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Winter 2015 Volume 9 No 4



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Oil boilers and tanks – part of the national infrastructure



There is a lot of talk about renewing the national infrastructure – the “Northern Powerhouse”, HS2, and renewing the underground in London. But our homes and heating systems are also part of that infrastructure – and many need renewing now!

OFTEC estimates that there are still 600,000 domestic standard efficiency boilers in Great Britain and possibly 800,000 in Ireland. Also the number of single skin oil tanks in GB and

Ireland is probably in excess of one million. With the low kerosene price set to stay, possibly for more than a year, there has never been a better time to tell your customers about the benefits of upgrading.

Oil heating is now the cheapest form of central heating – nearly £200 cheaper than mains gas – so we believe there is a great opportunity to promote boiler and tank replacements. Tanks should be a big market in 2016 as oil distributors are taking a more stringent attitude and are not filling tanks that look likely to fail. So strike now while oil prices are low!

Register to install solid fuel stoves

The solid fuel stove market has grown recently, but many installations are done by builders and DIY-ers with no knowledge about combustion. The risk of poor installations and the threat posed by carbon monoxide are clear. OFTEC offers solid fuel CPS registration for just £50 p.a. (€65) for existing registrants, so if you install solid fuel stoves I would urge you to register with us.

We have just published our own solid fuel technical book and assessments, so please ask your nearest training centre if they are running an OFTEC solid fuel course. (See page 25 for more details)

We are streamlining the way that you can register with us and now have a new website – www.joinoftec.com – which makes it easy to register with us. Please take a look at this site which also links to our other websites: www.oftec.org for information, and www.oftecdirect.com for quick delivery of ancillary products that you need.

Wishing all our readers a happy Christmas and good trading in 2016!

Nick Hawkins
Chairman
OFTEC



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Favourable prices lead to oil heating boom

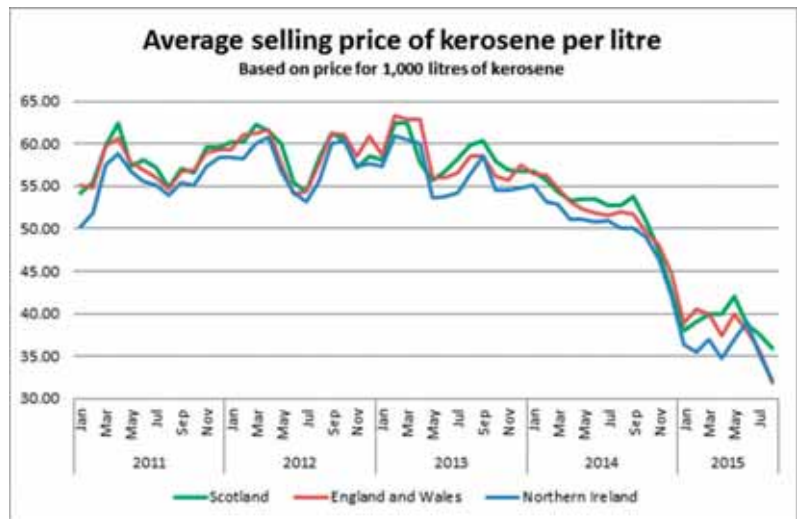
2015 is set to become a bumper year for the oil heating industry with sales of new boilers up by 9% in the year to August, compared to 2014.

Renewed consumer confidence combined with the unprecedented fall in kerosene prices have had a significant and positive impact on the industry. Overall oil boiler sales in 2015 are higher than any year since 2010. Sales over the summer have been particularly strong, suggesting that uncertainty over subsidies for renewable heating products, following changes in government policy, may also have influenced consumer thinking.

OFTEC's director general, Jeremy Hawksley, said: "Feedback from installers has been positive this year, suggesting that there's plenty of work around. Consumers are also increasingly aware of the need to find an installer they can trust, which is reflected in the rise in usage of OFTEC's online 'find a technician' search facility. It's clear that consumers are choosing oil because they want reliability and value for money."

The favourable oil price is likely to be a key factor in consumer decision-making. The average UK selling price of kerosene in England and Wales fell to a six-year low of around 35ppl in August, almost 50% cheaper than when prices peaked in spring 2013.

Jeremy continued: "The low price is making an enormous difference to households in Great Britain using oil, leading to annual savings of hundreds of pounds. Oil is now by far the cheapest major heating fuel with typical annual costs currently around £793 – that's 48% cheaper than LPG, 50% less expensive than electric storage heaters, and 23% cheaper than mains gas.



"Oil heating users have benefitted directly from the fall in crude oil prices because the price falls have been passed on to consumers – unlike other fuels. This has made oil heating very attractive, and not just for existing users.

"Predicting the future kerosene price is always difficult, but with world demand for crude oil still low, and high output still leading to an over supply in the market, it's likely that prices will remain comparatively low for some time to come."

Re-certification package for oil assessments

Following consultation with industry members, OFTEC has designed a re-certification package for oil assessments to enable technicians renewing their qualifications to spend less time off the job.

Covering the OFT10 suite of oil assessments – OFT10-101 (pressure jet); OFT10-102D/W (vaporising); OFT10-105E (appliance/system installation) and OFT10-600a (tank and supply installation) – the new re-assessments, which went live on September 1st, significantly reduce the time technicians need to spend in a training centre.

OFTEC sought the views of oil installers, certification bodies, training centres, appliance manufacturers and its own inspection team to come up with the re-certification package which has been designed to meet ISO 17024 requirements, the industry standard for the certification of personnel.

OFTEC training manager, David Knipe,

explains: "We are always looking at new ways to support our registered technicians and the businesses they run. From our conversations with installers it was clear that time spent away from the job doing training was a key issue for many. So we consulted with industry members to scope out whether reducing the assessment length, whilst at the same time maintaining the highest possible standards, was a viable option.

"The outcome was that for re-assessments only, it wasn't necessary to repeat some of the basic training elements as this would just be going over old ground for our more experienced technicians. Therefore, the new re-certification courses have been designed to concentrate more on practical elements as well as recent legislative changes, developments in technologies, industry risks and feedback from competent person scheme inspections. This allows technicians to renew these essential qualifications as proof of



OFTEC training manager, David Knipe

competence but spend less time away from work."

For further information and a full list of OFTEC approved training centres, visit www.oftec.org/technicians/oftec-registration-services

Goodbye Green Deal, hello PAS 2030

Apart from a few members of the former coalition government, it is doubtful whether many have mourned the passing of the Green Deal energy efficiency scheme, the end of which was announced by the new government in June, says OFTEC.

Green Deal failed to attract enough support from either consumers or the heating and insulation industry. For businesses that invested time and money in anticipation of getting work from the scheme, the announcement will remain a source of frustration. This is particularly true of small installation businesses which struggled to find a way to get

involved – just one of Green Deal’s many failings.

So where does the end of Green Deal leave us? While the early demise of the scheme was probably inevitable following the election result, it is worth noting that no alternative has so far been announced. This leaves vulnerable groups such as those in fuel poverty, or people living in draughty, hard-to-heat homes with few affordable ways to improve their situation. Many of these people use oil heating and need help to replace their standard efficiency boilers. A simpler, more inclusive scheme is urgently needed.

OFTEC launched its Green Deal registration scheme for

oil installers in 2012, hoping that the programme would generate work for technicians. Although it is disappointing that this has not happened, OFTEC has chosen to retain its Green Deal registration but to repackage it as the PAS 2030 (Publicly Available Specification) registration.

The reason for this is that while Green Deal may be dead, technicians will still need PAS 2030 for the installation of Energy Efficiency Measures (EEM) under Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and other government-led energy efficiency contracts. This is because contractors installing ECO measures will need to



operate a Quality Management System (QMS) in line with PAS 2030.

For more details, please contact OFTEC’s registration team on 01473 626298 or email: registration@oftec.org. Information about PAS 2030 registration is on the new OFTEC website: www.joinoftec.com

End of Green Deal – “an opportunity to build on previous successes”

The Department for Energy and Climate Change’s (DECC) decision to cease funding for the Green Deal should prompt renewed focus on smarter regulation for the heating industry, says Worcester, Bosch Group.

Neil Schofield, head of governmental and external affairs at Worcester, says: “It is no real surprise to see the Green Deal effectively scrapped before it ever really took off, in a month where we’ve already seen the government indicate cuts to the Feed-in Tariff and the end of its zero carbon homes policy. The question now is which scheme will be next to follow – the RHI or ECO?”

“While the intention behind the Green Deal may have been positive, the complexity it added to the supply chain, its unappealing interest rate, and the way in which it marginalised our network of heating engineers made success very unlikely.”

With the government still under pressure to protect and reduce household bills, Neil believes the Green Deal’s demise should be viewed as an opportunity for DECC to invest in dialogue with the heating industry and homeowners in a bid to introduce regulation which helps to cut energy expenditure.

He continues: “Given the need to reduce household bills without increasing spending, DECC now has to find a way to introduce regulation which use market forces to their advantage. The decision to make condensing boilers mandatory remains the most effective fuel, energy and CO2 saving legislation of all time, yet that was now over a decade ago. Moving forward, we need a government that is willing to build on previous successes by talking to the industry and being flexible with its drip-feeding of regulation.”

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



Neil Schofield, head of governmental and external affairs at Worcester, Bosch Group

Misuse of logo

OFTEC continues to receive calls regarding the misuse of the OFTEC trademark, leading to possible misrepresentation.

Recent cases have included reports of company websites, local press advertisements, business directory entries and business stationery which have falsely claimed OFTEC membership or used the association’s logo without authorisation.

OFTEC investigates every case and challenges those that do not have registration. The businesses in question are given 28 days to either register with OFTEC or remove the logo. If no action is taken then the case is referred to Trading Standards. The most recent cases have been located in Essex, Yorkshire, and Warwickshire.

Many cases are satisfactorily resolved. These include a case brought to OFTEC’s attention by a registered technician about a website in Northern Ireland. OFTEC went to the Trading Standards office after not receiving a response to letters requesting the company to withdraw the false claim of membership and OFTEC logo. Trading Standards made contact and the website has since been taken down.

If you spot something you think needs investigation, please contact OFTEC’s compliance team by emailing: compliance@oftec.org

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Energy Secretary will not support scrappage scheme

Amber Rudd, Secretary of State at the Department of Energy and Climate Change, is not prepared to support a boiler scrappage scheme, which, she says, “would only serve to undermine the long term strategy for the UK.”

In response to a letter sent to her by OFTEC chairman, Nick Hawkins, soon after she was appointed as the head of DECC, Ms Rudd said: “Regarding your proposal for a boiler scrappage scheme, I do understand your point about the efficiencies of modern oil condensing boilers and the effect this can have on fuel consumption and households should be made aware of and take the opportunity if they are choosing a new oil boiler to make these

savings.

“The UK, however, is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 80 % by 2050 and significant reductions throughout the interim period in our carbon budgets. This is a challenging goal. Of course, oil, like other fossil fuels, will continue to play a role in the UK’s energy mix in the short term, but if we are to achieve a reduction of this level then it is likely to require reducing emissions from buildings to near zero.

“To make the transition to a low carbon economy then we will need to change the way we heat our homes. This will mean lowering the energy demand across all the UK’s housing stock through better thermal

efficiency, changing consumer behaviour as well as deploying low carbon and renewable heating alternatives.

“As you are aware, the primary vehicle for supporting the uptake of renewable heating systems is the domestic Renewable Heating Initiative (RHI) which is targeted to homes that are off the gas grid, with the clear view that those without mains gas have the greatest challenge in making the switch and, depending on their current fuel, the greatest impact on carbon emissions.”

Ms Rudd concluded: “You will understand, therefore, why at a time when we need to focus public spending much more acutely on our objectives, I cannot support a boiler



Amber Rudd, Secretary of State at the Department of Energy and Climate Change

scrappage scheme, which would only serve to undermine the long term strategy for the UK.”

Ms Rudd’s letter to Nick Hawkins was written around two weeks before the government announced its proposal to slash the feed-in tariff rates for solar PV by as much as 87 % from January 2016 – a move the industry has widely condemned.

