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Spring 2015 Volume 9 No 1

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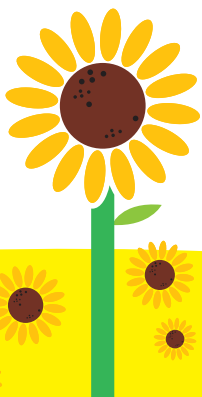
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Oil price drop – encouraging investment in modern heating systems



The big story this winter has been the dramatic drop in the price of heating oil. We believe this will keep people on oil heating and encourage them to install modern condensing boilers.

The average UK kerosene price in December 2014 was just 43.22 pence per litre which was 23 % less than the price a year earlier. The reason is the fall in the price of crude oil which is now under \$50/barrel compared to over \$115/barrel last summer. But

the most encouraging news is that oil company forecasts suggest that the crude oil price will stay below \$60/barrel for two years or more. Our latest thinking on future costs are on P4.

Oil users now have average bills (for a three bedroom home with a condensing oil boiler) of around £1,000 p.a. for space heating and hot water. This is less than the price of mains gas, and a massive 47 % less expensive than LPG. Even renewable heating, like wood pellet boilers and air source heat pumps with radiators, is more expensive for home heating than oil. Please remind your customers of this when they are considering a new boiler or alternative heat technologies!

September 2015 sees the introduction of the “eco-label” which the installer legally has to apply whenever a new piece of heating equipment is installed. This installer label is additional to the manufacturer’s label which will also be on the appliance. The eco-label will show the system efficiency at the time of commissioning. At OFTEC we are designing on-line calculators that you can use to work out the numbers to be applied to the eco-label. Also we will be running early evening seminars from April to explain how the label is to be completed. These seminars will also give updates on the revisions to the British Standard 5410 which have recently come into effect and have meant a large number of changes to the OFTEC technical books.

Please book into one of these seminars (details are on P8) and we will contact you about them in March. We have made available packs of updates to all the technical books and these can be purchased through OFTEC Direct (www.oftecdirect.org.uk).

Finally, we would urge you to consider training and registering with us for other scopes, especially the Part P (electrical); renewable technologies such as air source heat pumps and solar thermal panels – with or without MCS accreditation.

Jeremy Hawksley
Director general
OFTEC



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Oil price hits four year low – but what does the future hold?

It's great to start the New Year with some good news about oil prices. The tumbling price of kerosene hit a four year low at the end of 2014, with a leading industry analyst reporting that the average UK price in December was around 43p per litre (ppl). And it gets even better because, at the time of writing, the price is still falling

In October OFTEC calculated that a price of below 50ppl would make oil heating cheaper than mains gas, so oil users have good reason to celebrate. Annual heating costs for a typical three bedroomed semi using oil have fallen by £150 and are now down to around £1,000, compared to £1,124 for mains gas. The spectacular price fall means that oil is currently the best heating option for the majority of households off mains gas. In fact it is likely to be the cheapest major fuel for *any* user.

This is important because, although the economy is improving, fuel prices will continue to be the major driving factor for most consumers. So the current heating oil price means there is every reason for those installing, servicing or using oil heating to feel positive. But how long will the low prices last?

Unpredictable...

Forecasting the future price of heating oil has always been difficult as the price is strongly affected by the global crude oil price, which is itself unpredictable. For example, there were few warnings in the first half of the year that the price of crude oil was set to plunge by over 50% from a June high of \$115. Analysis done separately in 2014 by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and OFTEC had predicted that the price would begin to fall. However, that

research has been overtaken by what actually happened.

The global crude oil price is governed by a large number of factors but the recent fall is due to two: a considerable increase in global oil production, particularly from the USA, and a fall in global oil demand.

Politics is also a factor and the extreme fall in price can be seen as an attempt to drive some of the less cost-effective oil producers out of business. If this were to happen it could reduce supply and may eventually help to push prices back up as the world economy recovers. How long this will take is impossible to predict, but it could be some years before oil is back to the old \$115 a barrel level. The current best prediction is that, although prices may partially recover to around \$60 a barrel by 2016, crude oil is likely to stay relatively cheap for some time to come. This should keep kerosene prices pegged to well below the kind of levels we have grown used to paying.

OFTEC is hopeful that the present low oil price will persuade home owners to stick with their oil heating. It also hopes it will convince those with inefficient boilers and old oil tanks that it is worth replacing them. It is even possible that the low price may make users of other fuels, such as LPG and storage heaters, consider switching.

Think you're good enough? – then enter the Awards for Excellence!

OFTEC registration is all about high standards and, with the heating season in full swing, it's time to think about whether your work can cut it with the very best! If you think it can, why not enter the OFTEC Awards for Excellence?

Because OFTEC has added renewable scopes of registration, the awards for excellence will now include an installer of the year category for these technologies. As a result, OFTEC has decided to extend the time for entries, meaning that technicians have the whole of 2015 to enter the competition.

To stand a chance of winning, your entry needs to go beyond something that is merely a good, compliant installation or service. From installers OFTEC wants to see examples of innovation, of work that meets the most difficult or demanding requirements, and where your customer service has really gone the extra mile. For servicing and commissioning entrants, it will also be thoroughness, attention to detail and customer service that counts.

Over the years OFTEC has seen some outstanding work and we expect the 2016 awards to attract similar high standards. So if you think you've got what it takes, why not give it a shot?

Entries will be considered for work carried out between March 2014 and December 2015 – so you've got plenty of time to enter. But if you're doing good work now, why wait? You'll find an entry form on the OFTEC website, or contact OFTEC's marketing team, at marketing@oftec.org who will be happy to send you a form.



Anti-oil marketing reveals Calor's desperation

Many of you will have noticed Calor's recent high profile marketing campaign which promotes LPG at the expense of oil heating, writes Jeremy Hawksley, director general, OFTEC

While imaginative, it's fair to say that the campaign has plumbed (sorry!) the depths in its attempts to showcase Calor's alleged advantages. For example, they have cynically used OFTEC's own advice on avoiding oil theft to stoke up consumers' fear of crime, and claimed, incorrectly, that the only way to bury a fuel tank underground is to opt for LPG.