Urgent re-think on carbon reduction policies needed, says OFTEC

On the back of government plans to reduce ‘out of control’ green energy costs, OFTEC says it’s time to look at more pragmatic and affordable ways to reduce carbon emissions and heating bills.

During July DECC announced that there would be no further funding available for the Green Deal and Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (GDHIF) schemes, alongside sweeping cuts to subsidies for the renewable energy sector.

Qualifying the moves, energy and climate change secretary Amber Rudd, said the government’s priority was to “keep bills as low as possible for hardworking families and businesses” and to “reduce emissions in the most cost effective way.”

This is a sentiment OFTEC has supported from the outset but, says the association, “inadequate carbon reduction schemes such as Green Deal and the failing domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) clearly show that, to date, the government has been using the wrong vehicles to achieve its aims.”

OFTEC says a complete re-think on carbon reduction and energy efficiency policies in the UK is needed and that consumers would be far more receptive to more affordable, easier to implement measures.

Boiler scrappage

These should be led by an all-inclusive boiler scrappage scheme for gas and oil boilers to incentivise the take up of high efficiency condensing models which can reduce CO2 emissions by up to 30 % and significantly cut energy bills – in addition to the current cost savings from consistently low oil prices.

An estimated two thirds of oil heated households in Great Britain still use standard efficiency non-condensing boilers, equating to approximately 600,000 units, so the potential for carbon savings via this route is huge, says OFTEC. A similar, highly successful scheme is currently running in Northern Ireland which has seen more than 13,350 new condensing oil boilers installed between September 2012 and March 2015.

Jeremy Hawksley, director general at OFTEC, comments: “The government seems to be finally recognising that its current carbon reduction policies simply aren’t fit for purpose. Green Deal failed to deliver its potential and the extremely low take up of the domestic RHI just serves to highlight the lack of appetite most consumers have for expensive renewable technologies – even with government support.

“Instead of encouraging people to completely change their heating systems

which can be both costly and complicated, the government should be pushing more affordable, easier to implement measures such as a boiler scrappage scheme. The approach is working extremely well in Northern Ireland and with so many old oil boilers in need of an upgrade in Great Britain, a similar scheme could result in significant carbon savings as well as help reduce heating costs.

Carbon reduction targets

“When outlining DECC’s priorities for 2015, Amber Rudd said her focus was ‘much more on carbon reduction targets, which are more essential than the renewable energy targets.’ We couldn’t agree more. We need to find practical ways of reducing CO2 emissions which will capture consumers’ interest – and help them save money – rather than pushing costly renewables which are only viable for the wealthy few.”



Jeremy Hawksley

Notify work – or cause problems for the customer

Building Regulations in England, Wales, Channel Islands and Isle of Man make it a legal requirement for the relevant local authority to be informed about the installation or replacement of a notifiable heat producing appliance, an oil tank and some heating and hot water services.

The ability to self-notify installation work is a key benefit of OFTEC registration. Removing the need to directly involve the local authority saves time and money, benefiting both the installer and the customer.

However, far more appliances are sold than are actually notified, leaving customers facing problems.

Although it is the installer who normally takes responsibility for notification,

when an installation is not notified it is the homeowner who has broken the law

Homeowners are often ignorant of the need to notify and years can sometimes pass before they realise that their installation lacks the crucial paperwork. Often, it is only when they are selling the house, and the buyer's solicitor asks to see the paperwork, that the true situation is revealed.

Homeowners are faced with having to track down the original installer to seek a retrospective regularisation order from the local authority for the unauthorised work, or to take out indemnity insurance against contraventions of building regulations for the buyer - often at very short notice and adding to the cost and

stress of the move.

Commenting on the issue, Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC's registration services director, said: "The biggest problem with the need to notify is that homeowners are rarely aware of their responsibilities, so it's essential for installers to accept their role in fulfilling the requirements on behalf of their customers.

Duty of care

"OFTEC registration is all about providing reassurance that you're competent to do the work and that homeowners can safely put their trust in you. If you don't notify the installation work you do, you are letting them down and failing in your duty of care. Failing to notify goes against everything that



Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC's registration services director

OFTEC registration is all about."

For registered technicians, the process of notification is simple via the OFTEC notification website at: www.ofteconline.com. The cost of each online notification is £2.50 and takes only a few minutes. Notification can also be done by fax – contact OFTEC's registration team for details.

Low oil price fuels business boost

During the past 12 months, Philip Shakespeare, owner of Premium Heating Services Ltd in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, has experienced a 50% increase in oil boiler installation work which he partly puts down to the dramatic drop in oil prices.

OFTEC registered Philip, who started his business in 2004, says: "The region we cover – Derbyshire, Leicestershire and into Warwickshire – has always been a strong area for oil but we are currently working at full capacity, carrying out four or five services every day. We're also installing at least one high efficiency oil condensing boiler a week and have seen demand for these double over the last year.

Moving with the times

"The surge in popularity has undoubtedly been fuelled by falling oil prices," he says. "With sensible fuel costs, people can also now afford to have their boilers serviced properly by an OFTEC registered technician rather than cutting corners and employing an unreliable

cowboy. We find customers are asking more and more whether we are OFTEC registered."

Philip is also finding that many of his customers now research their purchases before they buy and are therefore far more aware of how efficient modern oil boilers are.

"We anticipate local consumers will be sticking with oil for a good few years yet – not just because oil is currently by far the cheapest heating fuel, but because the typical older, rural homes around here do not lend themselves well to fitting renewable heating systems without carrying out major works on the properties.

"A good number of our customers are also elderly and so of an age where switching to an entirely new heating system like biomass or solid fuel just wouldn't be practical. I always say to them the most strenuous thing you'll ever have to do on oil is pick up the phone and order more!

"Having said that, we also have a lot of younger clientele and with products such as wireless thermostats which work with smartphones, oil is definitely moving with the times!"



Philip Shakespeare (left) with Neil Merriman, accredited installer business support manager at Worcester Bosch

Philip currently employs one other technician and an office manager, but, he says, if business continues to go well, he plans to recruit an additional engineer in the foreseeable future with the idea of taking over his father's oil supply business, Premium Fuels, during the next five years.

"Premium Fuels has been going strong for 30 years and my father has always been my role model," continues Philip. "

He advised me to take small, steady steps with the business which has certainly paid off so far and, alongside the resurgence in oil heating we're now experiencing, business is thankfully booming."



Small space? Big deal.

The new Grant Vortex Pro Combi XS is now the slimmest 26kW oil-fired condensing combi on the market.

At just 515mm wide, it offers a flexible and easy to install solution for those boiler replacements in small or hard to reach spaces. And as part of an award winning, whisper quiet product range, you can be sure it will deliver all the reliability and efficiency your customers expect.

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Industry celebrates its successes with Heating & Renewables Awards

September was a particularly busy month in the world of heating with the advent of the Heating and Renewables Roadshows visiting many parts of the UK – from Edinburgh to Exeter and many places in between.

Immediately following the first Roadshow – at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry on September 10th – more than 500 of the industry’s leading figures assembled to celebrate this year’s Heating and Renewables Awards.

Organised by A&D Publishing, publishers of Oil Installer and Renewable Energy Installer, the 15 winning projects, installers and products were announced by top comedian, Jason Manford.

Congratulations go to all winners and those who were Highly Commended in their particular categories – but especially to the Oil Installer of the Year, N.D. Waters Oil Heating & Plumbing Ltd of Romney Marsh in Kent.

Paul Stephen, REI editor and judging panel member, said: “Once again, the calibre of entries has been extremely high and the panel had a tough time selecting its shortlists and overall winners from this strong field of candidates. This is testament to the breadth and wide scope of expertise this sector has to offer.

“My congratulations go to all of this year’s winners, who have stood out in one of the most innovative and forward-thinking industries in the world, and in particular to Oil Installer of the Year, N.D. Waters, and to Geothermal International, who won the coveted Heating & Renewables Installer of the Year Award.”

The award winners...

Residential Retrofit Project of the Year

Advanced Renewable Power – The Bothy

Training Initiative of the Year

Grant Engineering (UK)

Highly commended

ThermaSolutions

Apprentice of the Year

Husky Heat Pumps Ltd – Lloyd Roberts

Highly commended

Orangehouse Renewables – George

Houghton

Biomass Installer of the Year

Purple Energy

Highly commended

British Gas Heat Networks

Community Heating Project of The Year

Kensa Heat Pumps – Trent & Dove Housing/
Kensa Heat Pumps renewable retrofit heating upgrade

High Efficiency Boiler Installer of the Year

TSG Building Services

Highly commended

Glevum Heating

Solar PV Installer of the Year

Kirklees Building Services

Air Source Heat Pump Installer of the Year

RA Brown Heating Services

Highly commended

BRB



Jason Manford entertained a record audience at the Heating & Renewables Awards

Ground Source Heat Pump Installer of the Year

Geothermal International

Oil Installer of the Year (see page 13)

N.D. Waters Oil Heating & Plumbing Ltd

Commercial Project of the Year

Dimplex – Rook Services

Highly commended

OrangEnergy Limited – Sonning Mill

Heating & Renewables Innovation of the Year

Grant Vecta Condensing Biomass Boiler

Contribution to Heating & Renewables

emh Homes – Dene Carvell

Commercial Installer of the Year

Ground Heat Installations

Very Highly Commended

EvoEnergy

Heating & Renewables Installer of the Year

Geothermal International

Accolades for Grant

Grant UK was particularly pleased to scoop two major accolades at the Heating & Renewables Awards.

The company won the coveted Innovation of the Year category for its Grant Vecta biomass boiler. The second award was for the Training Initiative of the Year, and the Grant G-One Scheme. G-One supports oil and renewable installers with training, installation and MCS accreditation, and offers such benefits as extended product guarantees and promotional merchandise.

“We are delighted with these awards for the Grant Vecta and the G-One Scheme,” explains Anna Wakefield, marketing manager for Grant UK. “It confirms that our continued product innovation and enhanced support for customers is on the right track and is a great boost for everyone at Grant UK.”

www.grantuk.com



The Enviromax Blue Supreme

Oil Boiler Range



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MOST EFFICIENT

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*data from www.ncm-pcdb.org.uk/sap

Neale wins coveted Oil Installer of the Year award

Neale Waters – proprietor of N.D. Waters Oil Heating and Plumbing based in Romney Marsh, Kent – is proudly displaying a new certificate on his office wall. For Neale has been named Oil Installer of the Year by the judges of the 2015 Heating & Renewables Awards.

OFTEC registered Neale began his business in 1997 and has since built up a solid reputation as a specialist in the installation of oil heating boilers, oil storage tanks, vented and unvented hot water systems, and air source heat pumps, together with equipment servicing, repair, commissioning and hand over.

“I started my own business to offer a local service to my community,” says Neale. “All of my work comes via recommendations and personal endorsements – I get great satisfaction from doing a decent and honest job for my customers who are then happy to pass my details on to their friends and family. In all my self-employed working life, I have never been short of work!”

Neale undertakes around 20 to 25 installations each year, mainly boiler replacements and upgrades to high efficiency condensing boilers, some of which require ancillary work such as flushing, radiator replacement or system extending.

“Since 1997 I have taken training very seriously, keeping my oil qualifications up to date as well as expanding into unvented hot water and heat pumps after taking training courses,” explains Neale. “Currently I belong to the OFTEC competent person scheme for oil heating, oil storage, heating systems and vented and unvented hot water systems. I’m also going through the registration process for the Microgeneration Certification Scheme for heat pumps, and I am looking at biomass with a view to expanding by business next year into this renewable technology – this may become popular in my region with the RHI payments.”

Neale is particularly pleased that his passion and expertise in the oil heating industry have been recognised by the judges of the



Neale Waters receives his Oil Installer of the Year Award from Anna Wakefield of Grant UK. Pictured with them is comedian Jason Manford who hosted the occasion

Heating & Renewables Awards. “Oil heating is my main business and being in rural Kent, my customers rely on me to provide a competent, effective and dependable service when they need work undertaking.”