Other claims have come close to breaching the advertising standards code and OFTEC will continue to monitor their output carefully. In 2014 we twice took action over what we felt were unfair, inaccurate or misleading claims, and we

have previously been successful in getting adverts by Calor removed in Ireland.

Of course you'll have also noticed that one thing is conspicuously absent from their marketing assault on oil – any mention of price! Needless to say, here oil trumps LPG completely and, even before the recent price falls, OFTEC had been highly successful in pointing this out in the media. Oil also rates highly with consumers because they can buy when the price is low, from whoever offers the best price, and without being tied in to long contracts – unlike LPG.

LPG has a much smaller share of the off-gas grid market than oil and Calor's

aggressive stance can be seen as a rather desperate, and very expensive, attempt to retain market share. OFTEC believes that, with the oil price at a four year low, oil heating users are very unlikely to switch to LPG. However, we recommend that if you receive any queries, that you highlight the advantages of oil and refer them to the Oilsave website (www.oilsave.org.uk) where they'll find advice and information to help them make informed choices about their heating – and discover just how expensive LPG actually is!

Small acorns...

Andrew Townsend, senior consultant at energy and environment consultants, A.F.T. Energy, looks at the effect of lower energy prices on the drive for energy efficiency

Frankly, if someone had said last January that we'd be looking at the cost of energy and transport fuel being halved by the end of the year, they'd have been laughed out of the business, but here we are...

When energy prices rocketed at the beginning of last year and there were seemingly daily increases, home owners, businesses and developers were actively looking to reduce their energy consumption. As energy prices started to decrease, many at first thought that this was just a hiccup...

What are the challenges for us all in 2015?

Analysts do seem to be predicting that energy prices will continue to fall, but weren't they the same ones saying that prices could only rise last year?

Twelve months ago, the expectations, incentives for and aspirations of customers were very different. When selling a replacement energy saving

appliance or the installation of insulation or triple glazing, it was quick and easy to show the energy saving and money that would be saved once installed. But as energy costs continued to drop, modelling and predictions went out of the window.

Late last year, I was advising on a development project where two developers were building similar style 2/3 bed properties on an adjacent plot. I was working with a developer who had chosen to install energy saving measures whilst the other was just building to regulations.

All was going well – until valuers and banks stepped in. Having been valued at the same price, where was the incentive for my developer to invest in a building compliant with the government's 2020 targets if there was to be no financial return? Sadly both developers are now building almost the same bog standard buildings.

So how can we incentivise our customers to save energy?

I find that customers do still want to save energy and there are many schemes out there to help fund improvements.

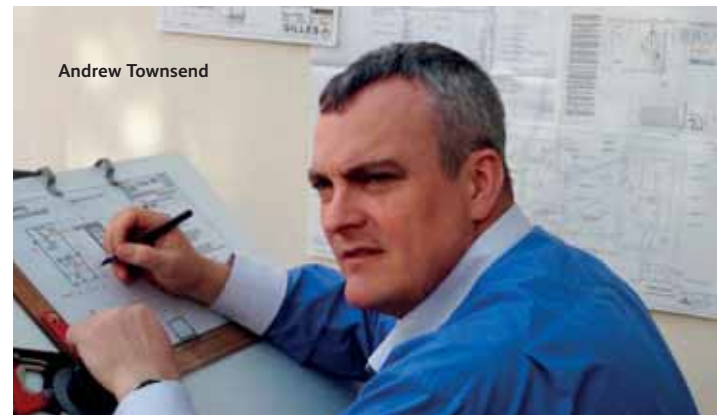
But, when a group of people get together they will talk of holidays, cars and sport – never of the reductions made to their energy bills or the brilliance of their new insulation. And you definitely never hear the words look at my tiny carbon foot print.

Perhaps we should be pushing the more aspirational aspects of energy efficiency. Like smoking, it should be socially unacceptable for any home not

to have at least energy saving light bulbs and double glazing.

I recently helped sixth formers from a local school do an environmental study. Using my thermal imaging camera, they were shocked and appalled at how many buildings pour out energy into the environment – and the worst performer of all was their school!

The head assured me that they were now running around turning lights off and closing doors. We can only hope that from small acorns, giant oaks will eventually grow...



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Spring seminar programme for technicians

This year OFTEC is holding a programme of local seminar events for technicians, designed to offer registrants the opportunity to meet their regional inspectors together with members of the OFTEC technical team.

At the seminars, information about the Energy-related Products Directive (ErPD) – which will soon have a big impact on the heating industry – and the recent changes to BS 5410-1 2014, will also be available. Technicians can also discuss any other issues at the informal drop-in events, which will count towards their CPD. A small number of manufacturers are also likely to exhibit at the events.

The free-to-attend seminars will typically run from 4pm–8pm and refreshments will be available. The programme will begin in the spring and the plan is to visit many of the most popular oil heating areas, with the aim of giving as many technicians as possible the chance to attend.

Dates and locations were being prepared as *Oil Installer* went to print, so please visit the events section of OFTEC's website for details, or contact OFTEC's marketing team on [0845 65 85 080](tel:08456585080) or [01473 626298](tel:01473626298).

ErPD – What the installer needs to know - See page 15

What will your vote mean for the heating industry?

Try as we might, it is impossible to avoid coverage of the forthcoming general election in the UK. But while the political debate focuses on the familiar battlegrounds of the economy, education and the health service, it is worth taking a moment to think how the heating industry might be affected.

The record of the present coalition administration on domestic heating has been mixed. A controversial element of their approach has been to separate their headline policy to reduce carbon emissions, the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), from schemes aimed at improving energy efficiency, such as the Energy Company Obligation, Green Deal and Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (GDHIF).

The policy split has led to some unfortunate outcomes, such as the exclusion of oil boilers from the GDHIF scheme while gas boilers were included. In general, their policies overall have been bad for the oil heating industry. Green Deal, which included oil boilers as a measure, has failed miserably, while the domestic RHI is designed specifically to encourage homeowners away from oil to renewable heating. Although how successful it will be remains to be seen...