Neale was presented with his coveted Oil Installer of the Year certificate at a special ceremony held at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry during September, by Anna Wakefield, marketing manager of Grant UK who sponsored the award. He was introduced to the audience by top comedian, Jason Manford, who hosted the occasion.

A baked bean bath for oil installer Brian!

OFTEC registered oil installer, Brian Dunlop, is a glutton for punishment... When he is not installing or servicing a boiler, he is normally dragging a radiator along a stony beach, jumping out of an aeroplane or competing in a gruelling five-aside football tournament – all in the name of charity!

Brian has been fundraising for the NSPCC for more than 15 years, in which time he has undertaken a tandem parachute jump, staged annual five-aside tournaments, and even taken part in a “drag-a-rad” event which meant that he had to race for one mile along a local beach pulling a heavy radiator

behind him! He is also a regular competitor in the Great South Run, and takes part in an annual fun bike ride which this year alone raised around £1000 for his favourite cause. In total, Brian has raised more than £35,000 for the charity.

And plans are at an advanced stage for a new – and messy – fundraising activity next year when Brian will wallow in a bath full of baked beans!

“I have also done guest talks for charity dinners and I have been involved in a couple of canoe events along the Basingstoke canal,” says Brian. “About seven years ago I wrote a song which was sung by my

daughter, niece and friends and was performed at a presentation night. We had 100 CDs made and sold them to raise funds – a friend of mine is in the music biz and did all the techie stuff for me!

“I strongly believe in the fundamental right that all children should be raised in a safe and loving environment and fully support the NSPCC in all their work,” he adds.

“A lot of what I have been involved with means that I need the help and support of others and things would not happen without this constant help. These people are the unsung heroes. My daughter, Jasmin,



Charity fundraiser Brian Dunlop with his daughter Jasmin

helps me a lot with the stuff I get up to!”

Brian uses the fundraising website Just Giving for many of his activities, but would welcome sponsorship from colleagues in the oil heating industry. He can be contacted at:

b.dunlop1@btinternet.com

In a recent TÜV Rheinland test, 34% of the most common oil-burner nozzles failed.
Danfoss burner nozzles scored best in test!

100%

**of Danfoss
nozzles passed
the spray
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TÜV Rheinland recently tested the six most common nozzle brands against the DIN EN 293 norm.

The results showed that:

- 34% of all nozzles failed the test
 - 3 of the 6 brands tested failed in 40-62% of cases
- Danfoss nozzles scored best in test - and achieved a 100% pass rate for spray distribution.

Oil burners need to be serviced every year. Imprecise nozzles are unreliable and can easily use up to 10% more oil. Precision Danfoss nozzles use less oil and require minimal servicing.

Download the full TÜV Rheinland report (no: S 221 2014 S4) directly at burner.danfoss.com

The tested nozzles do not represent the full spectrum of all oil nozzle types. But the test reflects what is believed to be the most common nozzle types and brands used in residential burners.

Richard Soper retires as Worcester CEO

Richard Soper has announced his retirement from the position of CEO of Worcester, Bosch Group.

Richard's retirement follows a hugely successful career in the heating and hot water industry, which began in the late 1960s and has included such highs as being president of the Institute of Plumbing in the early 1980s, receiving the prestigious 'Champions Award' from the British Renewable Energy Association and accepting a CBE from the Queen.

At the start of his professional life, Richard joined West Midlands Gas in the late 1960s where he completed an apprenticeship as a gas fitter. Richard then joined Delglo Appliances, which was part of the Delta Group at the time, as a salesman. In this role, he spent time working on the development of one of the first ever combination boilers in the UK, which was launched in the early 1970s.

Worcester Engineering purchased Delglo Appliances in 1977 and Richard stayed there as national sales and marketing manager until 1984 when he moved to Pegler as marketing director.

In 1993 Richard returned to Worcester Heat Systems Ltd as sales and marketing director before becoming managing director of Bosch Thermotechnology Ltd in 2001. After 10 years in the role, Richard handed over the baton to Worcester's current managing



Richard Soper

director, Carl Arntzen, when he became CEO in 2011.

Reflecting upon his experiences working at Worcester, Bosch Group, Richard said: "Working in the heating and hot water industry for the time I have has been a truly fantastic experience – a real joy. As the saying goes, when you enjoy your job you've never done a day's work, which is exactly how I feel."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Which? boiler investigation uncovers "shocking" servicing

A Which? investigation into how well engineers serviced a faulty gas boiler found most of them failing to meet legal requirements and others making potentially dangerous mistakes.

Which? organised for 10 separate engineers – five from major companies and five from randomly chosen independents – to service a household boiler to see if their work was up to scratch.

However, when independent experts assessed each service, they found only two of the 10 engineers did the minimum legal checks and none followed the manufacturer's servicing instructions properly.

Which? executive director, Richard Lloyd, said: "These results are shocking with most engineers we put to the test failing to do what is legally required.

"Faulty boilers could have serious or even fatal consequences for consumers so more must be done to check up on and crack down on incompetent engineers."

Which? has shared its findings with the Gas Safe Register, which is responsible for checking gas work is done safely.

Heat Fed criticises new ErPD regulations

Heat Fed – the Heating Engineers & Allied Trades Federation – has criticised the new ErPD labelling regulations which came into force at the end of September.

"The EU Commission have acknowledged the short comings of their energy labelling requirements but still miss the real point," says Heat Fed.

"As far as the Commission are concerned they admit that: – the introduction of A+ and higher classes under the 2010 Energy labelling directive reduced the effectiveness of the energy label in motivating consumers to buy more efficient products."

Heat Fed claims that some of the pictograms used in the label are also difficult to understand and that weak enforcement by national market surveillance authorities contributes to noncompliance.

"In terms of efficiency, the rule making process is too long – on average 49 months Sometimes leading to outdated technical and preparatory work at the time of policy decisions.

"For a number of products, the lower classes of the energy label are unpopulated, because ecodesign measures have banned low-performing models and manufacturers have responded to technological progress by making ever more efficient products. Without a full A-G comparison the relevance of the label to consumers is undermined.

"From media coverage in recent years, it is clear that the benefits of the policy have not been sufficiently communicated. So they are rewriting the rules.

"When we go to purchase items covered by energy labelling, the purchases are in the majority distressed purchases – i.e. the boiler, fridge, cooker, etc., have gone wrong and are beyond economical repair. As consumers we all have limited budgets for such purchases and as such the key point of purchase decision is 'cost versus value for money' – something very much not accounted for in the Commission report!"

The report was published at a time when heating engineers were preparing for September 26th when energy labelling became a legal requirement, says Heat Fed. The report and draft proposals can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/1_EN_ACT_part1_v6.pdf

Solid fuel training to launch in Ireland

Solid fuel has had something of a renaissance in the last few years, especially in Ireland. Its huge growth probably stems from the economic recession and higher fuel prices forcing some consumers to burn wood, peat and solid fuels which could be bought in smaller packs.

Since the recession ended, the stove or wood burner has become the most desirable 'must have' for the lounge or snug in the modern home, even with reduced oil prices. A modern wood burner neatly complements an oil-fired heated home and OFTEC technicians are increasingly being called upon to install and service solid fuel appliances.

In response to this demand, OFTEC has established a training and assessment course which will be available through the existing training centre network for both dry and wet installs.

The course was developed over the summer months with input into the assessments from stove and flue manufacturing companies, merchants, technicians and installers. It was piloted during September at METAC training centre in Port Laois and, with final fine tuning now underway, the plan is to launch it first in Ireland and soon after, throughout the UK.

A firm knowledge...

The course is designed to give the current and potential installers a firm knowledge and understanding of how a solid fuel appliance should be installed correctly, to

demonstrate the requirements for flueing, ventilation and how to meet the current building regulations. The wet course is only available to technicians completing the dry course (and meeting the existing pre-requisites) and will show technicians how to connect a stove to an existing heating system.

The course is supported by a new solid fuel book, with up to date advice and guidance which has been commissioned and written by the OFTEC technical department.

The course should be of huge benefit to installers who want to demonstrate their competence to consumers, says OFTEC. And, by registering as a solid fuel operative with OFTEC, they will also be included on a new solid fuel register of technicians. This list will be available online and, more importantly, merchants in Ireland have indicated that they will be handing lists of competent installers (OFTEC registered) to consumers buying stoves in Ireland.

OFTEC is also in discussions with SOLAS who have expressed an interest in adopting the OFTEC solid fuel course for plumbing apprentices.

Technicians who already hold a recognised solid fuel qualification can add this scope to their existing registration from as little as 65 euros. Two technicians in Ireland who have already added the 108D scope to their registration are Christopher Carey and Damian Finnegan.

www.oftec.org.uk



Technician Christopher Carey with Sean McBride, OFTEC's representative and regional inspector in the Republic



Technician Damian Finnegan with regional OFTEC inspector for Northern Ireland, Norman Armstrong

New rules for oil storage

Under the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations, Northern Ireland, all single skin tanks at commercial premises used for heating, refrigeration or any type of oil storage over 200 litres, must have secondary containment (or bunding) from 31st December 2015.

The original Control of Pollution legislation came into effect in March 2010, with a stepped timeline for compliance. Many people filed the information away at the time, but with the December deadline looming, now is the time for action, advises OFTEC.

"Rather than see it as a hassle, tank installers should see it as a business opportunity," says OFTEC. "Many installers and service technicians will have commercial clients – this provides an opportunity for technicians to offer a tank check and advice on meeting the new requirements. There are many commercial companies who will require new tanks installed."

A spokesperson for Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) said: "It is mandatory for all companies that store more than 200 litres of oil to provide more secure containment facilities for tanks and drums. This is to prevent oil escaping into the environment and causing pollution. Even a small quantity of oil can cause a lot of damage to the environment and threaten human health and ecological systems."

The regulations not only apply to commercial premises but also to businesses, churches and commercial workshops that use oil storage tanks fitting the criteria.

Further information can be obtained from the NIEA at: www.doeni.gov.uk/index/protect_the_environment/water/oil_storage.htm

Call on manufacturers to be responsible when quoting efficiencies

In Ireland, OFTEC has issued a reminder to boiler manufacturers regarding the use of energy savings data in trade and general advertising. The association is reminding manufacturers to use only seasonal efficiency data which is available on the Home-heating Appliance Register of Performance (HARP) database when quoting boiler efficiencies.

The HARP database was developed by the UK Building Research Establishment in partnership with Kiwa Gastec at CRE, Kovara and Heating & Plumbing Markets International and is based on the equivalent UK SEDBUK database. The

HARP database is a product efficiency database for home-heating appliances that are used in Ireland and one of its main functions is to help homeowners identify efficient heating systems for their homes.

OFTEC is reiterating the importance of all sections of the industry using this standardised system, which is accepted across the heating industry in Ireland.

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland, said: "We believe it's in the best interests of consumers and the industry that all manufacturers and energy companies behave responsibly. It is vital that all manufacturers, in particular, use the agreed

seasonal efficiency data when quoting their boiler efficiencies. This ensures the householder is getting the correct information, allowing them to make comparisons and informed decisions.

"Most manufacturers take their obligations very seriously and that's why we feel it is important to closely monitor activity in this area. Marketing installers and householders with efficiency claims that are contrary to the independent data available is not good practice and could be viewed as misleading by the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland," added David.

Paul Martin from the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland added: "Consumers rely on accurate and transparent information and like-for-like comparisons to help inform their purchases. We would therefore prefer to see manufacturers only using efficiency levels quoted on the HARP or SEDBUK databases to maintain consistency across the industry. This will avoid consumers being unduly misled and make for more open competition within the industry, in turn driving higher efficiency standards."

www.seai.ie

B30K a reality for Northern Ireland oil users?

OFTEC is encouraging the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) in Northern Ireland to support B30K bio-fuel.

DETI is responsible for formulating and delivering economic development policy in terms of enterprise, social economy, innovation, energy, telecoms, and tourism in Northern Ireland. Under its energy remit the department is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). To date, the domestic RHI has been undersubscribed and, following a recent meeting, OFTEC has encouraged DETI to support B30K bio-fuel in the second phase of the domestic scheme.