As we went to press, policy detail from the governing parties was sketchy at best. The Liberal Democrats have pledged to

deliver a Heating and Energy Efficiency Bill, which will build on the Green Deal with a new national programme to raise the energy efficiency standards for all Britain's households. They claim they will also legislate to boost renewable and district heating programmes and heat saving standards. Their plans include creating 200,000 new 'green' jobs. At the time of writing, the Conservatives had yet to publish their proposals.

By contrast, Labour published a 'green paper' last summer and then engaged in consultation with industry and a range of stakeholders, including OFTEC, ahead of their final policy announcement. Their proposals included making at least 5 million of the coldest homes more energy efficient over 10 years, with 'whole house' energy efficiency retrofits. Labour also appears to understand that rural homeowners have so far been let down by government in terms of help to address fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

OFTEC's view...

OFTEC supports the principle of carbon reduction and is 100% committed to supporting energy efficiency. However, rather than seeing oil heating as the enemy, OFTEC would like to see policy makers recognise the potential that exists to work



with our industry. After all, replacing an old, inefficient boiler with a new condensing model, and converting them to bio-liquids, will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as saving money for the homeowner.

OFTEC would also like to see less bureaucracy, which acts as a barrier to both consumers and technicians, and a recognition that simple, low cost interventions – such as a boiler scrappage scheme – could be more effective options, as these are easier for consumers to opt into.

OFTEC believes that registered technicians could play a major role in promoting the drive to eradicate cold homes by providing advice and helping to identify potential applicants. This would enable resources to be targeted at those who need them most, such as the elderly and fuel poor. Local installers are also best placed to do the work and, as competent people, they already have the skills required.

OFTEC has joined forces with FPS and written to all candidates standing in the next election, explaining our thinking and encouraging them to support our proposals.



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If you're fed up with non-registered installers, it's time to take action!

The OFTEC symbol is widely recognised and respected by homeowners, so technicians who pretend to be OFTEC registered are a major problem. Not only do they win business by falsely claiming to have undertaken the training and assessment that sets OFTEC registrants apart, but there is a much greater risk of them carrying out non-compliant work, damaging the reputation of OFTEC and the industry as a whole.

OFTEC is very keen to hear from you if you suspect someone of falsely claiming to be OFTEC registered.

Although OFTEC receives complaints of this kind regularly, it is quite likely that this sort of misrepresentation frequently goes unreported. While it can sometimes be due to an innocent mistake – perhaps because the installer forgot to renew their registration – often the intention to deceive the homeowner is quite deliberate.

Technicians work hard to achieve registration, so please help us to crack down on those who try to beat the system. Contact OFTEC's compliance manager, Adrian Wink on 0845 65 85 080, 01473 626298 or email awink@oftec.org. OFTEC is highly successful at resolving these cases so it's well worth getting in touch.

While misrepresentation is bad enough, sub-standard work is an even bigger concern for OFTEC and registered technicians alike. To help address this problem OFTEC has set up a reporting system to enable registered technicians to report their concerns. For example you could write to us about a non-registered installer who installs but is not authorised to do so under a building notice, or about a person not competent to work on heating equipment who has left an unsafe situation.

OFTEC is not able to take enforcement action itself. However, we will take whatever action we can to get your concerns addressed. This could be by involving local authority building control, regional trading standards, or contacting those being affected directly. We cannot promise to resolve all your concerns, but we will make every effort to encourage those who can take enforcement action to do so. We also promise to give you regular feedback on our progress.

To submit a report, log on to the technician area of the OFTEC website and look for the link to 'report poor or unsafe work by a non-registered technician'.



Awards to feature Oil Installer of the Year

Entries are now being invited for the 2015 Heating & Renewable Awards – this year featuring several new award categories, including Oil Installer of the Year.

Following last autumn's successful ceremony at The Kensington Roof Gardens, all 13 categories have been retained, plus four which are new for 2015.

Previously known as The Energy Efficiency & Renewables Awards, the event will also be returning to its regular venue – The Ricoh Arena, Coventry – on the evening of 10th September, following The Heating & Renewables Roadshow's midlands exhibition.

Award categories for 2015 will include: The Contribution Award; Commercial Project; Residential New Build Project; Residential Retrofit Project; Heating & Renewables Innovation; Biomass Installer; High Efficiency Boiler Installer; Solar PV Installer; Solar Thermal Installer; Air Source Heat Pump; Ground Source Heat Pump; Commercial Installer; Heating & Renewables Installer; plus the four new categories – Apprentice of the Year; Oil Installer of the Year; Community Heating Project of the Year; and Training Initiative of the Year.

Paul Stephen of award organisers A&D Publishing, commented: "For the first time ever, we have incorporated a category dedicated to oil installers in order to recognise the important contribution they can make in reducing carbon emissions, and the considerable body of expertise and innovation which exists in this sector. We are hopeful that oil installers will put themselves forward as we celebrate best practice amongst all heating contractors." More information, including how to enter and sponsorship opportunities, are available at:

www.heatingandrenewablesroadshow.co.uk/awards



New spares boss for PTS and CPS

Plumbing Trade Supplies (PTS) and City Plumbing Supplies (CPS), which form the plumbing and heating division of the Travis Perkins Group, have appointed Stuart Hough as managing director of spares.

Previously a business markets director at British Gas, Stuart's new role will be to develop new services and products, and to ensure a high-level of customer service is maintained across the extensive network of both merchants.

Stuart commented: "As the group's plumbing and heating division is expanding rapidly, I'm looking forward to putting a number of new initiatives in action and evolving the product range further for both PTS and CPS customers." www.cityplumbing.co.uk





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Setting the pace for the future

– by OFTEC director general, Jeremy Hawksley

In line with the changing face of the domestic heating sector, OFTEC has strengthened and expanded its service offering to technicians, including a move into renewables, and with further developments planned for 2015.

Reassuringly, much of OFTEC's key services remain the same – primarily our highly regarded Competent Persons Scheme (CPS) which has become a recognised benchmark of professional standards.

OFTEC registration is proof of competence and by displaying the distinctive OFTEC logo, technicians can underline the quality of their work. This provides consumers with peace of mind that their heating system will be installed and maintained by someone who really knows what they are doing – a big plus with so many 'cowboys' out there.