B30K is a kerosene-based fuel containing 30% fatty acid methyl ester (FAME) which can be sourced from animal fat or vegetable oil from plants and is 100% renewable. Calculations from SAP 2012 show that B30K bio-fuel produces 21% less carbon emissions than burning 100% kerosene, 60% lower than coal and 111%



OFTEC, in partnership with Emo Oil, successfully completed a two-year trial of a new environmentally friendly home heating bio-fuel in Northern Ireland last year. Pictured celebrating the success of the trial is David Blevings from OFTEC and Suzanne Waddell from Emo with Mrs Lauren McCormick at her NI Housing Executive bungalow in Killinchy, County Down

lower than electricity.

OFTEC has successfully completed a four year trial using B30K and over the period the CO₂ emissions from the property involved have been reduced by 2.5 tonnes compared with using 100% kerosene.

OFTEC believes that DETI is seriously considering bio-fuel as a suitable fuel for

grant assistance as over 60% of homes in Northern Ireland use home heating oil as their primary fuel. The association believes that the inclusion of bio liquids in the domestic RHI has the potential to substantially reduce the overall carbon footprint of Northern Ireland.

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Loyalty club for oil installers

Kingspan Titan has launched a loyalty club offering a range of rewards to installers every time they buy one of the company's oil tanks.

Installers who purchase a Kingspan Titan oil storage tank will be invited to join the Titan Loyalty Club, and will be in line to receive various incentives. Members are awarded points for every purchase which are converted into Amazon E-gift certificates which can be spent on whatever they want. There are other benefits to membership too, including up to date industry news, a regular newsletter, and access to administrative and business-related materials such as simple guarantee registrations and digital benchmark forms.

Melanie Talbot, marketing manager, environmental storage, says: "This is an exciting initiative for us. We want to give unrivalled customer service and training support, while also recognising and rewarding Titan's loyal installers.

"We're getting a lot of interest and feedback already – the benefits are proving popular with customers and it's very easy to sign up. When you buy a Titan oil tank you can become a member simply by registering your details online and completing the guarantee form for each tank you install."

www.kingspanenviro.com/titanloyaltyclub



Kingspan Titan has launched the Titan Loyalty Club for installers

New generation of steel tanks from Kingspan Titan

Kingspan Titan has launched a new range of steel tanks for the safe containment of kerosene, diesel, gas oil and lubricants.

DieselPRO tanks are available in a variety of sizes from 5,000 to 62,000 litres, either as cylinders or in a rectangular design, and with storage or dispensing functionality. Each has been designed to surpass all current oil storage regulations for guaranteed environmental safety.

Commenting on the launch, Tony Strutton, DieselPRO commercial manager,

says: "DieselPRO represents a new generation of steel tanks. They have been cleverly designed to give users total reliability, flexibility and control, for absolute peace of mind. Because of this, and their suitability to virtually every application from farms, industry to commerce and of course transport depots, we're getting a lot of interest."

Every DieselPRO tank is double-skinned with an integrated bund capacity of 110% in accordance with PPG2. The tanks are also

pressure tested and certified to ensure their integrity to BS799, then coated with two layers of anti-corrosive epoxy polyurethane finish prior to DFT paint testing. The tanks have a guarantee of 15 years with a designed life of 20 years.

The dispensing tanks are fitted with full-height roller shutter doors for maximum security. Likewise, DieselPRO storage tanks are supplied with a robust lockable cabinet as standard which houses a fill point and offers secure positioning for optional ancillary equipment.

The fuel dispensing systems range from entry level through to the advanced fuel management system servicing up to 2000 vehicles and drivers. There is data storage capacity for up to 10,000 individual fuel transactions with USB, LAN, WLAN and GPRS interfaces available.

All DieselPRO tanks incorporate Kingspan Sensor TMS monitoring systems as standard, offering functionality such as high and low level alerts, bund alarm and tank content data.

www.commerciantanksonline.com



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Use of integral fire protected oil tanks

– an installer’s guide

In response to increased enquiries from installers regarding the use of integral fire protected oil tanks, OFTEC wishes to remind Oil Installer readers of the process for using tanks of this design and Local Authority Building Control (LABC) approved products in general.

As the UK’s heating industry continues to evolve, innovative products are coming into the marketplace on a frequent basis. For practical reasons building regulations guidance documents, such as “approved documents” in England, are commonly only updated on a five-year cycle. This means new products designed to meet the functional requirements of building regulations often enter the marketplace, but are not captured in an approved document, or presumed to offer compliance. In some cases, a product manufacturer’s installation or user instructions may even contradict an approved document.

The following information is provided to aid installers and consumers in deciding whether they wish to use such products or equipment.

Do I have to comply with guidance in an approved document? Following the guidance in an approved document is one way of ensuring – but does not necessarily guarantee – compliance with the functional requirements of building regulations. What is considered to be reasonable provision will be for the building control body, or ultimately the courts to determine on a case by case basis.

However, by following guidance in an approved document, the person carrying out the work can be reasonably assured and will enjoy the benefit of a statutory presumption of compliance – i.e.

they will be presumed to have complied unless it can be proven otherwise.

What if a product carries LABC “registered detail”?

The LABC registered details scheme is run and administered by LABC and serves to evaluate products and systems so they can be used in common situations. Through technical review of testing in accordance with relevant British or European standards, and peer evaluation, a product or system may be registered so that any local authority building control department requested to approve its use does not have to perform an evaluation process again. Effectively, this can accelerate the building control application process.

It should be borne in mind that this does not exempt the installer from the need to satisfy themselves that they have complied with the functional requirements of building regulations. It should also be noted that an LABC registered details scheme does not carry statutory status and is primarily intended for use where the local authority has carried out the building control function.

Can LABC registered products, which are at variance with approved documents, be self-certificated and notified by OFTEC registered technicians?

No. The LABC registered details scheme was put in place to minimise the building control checking and approvals process. Whilst there is no need to seek approval from a building control

body where oil installation or commissioning work is carried out by a registered technician belonging to a competent persons scheme, the work is not exempt from enforcement should the local authority consider that the work has not been carried out within the requirements of the regulations.

The scope of the LABC registered detail process is primarily intended to help building control surveyors decide whether a regulation has been met in a given set of circumstances, and may require professional judgement beyond the guidance given in an approved document. Therefore, OFTEC’s view is that it would be inappropriate for technicians to apply this approach when self-certifying work, particularly where the LABC registered detail offers an alternative approach to that specifically recommended in an

approved document. In these circumstances the technician would be entirely liable for a decision they have made.

OFTEC’s advice to registered technicians is that all oil installation and commissioning work should be carried out in accordance with the relevant approved documents. Where a registered technician proposes to carry out work outside the scope of guidance in an approved document, they are strongly advised to seek advice from OFTEC before starting work unless a suitable application is to be made to the local authority for approval under building regulations.

Further information is contained in technical notice 001 Use of LABC Type Approved Products which is available to OFTEC registered technicians from the OFTEC website www.oftec.org



Installers need to consider fire safety when installing oil tanks

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Apprenticeships – training which lasts a lifetime

by Clive King

The recent television series, 'The Apprentice', fronted by Lord Sugar of Clapton, unfortunately gives the impression that an apprentice must start life as a degree wielding high flyer. In fact this cannot be further from the truth. The origin of the word 'apprentice' means a person who is learning a trade from a skilled employer, having agreed to work for a fixed period at low wages. It also means a person legally bound by indenture to a master craftsman in order to learn a trade.

Nowadays people are not encouraged to stick with the job they first carried out when they left school and this is no bad thing as long as re-training is done correctly. Back in history an apprentice was under no illusions about his position within the company or his relationship with his skilled master craftsman. Then nearly all apprentices were young men, some as young as 12/13 who entered into a trade and carried out manual work for a number of years. Some were given no pay but the 'master' was obliged to look after his apprentice – to feed and clothe him and give him a bed and shelter.

Girls are showing the boys the way to go!

When the author was granted an indentured apprenticeship in mechanical engineering by Shell-Mex & BP Ltd in 1958 no such medieval situations arose, but he had to be at work by 7.30 in the morning, work until 5.30 in the afternoon, half an hour for lunch and was paid £4.10s.0d per week. He was always under supervision whilst on site, could be called upon to do any job and was given a structured training that lasted five years. After that time he was promoted to 'improver' which meant he had to prove his skills to his employer for another two years before he was allowed to work on his own.

During the five years he was expected to go to a technical college for one day per week and if he failed the courses he was expected to re-take them during his two years as an improver – at his own expense! How different today.

However, a sad side to today's apprenticeship scheme is that it is sometimes the parents and even teaching staff in schools who steer pupils away from apprenticeships. Parents and teachers are guilty of encouraging all children towards going to university to obtain a degree.

It should also be noted that the word apprentice also applies to girls as well as boys in this day and age, and some of the girls taking up apprenticeships in plumbing and electrical skills are showing the boys the way to go!

So where do we go from here? Firstly parents and schools should be educated into accepting that a university degree, laudable though that is, is not necessarily right for their children/pupils. Secondly, it would be good if employers recognised that, in some cases, they also need training to learn how to cater for the needs of their apprentices and how to guide them in their work to obtain the best results in the shortest possible time, probably reduced to between three to four years nowadays.

During this time a fully structured day-release course must be followed, conducted by a technical college or a training school. Technical colleges are fully aware of the formal needs of the apprentice but some training schools do not have this skill as they are more used to training older people in advanced courses allied to their existing skills.

Sometimes six-month release courses are available but one should be aware that these longer periods away from the workplace tend to disrupt an apprentice's learning processes as when he returns the work he was carrying out has often moved on.

Out of the classroom craftsmen/employers have to realise that once a promising apprentice has been taken on, he/she must be actively encouraged and taught the necessary skills of the workplace and also trained in their relationships with their fellow workers and the company's customers. Young men and women today do not appear to have the social skills of their parents and grandparents and positive co-operation and interaction with all parties is a healthy way to progress with their training.

Before completion of the formal apprenticeship and technical college training, specialist skills can be added to the apprentice's portfolio with further training at a college or school. These may include electrical advanced courses, oil and gas courses, and nowadays renewable energy courses, such as solar, solid fuel and wood pellet heating, ground and air source equipment training and, of course, photo-voltaic/solar electrical production.

The world has developed dramatically over the last few years, opening up new horizons to young people who are prepared to work hard, and the opportunity to earn a very good wage after having carried out a training which will last them a lifetime.

In conclusion it is worth noting that the one thing essential for a successful tradesman/master craftsman, is something you cannot learn at college or obtain a degree in – *Common Sense!*



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.

OFTEC urges school leavers to consider apprenticeships - see page 25

Updating skills in the heating industry

With regular changes to legislation putting increased pressure on heating engineers, Martin Cooke, technical manager at EOGB Energy Products Ltd and his colleague, Alan Black, oil and technical standards trainer at EOGB, discuss the importance of regular update training.

The heating industry is a sector where best practice and standards are continually changing and almost every year we see more legislative changes coming into force.

Therefore, with increased regulatory demands on engineers, a training course which covers the same basics a minimum of once every five years is not sufficient to protect them from the pitfalls of carrying out their job. Of course the basics should be covered for those that need them, but how, where and when can engineers learn what has changed and how it affects their day to day working practices?

Martin and Alan recommend that update training should ideally be carried out each year, or at least every couple of years, to ensure engineers are abreast of all regulatory changes that affect them.

Currently, the onus of responsibility is left entirely on the engineer to seek out new information, much of which is written by manufacturers and may not be appropriate to engineers in general terms, especially those who utilise different types of equipment. This means that, in some cases, engineers discover at their cyclic five year training course that they have not been working compliantly, despite their best endeavours, and are legally responsible for the works which they have carried out.

Potential risks

If work is found to be non-compliant, engineers can face legal action which, at worst, could result in a prison sentence. Therefore, it is critical that engineers are aware of changes to standards to ensure that they are not unwittingly putting themselves – or their customers – at risk.

Unfortunately, the current system often lets engineers down and does not offer them the support they need. Ironically, this is the same system which may well be called upon to give evidence in court to show that the engineer had not carried out works which were compliant with 'current' standards and regulations at the time.

Those in places of influence often forget that many engineers are self-employed or owners of small businesses so are legally obliged to comply with company law, health and safety, HMRC, etc, as well as being expected to read through every trade magazine which lands on their doorstep to see if there is any news which may affect them.



In order to tackle this issue, it is vital that we see an increase in appropriate and proactive update training, both classroom-based and practical. Practical experience, without manufacturer bias, is essential to prevent an army of engineers with a head full of regulations and standards but unable to put them to sound practical use in the workplace.



New regulations

By way of example, just recently we have seen a number of regulatory changes and updates within the heating industry, including the BS5410 part 2 (oil installations over 45 KW) and The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

We also saw an update to the BS 5410-1 late last year and this September saw the introduction of the Energy Related Products Directive (ErPD).

With the renewable market now established, this brings further questions regarding installations and keeping up with changing markets. For example, engineers also now need to consider the ventilation implications when they come across plants with both renewable and fossil fuel installations.

Skills gap

As well as a lack of update courses for established engineers, training for new entrants in the heating industry has gone into rapid decline over the past decade, with many apprenticeship schemes no longer existing. This opened up the industry to many fast-track programmes where vital initial grounding engineering skills were sadly lost.

With many heating businesses no longer investing in training for financial reasons, it is not viable for colleges to offer training to only a small number of people. Also, with minimum wage restrictions and young people not wanting to accept low pay, employing trainees can be expensive.

This is a ticking time bomb for businesses and the industry as a whole as the next generation of skilled engineers is not coming through. Who then will have the skills and knowledge to maintain equipment within the industry?

If the situation is not addressed, it is likely that we will see far more serious life threatening incidents in the coming years.

OFTEC rolls out solid fuel training

After detailed consultation with appliance manufacturers, fuel suppliers, training partners and technical experts, OFTEC has launched its new solid fuel technical book and training course.

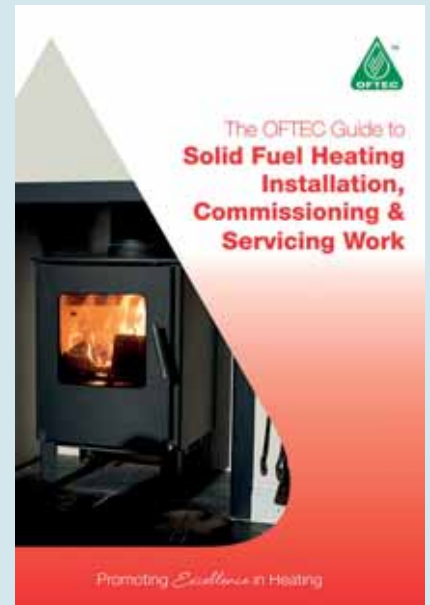
The development emphasises OFTEC’s commitment to solid fuel registration and means it now underpins its registration scheme with its own set of technical standards and associated training, rather than relying exclusively on other providers.

The new course has been piloted at South West Peninsular Training in Somerset and METAC training centre in Ireland. It takes the same approach as OFTEC’s oil training, with an emphasis on practical work, backed up with appropriate theory.

The training courses are split into two parts and provide the ideal grounding for any technician considering applying for OFTEC’s solid fuel registration (OFT 15-108 W/D).

Accompanying the new courses is a new technical book, “The OFTEC guide to solid fuel heating installation, commissioning and servicing work”, which is available from training centres and from OFTEC Direct.

OFTEC’s solid fuel registration is already proving popular and, for existing registered technicians, costs £50 (€65) a year. www.oftec.org.uk



OFTEC urges school leavers to consider apprenticeships

OFTEC is urging school leavers to consider an apprenticeship or vocational training as the first step to a successful career.

The call is part of OFTEC’s drive to recruit more young people to careers in the heating industry following concerns that the UK is facing its biggest skills shortage for a generation – a problem which is particularly apparent in the trade sector.

Major companies and unions have warned that the talent gap – which many claim has been caused by a continued decline in apprenticeships – is threatening the economy just as it is getting back on its feet.

The concern is backed by latest government statistics which show that in the academic year 2013/14, a total of 440,000 apprenticeships were started in England – 70,000 less than the previous year.

OFTEC registrations director, Adrian Lightwood said: “With the economy now picking up, there is a growing demand for skilled tradespeople across the UK. But while there are plenty of roles to be filled, fewer people are taking vocational courses or apprenticeships to bridge the growing gap.

“Skilled tradespeople are of vital importance to our economy and it’s important to remind young people that vocational qualifications and apprenticeships are not a ‘second class’ choice. They can offer a real opportunity to start a rewarding and secure career.”

Apprenticeship schemes combine ‘on the job’ training with high quality college learning to help 16-24 year olds build their careers. Students earn money as they learn, gain qualifications and have the opportunity to develop their skills from an early age by working alongside experienced staff.

Since 2002, OFTEC has run a competent persons scheme that encompasses the training, assessment and registration of technicians working in the oil heating industry. The scheme has recently been extended to cover solid fuel and renewable technologies, such as heat pumps and solar thermal, to widen its support for technicians.

OFTEC’s name has become a quality benchmark for installers, technicians and consumers alike but with 66 % of OFTEC



Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC registration director.

registered technicians aged over 40 years and only 10 % under 30, there’s an urgent need to bring new blood into the industry.

Adrian Lightwood concludes: “For anyone thinking about leaving school at 16, or who doesn’t want to go to university, apprenticeship schemes and vocational courses that place more emphasis on practical skills can be a great option. Consumers are always looking for tradespeople who can demonstrate their professionalism and skills through certification.

“By encouraging a new generation of technicians equipped with the right skills and a pride in carrying out their best work, we can help to ensure the current skills gap is plugged and the industry moves from strength to strength.”

To find out more about a career in the heating industry, email registration@oftec.org to request a copy of the recently revised ‘guide to registration’ booklet.



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Instil confidence to encourage repeat business...

Andrew Townsend, senior consultant at energy and environment consultants, A.F.T. Energy, shares his tips on how to encourage repeat business...

I am often asked by engineers “how do I sell a new appliance and annual servicing to my customers?”

I was recently contracted to do an energy audit on a number of properties, where, back in the day, I had serviced the appliances. On my first visit for quite a few years I noticed that the appliances had not been maintained as regularly as when they were under my wing. I put it down to the economic downturn. On the day I had arranged to meet the service engineers, who had turned up promptly, entered the first property, laid down the dust sheet and disconnected the appliance.

The client was well out of earshot so I – as the old head – gave some fatherly advice. “How are you going to prove to me that your work has given my client any benefit?” A shrug of the shoulders followed.

If you want repeat business, firstly fire up the appliance, pump test the flue to find if it is burning cleanly, then analyse it. This will prove to your customer how poorly their appliance was running and – when they see the before and after readings – show the saving on fuel you have made by servicing it. Emphasise your value for money to the customer by saying the service would pay for itself within six months – depending, of course, on how much you are charging for it!

A seed of interest...

This will certainly boost the customer’s confidence in you, so when you tell them they could have a replacement appliance installed with a fuel-saving 98% efficiency rating, at worst you will have planted a seed of interest and, hopefully, the likelihood that they will consider you for such an installation in the future.

Take a system water sample. If it’s black, show the customer and recommend either an inhibitor is added or a system flush is undertaken to enhance energy efficiency and long-term cost savings. This can be justified by emphasising the resultant longer pump life, higher radiator temperatures, more efficient boiler, and less probability of a system breakdown with consequential high call-out charges.

Whilst at the property, take a look at the whole installation and ask yourself – and the customer – various questions. For example, does that tank and pipework comply with BS5410? When was the filter last checked? When was the chimney last swept? It’s all about instilling confidence in you and your expertise.

If I had a pound for every time I opened my flue gas analyser’s case and a customer said: “What’s that? I’ve never seen an engineer with one of those before”, I would be a richer



Andrew Townsend

man than I am today!

Okay... perhaps I am talking to the converted, but regrettably there are too many of us out there cutting corners – probably to get to the next job!

Think about it ladies and gents... if you took your van for a service and the mechanic said the oil and filter will do another year, even though the manual says to change it, you wouldn’t be happy – especially if you later broke down as a result of the oil not being changed. Would you go back to that garage or purchase a new van from them?

It is always good to remind yourself that a customer may be only one of thousands to you, but to them you are their only engineer... a position you should carefully safeguard to ensure future business!

Engineers get hands-on experience in Italy

Nine UK heating engineers have returned from a week-long specialist burner training course at the world-renowned Baltur development facility in northern Italy.

The course, which is run annually by burner manufacturer and Baltur UK distributor EOGB, covers commercial burners with outputs from 50kW – 2000kW. Other aspects include commissioning, modulating controls, burner matching and fault finding.

Unlike the UK, which is limited in the number of places that large burners can be fired for long periods of time, the Baltur facility is equipped with cooling towers so burners can run for several hours if required. This enables engineers to get to grips with combustion settings without worrying about heat load.

Steve Hucker from South West Peninsular Training, who attended the course, said: “I would without question recommend this course to any engineer who wishes to extend their knowledge of oil, gas, and dual-fuel burners. I especially liked the amount of hands-on training in the workshop rather than too much classroom-based theory.”

The next Italy training trip will be in July 2016. EOGB also runs a number of courses at its purpose-built facility in St Neots in Cambridgeshire, including OFTEC oil training. Last year EOGB trained over 200 heating engineers. www.eogb.co.uk



A course candidate works on a commercial burner at the Baltur facility



SPECFLUE

Training to the right

SPECFLUE HAS BEEN A WELL-KNOWN FLUE AND CHIMNEY SUPPLIER FOR 23 YEARS. TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO THE COMPANY ENTERED THE RENEWABLES MARKET AND NOW HAS THE LARGEST, FULLY APPROVED HETAS AND RENEWABLES TRAINING CENTRE IN THE UK

Oil Installer editor Jane Hughes joined installers at Sudbury in Suffolk for a biomass training course covering appliance selection, installation, commissioning and decommissioning and service and maintenance.

So what are the key skills needed to install biomass?

“A real understanding of plumbing science and, in particular, flue installation,” said course tutor Toby Mayes. “Getting the flue right is vital and it takes time. Having real flue knowledge means knowing the local area, is it perhaps a low pressure zone? And, it’s important to take a look at how other solid fuel installations have been installed there.

“Be absolutely clear with your customer about what biomass means from both a practical and aesthetic point of view – do they understand exactly what they’re buying? Biomass may have origins in caveman-style heating but it’s backed by 21st century technology.

“The maximum efficiency of a biomass boiler can be as high as 96 % (92 % being average) but if ash is not removed regularly, it’s efficiency will drop. Is your customer willing and, more importantly, able to put the effort in?

“With a biomass installation costing between £7k-£10k, a thoroughly professional approach is vital. Selecting the right biomass appliance to meet a particular customer’s needs plays a crucial part in raising the industry’s profile.

“Biomass requires the installer to be upfront visually – exhibitions can give customers the wrong impression many display a biomass boiler minus the essential flue and Co2 meter!

“Be well-planned, prepared and equipped with the correct tools including draught gauge, combustion analyser, which needs calibrating and servicing every year, and temperature measurement equipment.

“Keep all documentation and take photographs of the installation. Both oral and handwritten information should be given to the customer including a schematic diagram of the heating system with colour-coded key tags. Armed with better understanding, it may then be possible to help a customer with a heating issue over the phone.

Biomass and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)

“The biomass market is stable with potential for biomass to be much more widely used,” said Toby. “That said, consumers do need more incentive to go green and if the domestic RHI goes completely it could severely affect the market.”

(At the time of the course, biomass attracted 7.14p per kw, in October it was 10 % down at 6.43p.)

To be RHI eligible a biomass installation must have a full heating design produced and be meter ready. RHI also requires that a service plan is carried out on an annual basis. “When servicing always clearly explain any faults and what has been done to rectify them,” said Toby.