Amongst the many other benefits of OFTEC registration, technicians can self-certify installations in accordance with building regulations in England, Wales, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, avoiding the time and expense of going through local authority building control.

We remain fully committed to supporting our technicians and OFTEC's expert staff can provide free technical advice via phone, fax or email. OFTEC also has a network of experienced regional inspectors who technicians can approach for help and guidance. Essential updates for technical books are provided via email.

With the business world becoming ever more competitive, OFTEC also offers technicians a range of consumer friendly marketing leaflets to promote their business, plus free listings on the OFTEC website (www.oftec.co.uk) and Competent Persons Forum websites.

We recognise costs are a key concern for any business and, in addition to offering discounts on equipment through OFTEC Direct, OFTEC registration also includes a free debt collection facility and discounts on other useful services such as business insurance.

And to keep up with the latest industry news and developments, registered technicians receive free copies of this magazine and OFTEC's monthly e-newsletter, as well as invitations to exclusive OFTEC events.

All this provides a compelling package of financial, technical and business benefits to help new and existing registered technicians stay ahead of the game and secure the future of their business.

Embracing renewables

With the latest figures showing that oil prices are at a four year low, oil looks set to remain one of the cheapest and most efficient ways to heat off-grid homes. Oil remains considerably cheaper than LPG, currently coming in around 47% less expensive.

While this undoubtedly points to a positive future for oil, we also recognise

the increasing role domestic renewable heat will play in the longer term.

To this end, OFTEC has introduced new classes of registration for solar thermal systems and heat pumps, with plans to extend this to cover biomass.

Installation businesses can now join OFTEC's combined Competent Persons Scheme and Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

By registering with these schemes, existing OFTEC technicians can add renewables to their oil heating businesses to expand customer reach, while installers already working in the renewables sector will benefit from the excellent value for money OFTEC renewable registration provides.

Registration costs are currently amongst the lowest on the market and for existing OFTEC registered technicians start at just £475 for one renewable scope of registration and £550 for two. This includes the MSC licence fee and free, expert technical support in renewables.

The oil heating industry undeniably faces challenges but by listening to the needs of technicians and adapting to change, OFTEC will remain at the forefront of the off gas grid heating sector for years to come.



Roadshow returns to showcase new technologies

The Heating and Renewables Roadshow is back for 2015. Visiting five strategically located venues across the UK, the roadshow will showcase some of the best and most innovative heating and low carbon technologies currently on the market, specifically for installers, specifiers and contractors.

The Roadshow has the support of a significant range of exhibitors and associations, with stand space almost 100 per cent confirmed.

"This is very much a show for the industry, bringing together a full spectrum of renewable and low carbon technologies under one roof in five different locations," says Paul Stephen of A&D Publishing, organisers of the Roadshow and publishers of several industry magazines, including Oil Installer.

"Each regional event will include a series of hands-on demonstrations for installers, bringing products and solutions to life in an engaging and informing manner," he adds. "We recognise

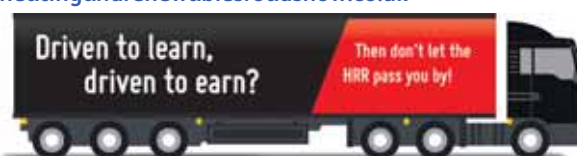
the importance of equipping our visitors with the necessary knowledge to help to increase profits and improve product specifications, so we are also presenting a comprehensive seminar programme at each venue."

The series of one-day events will visit:

- Coventry (Ricoh Arena), September 10th
- Exeter (Westpoint) September 15th
- Farnborough (FIVE) September 17th
- Edinburgh (Royal Highland Centre) September 22nd
- Manchester (Event City) September 24th

For further information visit:

www.heatingandrenewablesroadshow.co.uk



Oil – the number one choice for new homes in Ireland

A report commissioned by OFTEC shows that oil is still the first choice for new build homes in Ireland, achieving an ‘A’ rating standard when combined with PV or solar thermal energy provision.

2014 saw a much-needed boost to the construction industry and an increase in new building projects in both Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Despite new energy technologies, oil-fired heating systems remain first choice for new build homes in rural Ireland, as they provide a clean and affordable option (over 40% cheaper than LPG on annual basis*).

A recent study prepared by Dr Patrick Waterfield, a chartered engineer and independent energy consultant, proved that oil-fired heating systems can achieve an A-rating standard in new builds.

The report focused on a newly built, four bedroom, detached house with a timber frame, facing east. Heating and hot water was provided by a new oil condensing boiler feeding radiators and hot water cylinder (200 litre) with full zone control, 80mm foam insulation and background ventilators and intermittent extraction fans. Air permeability was 0.25 ach and thermal bridging Y value of 0.08. With the inclusion of east-facing photovoltaic panels, with a 4.8kWp specification, the house achieved an A-rating (92) in Northern Ireland and a notional A3 rating in the Republic.

Another option to achieve

compliance with Part F of the NI building regulations would be to incorporate a flat plate solar thermal collector instead of the PV panels. Compliance in the Republic cannot be achieved with solar thermal alone but requires the 6m² flat plate and 2.6kWp of PV panels. This combination gives a notional B1 (52.2) rating.

While OFTEC recognises that oil is a tried and tested means of heating homes and is still the first choice for more than one million homes across Ireland, the study proved that oil is a viable, cost effective way to provide the heating and hot water requirements for today’s

modern home.

“With oil costs down more than 40% on 2013** prices, a modern condensing boiler, linked to PV panels and/or solar thermal, has to be a viable option for anybody considering a new build home in Ireland today,” says David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager.

** Sutherland Tables Independent Fuel Costs October 2014: annual cost of space and water heating for 3 bed house using condensing oil appliance – £1,132; annual cost of space and water heating for 3 bed house using condensing LPG appliance – £1,988.*

***Oil price: 900 litres 21/02/13 – £587, compared to £340 – 08/01/15. Reduction = c.42% – Consumer Council Oil Price Archive.*

New guide helps older people to “Keep warm this winter”

OFTEC Ireland and Kathleen Lynch TD, minister of state with responsibility for older people, officially launched a free guide in January, offering key advice to help older people using oil home heating to stay safe and warm throughout the winter period.

Excess winter deaths are a major issue in Ireland, with older people particularly at risk. The guide, which is being distributed throughout Ireland, was created by OFTEC in conjunction with Age Action Ireland.

At the launch, Kathleen Lynch said: “With this winter predicted to be particularly harsh, it’s essential that older people know what they can do to keep their fuel bills low and stay warm and well over the winter months. I’m pleased to support this new guide that not only provides money saving tips, advice on energy efficiency and oil tank security, but also information on heating payments and schemes for the elderly. It also contains useful phone numbers and general guidance on staying warm.”

Age Action is distributing the guide through its network of branches and shops and copies can be requested, free of charge, by calling OFTEC on 01 864 5771. A digital copy is also available to download from both the OFTEC and Age Action Ireland websites.

David Blevings, Ireland manager of OFTEC, said: “We’re delighted to work with the minister and Age Action on this important project to support older people who use oil heating. Approximately half a million homes in Ireland use heating oil as their primary heating source so we feel it’s vital to provide older people with as much information as possible to help them save money and keep warm through the coldest part of the year.

“We want to help as many people as possible save money on oil and have made this information available online through our Oilsave website. However, we were very aware that this may not be reaching the most vulnerable group, older people, which is why we’ve worked with Age Action Ireland to produce the new printed guide.”

Robin Webster, chief executive of Age Action, added: “Many of the most vulnerable older people rely on oil heating to keep warm. We are pleased to be working with OFTEC to provide information specifically aimed at those who heat their homes via oil-fired central heating systems.”

www.oftec.org
www.oilsave.org
www.ageaction.ie



Hot off the press – Kathleen Lynch TD, minister for older people, launches OFTEC’s new oil heating guide to help older people ‘Keep warm this winter’, with Ellen Reddin and David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager

Tank Safe campaign aims to reduce domestic oil spills

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and OFTEC have joined forces to launch a campaign on oil tank safety awareness for Northern Ireland householders

The campaign, backed by Northern Ireland environment minister Mark H Durkan, aims to raise awareness of the importance of safe oil storage tank usage and maintenance setting out some simple steps to ensure both secure storage and protection for the environment from spillages. In the last two years 75 % of confirmed oil pollution incidents were at domestic premises.

Mark Durkan said: "I welcome this joint 'Tank Safe' campaign driven by my Environment Agency and OFTEC to help reduce the number of oil related water pollution incidents through a 'best practice' approach.

"The campaign strives to encourage responsible ownership and storage of oil at domestic, agricultural, and commercial premises by raising awareness of simple measures to prevent loss of this valuable non-renewable resource from storage tanks which will, in turn, help safeguard the environment and minimise the risk of expensive remediation by the tank owners."

With approximately 68 % of households in Northern Ireland using home heating oil to heat their homes, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the vulnerability of tanks older than 20 years;

encourage regular visual inspection by owners; and promote annual servicing of oil tanks and associated related ancillary equipment by accredited professionals.

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager said: "Plastic oil tanks provide safe and sound storage for home heating oil throughout the



Kevin McGrady, senior scientific officer at NIEA, with Northern Ireland environment minister Mark H Durkan, and David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager, at the launch of the oil tank safety awareness campaign, aimed at Northern Ireland householders

year. They sit in the garden and endure rain, frost, snow and even some sunshine. Like all products, they have a definitive lifespan and the aim of our joint campaign with NIEA is to remind householders that oil tanks should be installed and serviced appropriately."

NIEA is the regulatory authority regarding compliance with the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 [OSR2010]. Further guidance on OSR2010 is available at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/guidance_document_for_the_control_of_pollution_oil_storage_regulations_northern_ireland_2010.pdf

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When in doubt – see how it's done!

18

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Ecodesign and energy labelling regulations

– helping user choice of efficient heating systems

by Paul Rose, OFTEC technical director

The background: Following a preparatory study and the first formal steps in 2006, ecodesign and labelling regulations were passed in Europe on 26th September 2013. These regulations are set to drive change in the heating sector with regard to manufacturing, testing, dissemination of information, and installation practice across Europe... all in a bid to improve the efficiency of heating systems, reduce heating system emissions, and help end users make smarter choices when purchasing equipment in their homes

The reason that the ecodesign/labelling process has been eight years in development is due to the complexity of the regulations, which cover many different heating technologies and fuel types. Such is the complexity, to assist equipment manufacturers develop product, test it, and get it to market, the implementation of the regulations will also be rolled out in stages, known as 'tiers'

The regulations cover two areas of focus. Ecodesign requirements place performance standards and responsibilities on equipment manufacturers. Labelling requirements place responsibilities on the entire supply chain and installer.

EU member states are also expected to conduct a review of requirements during 2017, which will assist in shaping ecodesign regulations in the future.

Ecodesign

The Ecodesign preparatory study concluded that the environmental impact of using heating systems in both new and existing buildings provides a significant opportunity to reduce 'in-use' primary energy through the reduction of carbon emissions and reducing combustion emissions from fossil fuels such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). For heat pumps, noise and the use of refrigerants is a consideration, as are standing losses from water heaters.

Labelling

From 26th September 2015, having developed and tested appliances, manufacturers will have to provide a label on their products, much like what you see on a fridge or washing machine. Additionally, manufacturers must also provide supporting information to be known as a 'product fiche', which will contain information to enable the efficiency of a heating system to be calculated when a number of items are assembled. This could include a boiler, controls package, and maybe a solar collector. The person who brings the package together, typically the installer, at the point of sale to the end user will have the responsibility of producing the heating system label. In the coming months, OFTEC will be looking at ways to assist registered technicians achieve this.

Enforcement

It has been indicated that surveillance may be appointed to three bodies; the National Measurement Office are likely to look at accuracy of testing and information, the Advertising Standards Agency will look at marketing, and Trading Standards will look at the 'visible' application and use of product labels.

Regarding sanctions for non-compliance, exact details are yet to be announced. However, OFTEC has been advised that surveillance costs are generally pursued from the person/business causing non-compliance. There is no cap on financial penalty, which is determined by many factors such as intent, honesty, remedial actions, etc.