To maintain a warranty, the installer must install to the manufacturer’s requirements. “An installer must know a manufacturer’s documentation back to front,” said Toby.

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"A real understanding of plumbing science and in particular flue installation are the key skills needed to install biomass," says course tutor Toby Mayes

A biomass unit is expected to last 30 years, although components will need to be replaced over time.

The biomass market in the UK

Germany and Denmark are the largest users of biomass in Europe; most boilers are still sourced from Europe with Specflue opting for an Italian manufacturer.

Toby has seen many oil and gas boilers replaced by biomass in the commercial sector which attracts a 20-year RHI payment. In his experience domestic properties with biomass are predominantly rural, ranging from two to four or more bedrooms.

"Although it's not currently possible to use solid fuel in passive houses, it's likely that document J will change to encompass new build."

Ensuring a good standard of installation and a consistent quality

"We educate installers properly but, whatever the energy, there are rogue installers who do cut corners out on the job," said Toby.

Those on the course agreed that with many installers willing to sell anything to anyone, negative news about the heating industry spreads quickly. All agreed that word of mouth from a satisfied customer was still the best way to promote any new heating system.

The importance of raising customers' confidence in biomass quality and its sustainable production was stressed.

There are upwards of 40 companies now delivering biomass in the UK with pellets being the easiest to transport and store. Depending on the installation's size and its annual heat demand, around 4.5 tonnes of biomass will be required with two deliveries a year needing to be stored and kept dry.

Adding biomass to your portfolio

As the popularity of biomass has grown, more oil installers are looking to upskill in this area.

"Everyone knows that while the cost of oil has gone down, it's always going to creep up again at some point," added Toby.

The five-day training and assessment course for wet and dry installations costs £1250 + VAT, the last two days covering biomass. It is also possible to do a 2-day biomass course at a cost of £245. Training includes desk-based activities and practical hands-on work backed by fault finding exercises.

For further course details contact the Specflue Training Department on 0333 999 7974 or email training@specflue.com.

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Ollie's ErP labelling special!

What is the scope of Energy Labelling regulations for oil boilers and water heaters?

The Energy Labelling regulations cover oil boiler and water heaters with a rated output of up to 70kW.

What documents are installers required to do under Energy Labelling regulations?

When supplying a single product, such as a boiler or water heater in isolation, pass on the manufacturer's product label and fiche. When supplying a combination of a boiler or water heater with a temperature control and/or solar device, known as a 'package', calculate the energy class of the package and provide a 'package label' to the end user. The package label tool can be downloaded from the OFTEC website.

If I supply a boiler only, do I have to produce a package label?

No, because what you have supplied is a single product. You should just pass on the manufacturer's product label and fiche.

If I install a boiler and temperature control,

then I upgrade the control at a later date, do I have to calculate a package efficiency again?

No, because you have only provided a single product as part of the work. You should just pass on the manufacturer's product label and fiche.

If I buy a 'bundle' of a boiler and temperature control that my merchant has put together, is it still my responsibility to produce a package label?

No. In this case the merchant has put the package together so they would be deemed to be the 'dealer'. However, if you add to, or take away from the bundle, you would need to produce a new package label if providing more than a single product.

If I am paid to supply and install a boiler and my customer directly employs an electrician to supply and install a temperature control, who provides the package label?

A package label is not required as the two trades supply individual products under their

ASK OLLIE!



own contract. Therefore, you should just pass on the manufacturer's product label and fiche, as would the electrician.

I have read that the measurement of NOx is a requirement of Ecodesign from 2018. Does this mean that I have to buy a new flue gas analyser which measures NOx?

No. NOx emissions are influenced by the nitrogen content of the fuel and are controlled as part of the boiler design. NOx emissions cannot be influenced by a technician who has already achieved best combustion performance.

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BSRIA launches world heating market reports

The Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA) has launched its findings on the latest Traditional and Renewable Heating World Markets Analysis.

Worldwide sales of boilers are growing, says BSRIA, supported by positive economic developments and progressing gasification in many world heating regions. China, South Korea and Iran represented particularly bright spots in 2014.

Krystyna Dawson, senior manager, heating & renewables, BSRIA Worldwide Market Intelligence, said: "Europe has seen a different development overall. Nearly all the main European heating markets have recorded a decrease in sales of boilers in 2014. Weak economy, efficiency requirements in the new build and uncertainty about the future in both economics and regulations have caused the consumers to adopt "wait and see" attitude.

"UK, the biggest domestic boiler market worldwide, has been a bright spot of the region recording further growth, thanks to the ongoing ECO obligation program and positive economic development alike."

BSRIA can provide heating studies that include analysis of: domestic boilers (including heat interface units); commercial boilers; comprehensive water heating; radiators; and underfloor heating.

To order a copy of the report, visit the website: www.bsria.co.uk or contact Steve Turner, general manager, sales: steve.turner@bsria.co.uk

Oil storage regulations in Wales

The Welsh government has recently finished consulting on proposals for the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (Wales) Regulations, which are set to be introduced in early 2016. Below, *Oil Installer* summarises the proposed scope and principal requirements of the regulations and explains the transitional provisions affecting its application.

The proposed regulations apply to all storage facilities:

- with a capacity exceeding 200L;
- installed above ground;
- installed on any premises (including domestic), except oil distribution depots and oil refineries.

The proposed regulations set standards for oil storage facilities which aim to prevent the escape of oil and the resulting risk of water pollution and/or damage to land and property. The principal requirement is for secondary containment (bunding) to prevent any leaks from the oil storage facilities escaping into the wider environment.

The requirements will apply to all new oil storage facilities from the date that the regulations come into force, which is expected to be in early 2016. Existing oil storage facilities, other than domestic, will need to comply between two and four years later, depending on the risk they pose to the environment.

Once the proposed regulations have been finalised and published, OFTEC will release an update to OFTEC Technical Book 3 ahead of them coming into force. In the meantime, further information will appear in OFTEC's e-news bulletins and website press releases.

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Leading the way in blue flame technology...

Enthusiasm for an innovative new product seems to be contagious – certainly if Firebird's introduction of its new blue flame domestic boiler is anything to go by!



David and Graham Shepherd of T.B. Shepherd & Son Ltd were particularly impressed with Firebird's new blue flame technology



Barry Brynildsen, Firebird's regional sales manager, introduces the Enviromax Blue Supreme boiler to plumbing and heating engineers, T & K Pye Family Ltd of Lancaster, and Mark Shaw Ltd of Milnthorpe



Firebird's Enviromax Blue Supreme boiler

Firebird held a series of "teach-in" sessions around the UK to introduce its new blue flame technology to installers, prior to the official launch of its Enviromax Blue Supreme boiler in October. *Oil Installer* attended one of the sessions – held at Cumbria Heating Components in Kendal. Barry Brynildsen, Firebird's regional sales manager, hosted the event with an enthusiastic presentation and was rewarded with an equally keen response from his audience.

Brothers David and Graham Shepherd of heating engineers T.B. Shepherd & Son Ltd were particularly impressed with the UK's first oil fired condensing boiler with blue flame technology for the domestic heating market. "This has got to be the future," said David.

Based in Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria, around two-thirds of the company's business involves oil heating. "This is the first time we have seen the new technology and we are very impressed," he added. "It has many advantages and we will certainly be recommending it to customers. Firebird have got in first, and we want to be with them."

Getting ahead of forthcoming NOx emission target regulations, Firebird claim to have produced the most energy efficient domestic oil fired boiler in Europe.

The Enviromax Blue

Supreme meets the exacting standards of the Eco Design Directive in higher efficiencies and low NOx emissions. "Not only are they the most efficient boilers in their class but they also surpass by a considerable margin the intended NOx targets," Barry Brynildsen told his audience. "The new European standard is currently anticipated to set maximum NOx levels at 120mg/kW hour when it comes into effect. This compares with Firebird's field test results with the Enviromax Blue Supreme achieving an impressive level of just 65mg/kW hour."

High efficiency

Firebird's new boiler features innovative combustion technology – SAP 2009 annual efficiency ratings of 93.4% have been achieved by incorporating a patented high efficiency heat recovery unit in conjunction with the boiler secondary heat exchanger that pre-warms the air required for combustion.

The boiler is available in three models – kitchen, boilerhouse and external heatpac – with two fixed outputs, 20 and 26kW. It is ErPD ready and even exceeds the next round of the ECO Design directive on proposed NOx emission levels.

Barry explained that, whilst highly innovative, the principles of the technology are simple. Heating oil is atomised at high

pressure before being mixed with pre-warmed air and ignited. Hot combustion gases are then re-circulated through the burner blast tube through a specially designed slot which in turn concentrates the burner flame in one area and reduces the overall NOx levels. The result is a blue flame which produces soot free combustion along with reduced consumption of heating oil and the lowest possible emissions.

The burner, manufactured by the German engineering company MHG GmbH, incorporates a digital control box to give diagnostic information to the maintenance engineer should a fault occur, making the maintenance process simple and efficient. For the end user the digital controls help achieve the most out of their heating appliance, including burner run time, pump overrun and anti-cycling features.

"If someone wants a quiet boiler and wants to save the planet, we've got that boiler," added Barry. "Firebird is the first to do it and now we have the best efficiency rated boiler in Europe."

The Enviromax Blue Supreme is the latest addition to Firebird's existing portfolio which includes oil condensing boilers, biomass boilers, solar thermal systems, oil fired and multi-fuel range cookers and multi-fuel inset stoves.

www.firebirduk.co.uk

New weekend delivery service from HWOS

Heating World of Spares has introduced a new weekend delivery service for the heating season. In partnership with Interlink Express, HWOS can now ship out parcels up to 1pm on Saturday for delivery on Sunday or Monday.

All weekend delivery orders are fully tracked and have a one hour window on the morning of the delivery with options to make changes should timings not be convenient. The new weekend service is in addition to the company's premium FedEx home delivery service and its free UPS Access Point service. www.hwos.co.uk

First time fix with Parts Center

As the cold weather starts to bite, it is essential for installers working in the remote, off-grid areas of the UK, to be able to fix a heating system breakdown for home and business owners first time. Simon Allan, Parts Center category director – parts, pumps and controls – explains how his company can help installers provide a first-class, efficient service without leaving customers out in the cold...

According to research by Cornell University in the USA, employees make 44% more errors if they are too cold. So, if the heating goes wrong and the temperature drops, it stands to reason productivity will drop too, making it essential for businesses to get their system back up and running as quickly as possible. And when it comes to health, respiratory problems, arthritis, rheumatism and even mental health can be affected by the cold.

So it's vital for installers to be able to get their hands on the right part at a moment's notice, to keep the heat on and their local reputation intact. And in remote areas, where arriving with the wrong part for an essential repair has far greater consequences, the pressure is particularly acute.

Identifying the right part

Installers know a huge amount about the parts they install, but as no job is ever the same, it can be difficult to keep track of what they need for each one – and there's always a chance that they'll come across a part, or even a heating appliance, they've never seen before.

Technology in the plumbing and heating industry is changing and improving all the

time – with the number of parts available ever-growing. And, with the upsurge of hybrid systems, which combine conventional heating systems with renewable and energy efficient technologies, there's even more parts for installers to get their heads around.

So Parts Center has developed Parts Arena, a parts identification system, as an essential guide for installers.

Available online, via smartphones, tablets and PC it gives access to features including parts lists, images and diagrams, enabling installers to make fast and accurate identification of spare parts and accessories whilst onsite or in the office. They can then order the part and advise the customer when it will be delivered and the boiler fixed.

Knowledge base

In 2015 Parts Center has focused on staff training to make sure installers get the best out of their branch visits. Branch staff have been upskilled and trained to add to their already considerable parts knowledge. And the best branch staff have been identified to work as parts specialists, who can confidently and correctly identify and advise on any of the products available.

Next day delivery is an essential part of any online trading business and the same applies to the heating and plumbing industry.