One thing we can be sure of is that the entire heating industry will be working very hard during 2015 and beyond to get their products ecodesign compliant, and to provide training and solutions for installers.

The scope of the new regulations

- Space heaters and combination heaters: Ecodesign $\geq 400\text{kW}$ output, labelling $\geq 70\text{kW}$ output
- Water heaters: Ecodesign $\geq 400\text{kW}$ output / ≥ 2000 litres, labelling $\geq 70\text{kW}$ output / ≥ 500 litres

Timescales for oil firing products

- 26th September 2013 – Publication of the regulations
- 26th September 2015 – Tier 1 energy efficiency requirements and energy labelling scale A++ to G for space heaters and A to G for water heaters
- 26th September 2017 – Tier 2 energy efficiency requirements and energy labelling requirement are uplifted
- 26th September 2018 – Tier 3 introduction of requirements on nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emission limits

Team members celebrate a decade of service

2015 marks the 10th anniversary of the introduction of works notification for technicians, a change that has been a significant catalyst in encouraging greater professionalism in our industry.

The last decade has also seen other important changes, not least the introduction of condensing boilers in 2007 and the wider acceptance by consumers of renewable heating technologies. OFTEC has also successfully passed several important milestones – achieving UKAS accreditation as a competent person scheme (CPS) provider in 2010, and introducing scopes of registration covering heat pumps, solar thermal and MCS in 2014.

These headline achievements underline the ever-changing nature of our industry, so it is particularly good to be able to celebrate the long service of six members of staff who have all worked for OFTEC throughout the last decade.

They are:

- Adrian Lightwood**, registration director
- Adrian Wink**, compliance manager
- Teresa Garnham**, OFTEC Direct manager
- Tina Pierson**, finance assistant
- Paul Rose**, technical director
- Paula Shackleton**, registration supervisor

Having an experienced staff is an enormous asset to OFTEC – between them, these six team members alone have an impressive

63 years of experience, expertise and knowledge.

With a range of challenges likely to face the industry during the next ten years, OFTEC's staff are vital to ensure the association stays at the forefront of the industry, providing the registration services and technical support demanded by the technicians of both today and tomorrow.

The next ten years are likely to see the off-gas heating market become more diverse, so this in-house experience will be a vital asset going forward.



left to right: Tina Pierson, Adrian Wink, Teresa Garnham, Adrian Lightwood, Paul Rose, Paula Shackleton.

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50 years of domestic oil-fired heating

– from Heath Robinson boilers to sophisticated oil theft, by Clive King

Before the emergence of the domestic oil heating market in the early 1960s, the only domestic oil fired boilers were small cast iron sectional, three-pass boilers, derived from the then current commercial boilers being used in industry. These boilers fired on “gas oil”, or diesel as it was, sometimes known as 35sec. oil.

The domestic market was originally developed by Shell International and British Petroleum under their marketing arm, Shell-Mex & BP Ltd. Kerosene (28sec. fuel or paraffin, which was its generic name) was in plentiful supply and was a product of the “fractioning” process undertaken at UK oil refineries. The only outlet for this type of fuel in those days, with a little modification, was the aviation industry which, in 1960, was nowhere as big a user as it is today.

Obviously people had to be trained to install these new domestic boilers using kerosene that were now being produced in conjunction with the oil companies. Building Regulations did not accept oil as a genuine heating fuel and oil was contained within the regulations for solid fuel heating. Very quickly the design of flueing and small, quiet burners was being developed. Yet the problems with getting Building Regulations to accept genuine balanced flue boilers remained legion. A major problem during this period was the installation of domestic oil storage tanks. Only the oil companies and a small number of installation companies knew how to carry out the work, but even they were not familiar with the burgeoning domestic market.

Before Shell-Mex & BP launched the domestic oil heating industry in 1962 with

the ‘Mrs. 1970’ campaign, oil storage tanks were installed to the requirements and recommendations of the major oil companies. Esso Petroleum followed close on the heels of SMBP and soon Burmah and Regent were in the market.

Many plumbers and heating engineers were new to the oil-fired central heating market and were trained by Shell Mex & BP and Esso in their respective training schools.

Over capacity of heating oil...

It must be said that the training on the installation of oil storage tanks was not a very large part of the course and Shell and ESSO indicated to their candidates that it was desirable to sell the largest tank possible, regardless of the boiler on the end of the supply line. The reason for this was that all major oil companies in the late 50s and early 60s had over capacity of domestic heating oil (28sec./burning oil/kerosene etc.) and needed to get rid of it. Therefore they encouraged the customer to store it for them!

In those days the installation of domestic oil storage tanks left much to be desired and the commercial market was no better. In the domestic market customers did not want to see oil storage facilities in their gardens and therefore the poor plumber (now heating engineer) was given the job of hiding the tank where it could not easily be spotted from the main windows of the property.

At the time, oil-fired heating was reasonably expensive to install but extremely cheap to run. A banker's order to cover a year's worth of oil, plus system maintenance, was only around £4 to £5 per month.

However, the 1973 Arab oil

crisis – when domestic oil prices increased by 400% over night – decimated the oil market and caused Shell and BP to break up its marketing arm. Not long afterwards BP pulled out of the domestic oil market altogether. Since that time Esso no longer produces domestic kerosene either. In 1973 LPG made a push for the domestic market and was also sold as a viable alternative to ‘expensive’ oil.

Oil pollution regulations...

It was not until 2001 that oil pollution regulations were implemented by the Environment Agency. These regulations demanded that oil storage facilities were installed in a responsible way so that in the event of a tank failure the pollution of surrounding flora and fauna was limited to the immediate area of the failure. Other regulations were also brought in to prevent the damage of oil storage by fire.

As previously stated, oil heating users did not want to see their storage facilities and it was not the practice in those days, nor very much today, to bury tanks. As a result, the one piece of modern equipment that was developed in around 1967 by SMBP was the radio link system. This was a wireless, electronic overspill prevention device inserted into the oil tank via a small hole of about 8mm diameter, drilled in the top of the tank.