This is exactly why Parts Center's direct to customer, UK-wide, premium delivery service, Parts Direct, has been developed. It is available from all Plumb and Parts Center branches as well as the dedicated call centre, for next day delivery to any UK mainland address. Three levels of service can



Simon Allan, Parts Center category director

get installers the part they need as early as 10.30am the next day.

In an age where 52% of installers are now using smart devices – phone or tablet – to access information, they no longer have to know everything off the top of their head, but they can certainly make it look like they do!

Getting the right part as quickly as possible can be the difference between a satisfied client and losing their business forever. Parts Direct, along with its unique parts identification system, can be combined with the Parts Arena service to ensure that installers are always on top when it comes to parts. www.partscenter.co.uk

Technology company aims to reduce heating bills

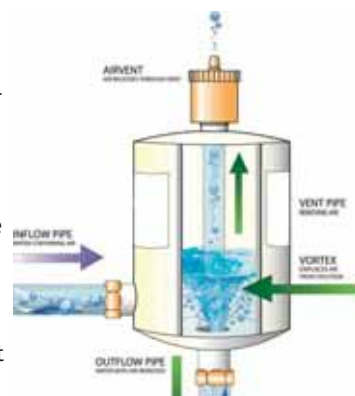
An energy management solutions innovator claims to have revolutionised the heating industry with a new product that removes entrained air and dissolved oxygen from within heating systems.

Launched by S.O.R Technologies, the Vortex Energy Saver is said to represent a new era of efficiency for home owners, heating traders and those living below the fuel poverty line. It is compatible with all types of wet heating systems, including oil-fired boilers.

"Using next generation technology, the Vortex Energy Saver actively removes entrained air and dissolved oxygen from heating systems, leaving a content ratio of just around 0.2 parts per million," says the company. "Once installed, the product has been shown to induce typical heating cost savings of up to 30%, with a recent Coventry University trial elevating the figure to a staggering 35%."

After several years of extensive independent testing and trials S.O.R Technologies is now engaged in talks with housing associations and sheltered schemes. The goal is to use the Vortex Energy Saver to combat fuel poverty across the UK. Recommended retail price of the product is around £500 including installation and VAT.

Jonathan Stross, founder of S.O.R Technologies, says: "We are delighted that we have now exceeded the 30% savings mark which has always been our hope. We now look forward to rolling this out on a large scale to help more people save money on their heating bills." www.vortexenergysaver.com



The Vortex Energy Saver from S.O.R Technologies

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Wall hung oil-fired boilers from Grant

With eight models, available in internal and external variants, the Grant Vortex wall hung oil condensing boiler offers high efficiency heating when space is at a premium.

All models have heating outputs ranging from 12-21kW, an ErP energy rating of A, and are endorsed by the Energy Saving Trust.

As one of the few manufacturers of wall hung oil boilers in the UK, Grant supplies both sealed system and open-vented system variants. The boilers are pre-plumbed and encompass Grant's patented Vortex stainless steel heat exchanger and turbulator baffle system.

The sealed system versions include a factory fitted expansion vessel, filling loop, automatic air vent, pressure relief valve and high efficiency circulating pump.

Vortex internal wall hung boilers require a separate flue kit and are compatible with all Grant EZ-Fit low level, high level and vertical flue systems. Meanwhile, the external models come complete with a factory fitted flue, high quality external powder coated finish, built-in boiler frost protection, mains isolating switch and a test switch.

www.grantuk.com



The Grant Vortex Eco wall hung internal oil-fired boiler

Mobile-friendly website from Worcester

Worcester, Bosch Group, has launched a new mobile-friendly website, which has been developed to provide installers with a host of useful tools and resources, including its very own ErP label generator.

The new website provides installers with a free, simple-to-use online tool to assist with the production of an energy efficiency label for heating systems comprising multiple products. Using the new tool, installers simply need to either select the Worcester products being fitted, or input the performance data of other manufacturers' products, to produce a label which can be saved, printed, or emailed to their customer.

In addition to the ErP label generator, the new website has also been optimised for smartphone use as a resource for all product details, technical assistance, and contact information.

Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, commented: "With our website generating millions of hits every year, we recognised the need to develop a new website which is capable of being an invaluable tool for installers and their customers on a daily basis. Our new ErP label generator is typical of a wider catalogue of useful resources which can be used just as well on-the-go as they can from the office.

"While research tells us that a growing number of installers are visiting our website on their smartphones at various points during the working day, there is also demand amongst their customers for simple troubleshooting advice, which may prove invaluable should they encounter any performance issues with their heating and hot water."

Worcester's new website can be accessed at:

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Universal Filter Pack from SOS

More than 20,000 Universal Filter Packs have been sold since the product was developed by Shropshire-based Specific Oil Solutions. The latest version of the pack has recently been launched by the company and has already been taken into stock by Wolseley's national distribution centre.

The original product was developed as a "one kit fits all" fuel filter pack to enable technicians to service the wide range of fuel filter units which incorporate a nylon filter element.

The pack gives technicians the confidence to know that whichever version they encounter, they have every possible seal/joint to reassemble it professionally and safely. Every combined filter and isolation valve unit used by plastic fuel tank manufacturers is supplied as an aftermarket replacement.

The product is packaged on skin-card for easy identification when on display at the spares stockist. It contains one nylon element; two rubber cork mixed



material washers; two brass washers; four "o ring" seals; five rubber seals; one bottom bolt seal; and one write-on weatherproof label to advise date of service.

Amongst other stockists, the Universal Filter Pack is available via OFTEC Direct, and Specific Oil Solutions is inviting enquiries from heating spares stockists, fuel oil distributors, and tank installers/distributors.

Specific Oil Solutions 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.

stuartbratt58@icloud.com

– See advert on page 22

Danfoss nozzles "out-perform the rest"

In a recent test, carried out at the TUV Rheinland independent inspection, testing and certification facilities in Germany, it was found that Danfoss nozzles out-performed their competitors in all aspects of product quality and reliability, reports the company.

In the tests, which involved the six most popular brands, Danfoss was found to have the least deviation when it came to flow rate values. Danfoss also came out on top for spray distribution when none of its nozzles failed the tests.

For three of the six most common brands, 40-62% of the tested nozzles failed to meet the DIN EN 293 norm. Two of the remaining three brands failed in 20-31% of cases.

Mark McElroy, manager at Danfoss Burner Components, commented: "We have always worked hard and prided ourselves on the high quality and reliability of the products we manufacture, so even though it was not a surprise to me that we did come out as the best nozzle, we are still very happy with the findings."

A full report can be found at www.burner.danfoss.com

BES launches new mail order catalogue

BES Ltd, the mail order specialist within the plumbing and heating supply industry, has launched its latest catalogue.

John Quigley, marketing manager for BES, comments: "The launch of our new catalogue is always very exciting. This year is even more special as it marks 40 years of delivering expert service, something we are very proud of. Customer feedback is important to BES and so we have further improved our depth and breadth of products. If you need plumbing, heating and gas supplies, we've got it!"

BES pride themselves on rapid selection and dispatch, with over 15,000 product lines available for next delivery day to plumbing and heating engineers from their 77,000 square feet warehouse in Birmingham.

Telephone 0800 80 10 90 or visit www.bes.co.uk



HWOS competition winner

Heating World of Spares has announced the winner of their recent competition to win an EOGB X400 oil burner.

Entrants were asked to submit photographs showing the latest HWOS catalogue in unusual and interesting places. Winner was Mr Davies from Devon for his picture at the controls of the brand-new RNLI Shannon class lifeboat in Ilfracombe. Mr. Davies normally carries out mechanical work on the lifeboat but took the opportunity to grab the helm and snap his picture after some training exercises!

Six runners up will each receive a Kidde 10-year sealed CO alarm. www.hwos.co.uk



Elmhurst launches energy efficiency calculator software

Elmhurst Energy, a specialist energy performance rating organisation, has launched Green Check, a lead-generating 'plug-in' for websites which is aimed at installers of energy efficiency measures.

Green Check provides a methodology for calculating energy efficiency based on a simple set of questions. It can add value to the customer's experience on a website by demonstrating potential savings provided by specific energy efficiency improvements. These could include boiler replacements, cavity or solid wall insulation, replacement windows and loft insulation.

"Green Check puts consumers in the driving seat so that they can discover the potential savings for themselves in a way that they can trust," explains Stephen O'Hara, managing director of Elmhurst Energy. "Because it's embedded on your site, you can also customise the questions asked, as well as branding to fit with your corporate guidelines." www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

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Courting efficiency

A popular Somerset venue for weddings, wine tasting and events, Aldwick Court Farm is now equipped with an Eco Angus Orlan Super 130kW log gasification boiler, a 10,000 litre Akvarterm accumulator tank and a NOVA stainless steel flue.

Installed by Blake Ecotec, the boiler's 130kW heat output and large loading capacity means it is capable of burning logs with moisture content of 15-20%, up to 100cm in length. It works at 91%

efficiency and can burn for up to 12 hours continuously.

Compliant with the non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive, Aldwick Farm will receive government payments of 8.8p per kWh of heat generated over a 20-year period, a total of approximately £403,900.

The system will deliver fuel cost savings of £258,636 and the site's carbon footprint will be reduced by 36 tonnes of CO₂ per year, a 90% reduction.



Equipped with an environmentally friendly solution capable of providing heating and hot water to the whole site including farmhouse, visitor centre, function and event rooms, offices and a flat

Industry fears government solar FiT cuts

Pressure is mounting on the government to rethink plans to virtually eliminate the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) for solar PV amid fears of a dramatic collapse in demand.

An eight week consultation period ended as *Oil Installer* went to press, and if applied, the changes will see the FiT rate slashed by 87% from January 1st, and possibly scrapped completely if a budget cap for the scheme is reached.

Opposition has been widespread with politicians, business leaders and the industry itself stressing that the cut from 12.9p/kWh to 1.63p/kWh is too large and too soon when solar is close to gaining grid parity and becoming subsidy free.

A petition on the UK parliament website had attracted around 27,000 signatures at the time of going to press, and a joint campaign from RenewableUK and the Solar Trade Association is calling on the general public to show support for solar via social media and by writing to their local MPs.

The government's own impact assessment acknowledges that domestic demand for solar panels could fall by as much as 6GW of installed capacity, jeopardising 20,000 jobs and millions of pounds of investment in the sector.

Enthusiasm waning

Julia Evans, chief executive of the Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA), commented: "Ministers slashing these subsidies for solar panels is yet another sign that the government's enthusiasm for green energy is waning. If implemented, such a step would remove virtually all incentive for home owners to install the panels and could mean the end of Britain's solar power boom.

"The government is giving me little confidence that it is taking the carbon reduction agenda seriously."

Dr Doug Parr, Greenpeace policy director, agrees: "The timing couldn't be worse as the young and potentially booming solar industry is on track to go subsidy free, but if these cuts happen, it will be too sudden, too soon and too dramatic. It is highly likely to irrevocably damage the domestic solar industry."

Juliet Davenport, chief executive of Good Energy – one of the largest Feed-in Tariff administrators in the country – said: "The proposed cuts mean that installing solar panels at home will no longer be attractive to British families.

"The Feed-in Tariff has transformed the way the UK generates its power over the last 3 years, with over 22% of the UK's power coming from renewables in the early part of 2015. It's helped to take us away from the old-fashioned fossil fuel companies to a cleaner, local, more democratic system."

Short sighted

Ged Rowbottom, director of Lancashire-based Solarlec, agrees that slashing the cash-back incentive for homeowners is "extremely disappointing" and "short sighted".

He says that with such clear benefits, it is not surprising that Britain's domestic solar panel market has boomed in recent



Cutting the FiT by almost 90% will certainly have a negative impact on the solar power industry, says Ged Rowbottom, director of Lancashire-based Solarlec

years, with an estimated 640,000 homes now having panels installed. But that boom meant the cost of providing the FiT – now estimated at more than £800m per year – has been much higher than the government first anticipated.

"We knew the Feed-in Tariff was under review but no-one in the industry expected a cut of almost 90%, or that it could be scrapped altogether as early as next year," he said.

"If this goes ahead it will certainly have a negative impact on the solar power industry, which employs an estimated 340,000 people across the UK, and on the move away from non-sustainable fossil fuel energy supplies.

"People will still fit solar panels because of the big savings on their energy bills – especially as energy costs continue to rise while the cost of installing a good quality solar panel system is coming down. But removing the Feed-in Tariff incentive will put the brakes on what has been a growth industry." www.solarlec.com

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CASE STUDY:

Biomass conversion leads to major savings for rural homeowner

Launched in April 2014, the government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme for the domestic market has proved to be a big success for homeowner David Taylor who lives in rural Northamptonshire.

Mr Taylor's 300-year-old four-bedroom cottage was previously heated by an oil fired boiler. He and his wife decided to upgrade and convert to a biomass boiler, supplied and installed by MCS registered and Windhager trained installers, Plumb-Line Plumbing and Heating from Northampton.

The equipment installed centred around a Windhager BioWIN2 26kW wood pellet boiler and now provides all the heating and hot water for the property.

"We were thrilled to receive our first quarterly RHI payment following the installation of our new biomass boiler," says David Taylor. "The conversion to a biomass boiler was quick and easy and Plumb-Line made the whole process incredibly simple for us.

"Our annual pellet consumption we

estimate will be between six and seven tonnes, costing approximately £1550 per annum – giving an additional saving on fuel as well as receiving the quarterly RHI payments for the next seven years," added Mr Taylor. His annual RHI payment is £6,780.

The Windhager BioWIN2 range of pellet boilers are compact, durable and low maintenance. Equipped with a high quality stainless steel burner, "low-dust" technology and a unique self-cleaning function, the boilers provide long-term, hassle-free comfortable heating to the homeowner, says the manufacturer.

"The main driver in our decision to install a Windhager boiler was the high efficiency and high quality of their boilers. I always look for quality and reliability and that's what we have with the Windhager pellet boiler, coupled with the great service and advice we received from Plumb-Line," concludes Mr Taylor.

www.windhager.co.uk



David Taylor's 300-year-old cottage in rural Northamptonshire



The new Windhager BioWIN2 26kW boiler in David Taylor's cottage

Kensa project wins community heating accolade



Chris Davis, Kensa commercial director, at the Heating & Renewables Awards

An ambitious project delivered by Kensa Heat Pumps and Trent & Dove Housing, aimed at tackling fuel poverty in 133 rural sheltered housing bungalows in Staffordshire, has been awarded 'Community Heating Project of the Year' at

the Heating & Renewables Awards 2015.

The culmination of an intense three months' work, the award winning project featured the replacement of night storage heaters with ground source heat pumps and new wet radiator systems in 133 bungalows

over 15 separate sites.

Tenants are already seeing energy bills reduced by as much as 50%, whilst Trent & Dove Housing has reported that tenant health and well-being has also improved. Kensa calculates that tenant electricity costs will be reduced by a total of over £50,000 per year, at an average of £390 per resident. The average electrical energy consumption of each property is expected to drop by 75%, producing an annual saving of 2.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂).

Chris Davis, Kensa commercial director, said: "We are delighted that this ground breaking project has been recognised by the wider heating and renewables community as an exemplar of what can be done at scale in the social housing sector.

"Mitigating rural fuel poverty and reducing excess winter deaths remains a key priority for Trent & Dove, so it is rewarding that the combination of ground source heat pumps, the RHI and ECO can work together in this way to make a real difference to real people's lives." www.kensaheatpumps.com

Link up systems for “greater flexibility”

With oil prices low, there are many reasons why both oil users and installers are keen to retain the security, reliability and value that oil heating offers. Technicians know that oil is a reliable fuel that contains a great deal of heat energy per unit volume. It is stable under a range of environmental conditions and the cost per unit is extremely competitive.

However, many homeowners are attracted by the additional flexibility offered by combining oil alongside wood burning stoves, solar thermal systems, heat pumps and other renewable technologies.

Accepting that the upfront cost of combining heating technologies can be expensive, there are many benefits from a well-designed and used link-up system.

The main benefit is the flexibility that systems of this type can offer. For example, linking a wood burning stove to an existing oil heating system can be useful on cooler spring and autumn evenings, as it may avoid the need to run the boiler.

Optimum performance

Link-up systems can be achieved in a number of different ways. The decision about which technologies are the most suitable, and the design of the system and its controls, will depend on property type, customer preferences and the technologies being linked. Consultation with equipment manufacturers at the

design stage is usually essential to ensure that the conditions placed upon the linked technologies is satisfactory for optimum performance.

Priority controls

At the heart of any link system will be a means of connecting hydraulic circuits and controlling the technologies. This often involves the use of a buffer tank or thermal store. Controls exist that will prioritise which technology leads in the production of heat and these can be programmed depending on whether the user wishes to prioritise fuel cost saving, carbon intensity, or operational performance criteria.

For users to benefit from lower energy bills and RHI payments, if applicable, the renewable technology should be used most of the time and must be metered. When heat demand increases, the oil boiler will come in to assist with the production of heat or even take over the entire demand.

A key point when considering a link-up system is that it's not just about producing

heat. With renewable technologies in particular, consideration also needs to be given to reducing heat demand and retaining the heat generated.

Customer expectations

It is important that installers help to manage customer expectations. Many older properties are likely to need measures to reduce heat loss through the installation of high quality insulation and double glazing if efficient performance from renewable technologies is to be achieved.

In situations where this can be achieved, the intelligent use of renewable technologies, linked-up with a modern condensing oil boiler to assist with periods of high heat demand, can be the ultimate year-round system solution for users keen to maximise flexibility while ensuring they have an efficient, comfortable and greener home.

Video shows energy rating success

A new video from Mitsubishi Electric shows how the company took its Hertfordshire head office from an 'E' to a 'B' energy rating and offers advice on how other companies can do the same.

“We've been on an eight year journey and one of the things we are saying in this video is that any business could and should be planning to improve the performance of their building,” explains Russell Jones who hosts the video.

“Just like any other company we have had to make a strong business case for each new piece of equipment, but the fact that we have improved so much and have significantly reduced running costs shows the advantages that can be gained.”

The video can be viewed on the company's dedicated YouTube channel: <https://youtube.com/mitsubishielectric2>

Extra benefits for HETAS registrants

Heating and plumbing professionals with a HETAS accreditation now have the opportunity to gain a second endorsement from Which? Trusted Traders.

Earlier this year, HETAS – the official body for approving heating appliances, fuels and services – established a partnership with Which? Trusted Traders to give HETAS registered installers the benefit of dual endorsement. A number of businesses have already taken advantage of the partnership and HETAS has now arranged a special offer which gives those that are yet to sign up 50% off their first year. The offer is available until the 31st December 2015.

The collaboration highlights the aim to promote reputable traders in the biomass and solid fuel heating industry to consumers.

Registrants who choose to sign up to the scheme will not only benefit from an assessment by Which? Trusted Traders but also gain a company profile on the whichtraders.co.uk website, designed to enhance the opportunity for online enquiries. Registrants are also able to use the 'Which? Trusted Traders' logo on their vehicles, websites and business cards. www.hetas.co.uk/which-trusted-traders

Elmhurst Energy outlines efficiency solutions post-Green Deal

When the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced that the funding for the Green Deal Finance Company was to stop, many commentators described it as being the end of a 'green deal'. Martyn Reed, operations director for Elmhurst Energy, offers an alternative view...

There has been much written on the demise of the Green Deal. So much so that you could believe that the energy efficiency industry has been completely wiped out. This is simply not the case, but in the post-Green Deal world it's important we remain positive about the need to improve energy efficiency across the UK housing stock and propose practical, positive solutions to get things back on track.

Sadly, by making the announcements on the closure of Green Deal with no fallback plan to speak of, DECC's decision jeopardised a number of other government initiatives, all of which refer directly to Green Deal. These include ECO, the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Minimum Rentals Standards, that will start to apply in 2016. This means that a replacement solution is needed quickly.

We believe that much of that solution already exists, in the form of 5,000 plus accredited energy assessors. Therefore, Elmhurst Energy has a straightforward seven-point plan that it believes will make a success of a Pay-As-You-Save model;

1) Make full use of the existing Energy Performance Certificate (EPC): RdSAP and the resultant EPC are proven methods of assessing the appropriateness of making improvements.

2) Simplify the occupancy assessment: The concept of an occupancy assessment, i.e. tailoring the EPC to one which more closely reflects the lifestyle of the current occupant is valuable in calculating cost

benefit. Previously, the mistake was making it too complex with too much information required, much of which was too personal. We believe you can get adequate accuracy by asking four or five questions about the occupancy (age, profile, hours of occupation and so on) which are both appropriate to ask and easy to answer.

3) Offer advice and an occupancy assessment without commitment:

Householders should be offered the opportunity to undergo an occupancy assessment and receive advice on energy assessment. If they agree, then that could be funded, either by paying a supplement on top of the EPC or by allowing the lead to be passed to a supplier, who will pay for the assessor time. The energy assessor should be encouraged to provide advice and guidance on matters of energy efficiency. Such advice could range from installation of a particular measure, suggested suppliers and behavioral advice to make best use of the technology.

4) Simplify funding opportunities: The distinction between funds for those that can pay and those that are fuel poor should be removed. Funding, whether that be from ECO, Green Deal (or the extra VAT that will be collected when the rate reverts back to 20%), should be pooled and allocated on an 'as deserved' basis with those that are in most need, and have least ability to pay, getting 100% subsidy (as they do with ECO). Those with less to gain and/or an ability to pay get small incentive whilst those



Martyn Reed, operations director for Elmhurst Energy

least needing improvement, get nothing.

5) Offer incentives: Incentivise improvement, as was done for low emissions cars, by reducing the council tax charge for high rated properties. For instance: energy rating A – 20% discount; B – 15%; C -10%; D – 5%; E,F,G – 0%.

6) Keep out of finance: Involving energy assessors in funding created confusion, complexity and bureaucracy. If incentives and subsidies are set at the right level installers, private funding and private finance will find the rest.

7) Keep it simple and remove bureaucracy around installation: For consumers who receive no funding allowance, allow a post install EPC as sufficient to demonstrate that a measure has been installed. For consumers in receipt of subsidy, the installer must be PAS 2030 approved and the subsidy paid on receipt of a pre and post

install EPC and a certificate of completion from the installer. To safeguard the unknowing, all products would be industry recognised and independently certified by one of a number of routes including certification by a UKAS approved certification body.

Elmhurst Energy, through its position on the Green Deal Advisory Group and through the chairmanship of the Property and Energy Performance Association (PEPA), were involved in the latter days of the Green Deal and attempted to support its positive aspects, while identifying its weaknesses – all with the intention of proposing fixes.

Remaining positive and with the confidence that increasing the energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock is simply the right thing to do, we will be proposing this seven-point strategy at every opportunity and putting it forward to DECC and other key stakeholders. www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

Strictly candid camera...

Once again we are featuring happy and not-so-happy photographs on this edition's Gallery page. Whatever category your photographs fall into, keep them coming so that we can share them with our readers! Send them to: jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Tripping the light fantastic and showing everyone else exactly how it should be done on the dance floor, following a Grant UK press reception in the Republic of Ireland, are Anna "Strictly wannabe" Wakefield, marketing manager of Grant UK, and Terry "twinkle toes" Smith, long-time managing editor of Professional Builder magazine. Sorry you two... there are Oil Installer spies wherever you go!



Send your photographs to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



David Quinlan, proprietor of his own plumbing and heating services business in West Cork, Ireland, entitled this photograph as "A fire waiting to happen." David came across this configuration on a routine visit to a house to repair a leaking shower and spotted the tank outside the window. He had to have a look! He was told by the homeowner that the boiler had been fitted by a qualified plumber. "Strong evidence that Ireland needs a competent persons scheme!" says David who specialises in new boiler installations and heating upgrades.

David Cudbertson of Yorkshire Oil Heating was called out to a boiler breakdown recently – and soon discovered why... The boiler had not been serviced for eight years! To call it choked with filth would be an understatement! David was surprised that it had carried on working for so long!



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