The reason for explaining the aforementioned history is that most things that happen in the past normally get carried on into the future – especially if the participants do not undergo constant training and updating in their particular area of expertise. Therefore – with consequences for the present



A well known and well-respected personality in the oil heating industry, Clive King joined Shell-Mex & BP Ltd as an apprentice after leaving school in 1958, subsequently joining the company's domestic oil central heating division as a designer. He then took over as south west regional sales manager for Boulter Boilers before becoming general manager with a Shell nominated company to install cavity wall insulation. In 1984 he formed his own company, Energy Systems (Exeter), specialising in installing, upgrading and servicing oil fired heating equipment. He ran the company for 23 years and during this time he carried out consultancy work for OFTEC and, in 2007 became an OFTEC inspector – a position he held until May last year. Although now semi-retired, Clive continues to carry out consultancy work and still takes a keen interest in the oil industry.

day – in the 1980's oil storage tanks were very often installed in the wrong place, on the wrong base and close to combustible material because the customer did not want to see it. And many oil technicians are still working to the old methods...

In the Summer issue of Oil Installer, Clive King will share his thoughts on oil storage tank installation and what can be done to deter the oil thief.

New control range from Worcester Bosch

Worcester, Bosch Group is extending its controls portfolio with the addition of the Greenstar Comfort range

The range comprises a collection of intelligent and simple to use controls, designed for quick and easy installation. The new controls have oil compatibility with the Greenstar Heatslave II and should be installed with a comfort wall plate kit.

Each of the three programmable products includes a dial-controlled menu which allows navigation of all heating and hot water functions and the ability to programme different times along with various energy saving options. The range also offers wireless load compensation which enables installation without having to

wire the unit to the boiler.

Commenting on the launch of the new range, Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support, said: "Despite some of the recent innovations in the market for heating and hot water controls, we're aware that the vast majority of controls installed remain the most basic of mechanical options. It is vitally important that manufacturers and installers continue to educate their customers on the benefits of using more intelligent programmers to benefit from greater comfort and the potential for reduced energy bills.



The Worcester Greenstar Comfort range of controls

"By sitting alongside the state of the art smart thermostat, the Wave, our Comfort range means we can now cater for a wide variety of homeowner preferences whilst making it as simple as possible for installers to fit intelligent controls."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/homeowner

Tuffa tank chosen for church and school

A Tuffa steel fire protected oil storage tank was recently used to feed both a church and a primary school sited next to each other.

The site required storage of around 3500 litres of heating oil. Uttoxeter-based Tuffa Tanks were able to manufacture and supply a 3500 litre tank with 60 minute integrally fitted fire protection, measuring 2500mm (L) x 1500mm (W) x 1500mm (H).

"The tank was acquired and installed by Forecourt Installation

Services who did a fantastic job from start to finish, specifying the tank right through to the installation," says Charlie Goring of Tuffa UK Limited. See also page 32.

Tuffa Tanks can provide liquid storage solutions for up to 100,000 litres, with manufacturing equipment which allows the company to produce the largest roto-moulded tank currently on the market of 20,000 litres, in a single unit. www.tuffa.co.uk

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Continuing development from Firebird – company launches upgraded version of its Enviromax kitchen boiler

Firebird's new and improved condensing oil boiler now features a digital control panel giving the end user more precise control over the boiler settings and enabling them to easily view the boiler's performance and temperature.

When Firebird first introduced the Enviromax oil-fired condensing boiler range in 2007, theirs was no simple adaptation of an earlier non-condensing model. Instead, Firebird's R&D team went back to basics and designed the Enviromax as a completely new model, incorporating some unique and now well proven design benefits.

"It is genuinely a true condensing boiler because it has been purpose designed and built, based on extensive research from around the world. It challenged existing mere adaptations to create a truly innovative condensing oil fired boiler," says Firebird's UK general manager, Debbie Coley.

Simple to service

Designed for new builds and the replacement market, Firebird made life easier for the installer by incorporating four BSP tappings which allow the installer to retrofit a new Enviromax replacement boiler without the need for major pipework alterations. The single door access gives full scope to all the internal baffles and exchangers making the boiler simple to service and, with the condensate trap at the base of the appliance, also allows the flue ways and secondary exchanger to be washed through without compromising any internal components.

Together with the multi-directional balanced flue system, there



Firebird's Enviromax boiler – "a true condensing boiler because it has been purpose designed and built"

are virtually no situations where a Firebird Enviromax cannot be installed, says the company.

"More and more installers are recognising and appreciating the huge benefits of the Enviromax," continues Debbie.

The Enviromax has been upgraded with technological improvements, most notably the introduction of the Riello self-diagnostic digital control box with built in post-purge feature. It supersedes electronic controls, giving greater accuracy, speedier reaction and increased energy efficiency with resultant fuel savings and reduced carbon emissions.

"These product benefits are also featured in the new upgraded Enviromax kitchen boiler and will undoubtedly cause great excitement, not only for existing Firebird installers, but for other professional installers who wish to fit a highly efficient, well proven, reliable and extremely robust, trend setting condensing oil fired boiler," adds Debbie. www.firebirduk.co.uk

Grant display vans "take products to the customers"



Grant UK has taken delivery of two bespoke display vans, fully kitted out with the company's oil, biomass, solar and air source heat pump products.

The vehicles will be touring the UK throughout 2015 visiting merchants, trade exhibitions and country shows.

The mobile displays feature a Grant Spira condensing biomass boiler, the new Vortex indoor combi, a Grant solar thermal collector and an Aerona air source heat pump.

"By taking products to our customers we are able to explain practically how the technologies work and demonstrate their features and benefits," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing manager for Grant UK.

"We believe this will better educate installers, merchants and even homeowners."

www.grantuk.com

The Grant UK vans – spreading the "Efficient heating for greener homes" message

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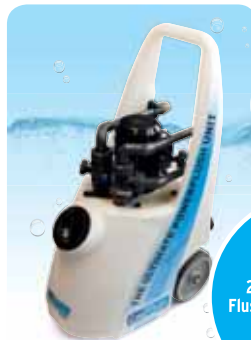
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VTX3646	Pro Kitchen/Utility 36-46 Internal	£1492.00
VTX4658	Pro Kitchen/Utility 46-58 Internal	£1549.00
VTX5870	Pro Kitchen/Utility 58-70 Internal	£1609.00
VTXOM1521	Pro 15-21 External	£1149.00
VTXOM1526	Pro 15-26 External	£1286.00
VTXOM2636	Pro 26-36 External	£1519.00
VTXOM3646	Pro 36-46 External	£1709.00
VTXECO1521	Eco 15-21 Utility	£879.00
VTXECO2126	Eco 21-26 Utility	£965.00
VTXECO2635	Eco 26-35 Utility	£1149.00
VTXOMECO1521	Eco 15-21 External	£1015.00
VTXOMECO2126	Eco 21-26 External	£1159.00
VTXOMECO2635	Eco 26-35 External	£1319.00
VTXWH1216	Eco 12-16 Internal Wall Hung	£999.00
VTXWH1621	Eco 16-21 Internal Wall Hung	£1049.00
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VTXS2636	Pro Kitchen/Utility 26-36	£1509.00
VTXS3646	Pro Kitchen/Utility 36-46	£1619.00
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7716100142	Danesmoor 18/25kw Internal Utility	£1089.00
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7716100145	Danesmoor 18/25kw External	£1299.00
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7716100124	Danesmoor 12/18kw Wall Mounted	£1345.00
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7716100103	Greenstar 32/50kw External Utility	£1565.00
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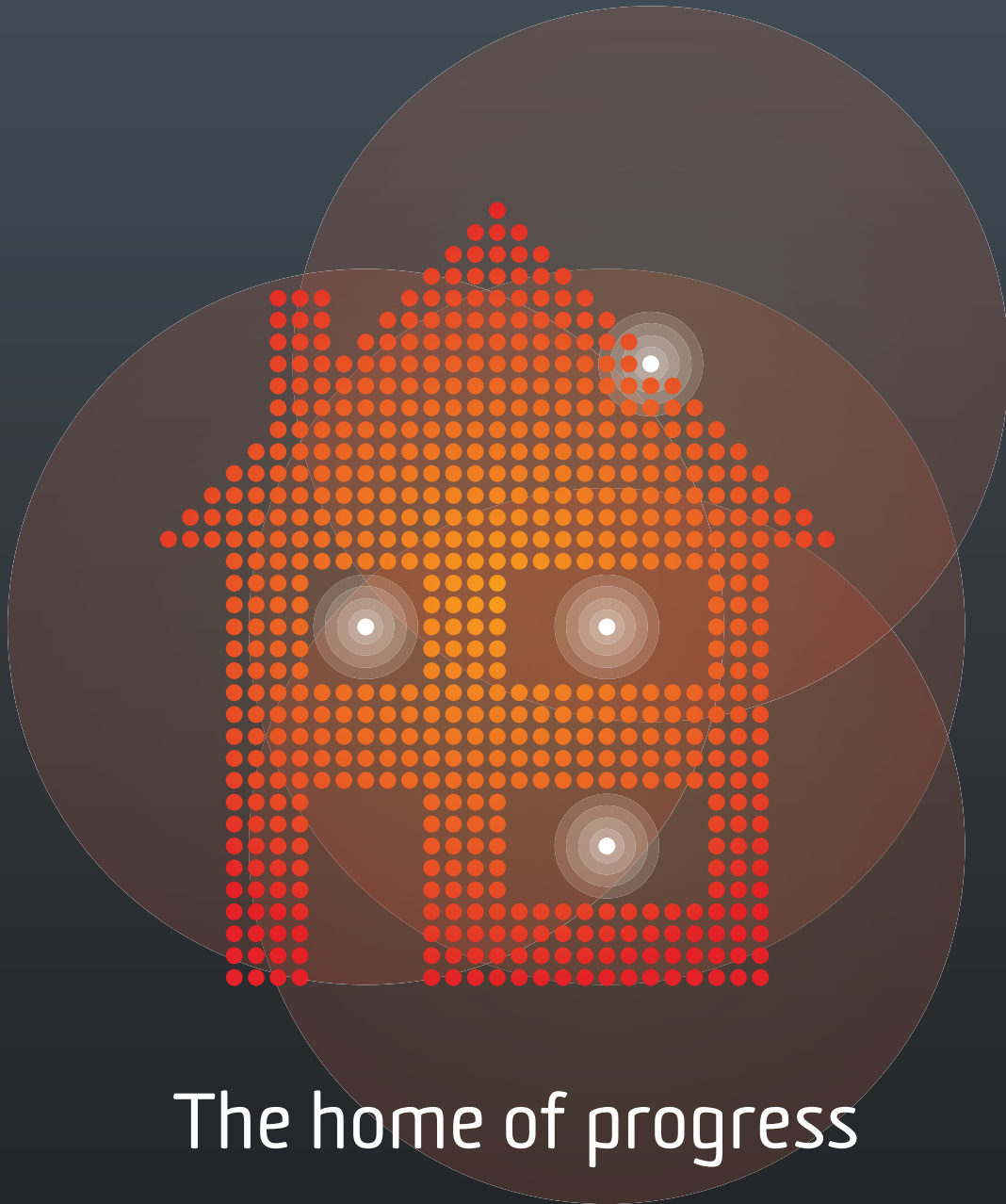
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Grant upgrades Vortex combi range with larger expansion vessel



Following feedback from its installer network and training academy, Grant UK has made several upgrades to the combi models within its Vortex range

Most oil-fired combination boilers are supplied with a 12 litre expansion vessel and it's the installer's responsibility to provide any additional expansion for the system. The Vortex combi range now includes a 24 litre expansion vessel, and also includes a plug and socket connection for the Riello RDB burner, as standard.

The plug and socket has been requested by service engineers to aid the removal of the burner during annual maintenance, making the job both quicker and easier.

The latest Grant Vortex combi models also feature internal frost protection, neon diagnostic indicators and a factory fitted condensate trap.

The Vortex combi is available in an internal or external version in three sizes – 21kW, 26kW and 36kW.

www.grantuk.com

The Grant Vortex Pro 2014 internal combi – complete with its 24 litre expansion vessel

Fast-approaching deadline for emissions targets

The deadline for meeting stringent NOx and other emissions targets for oil boilers is rapidly approaching. However, the required burner technology is already available says Barry Gregory, managing director of Riello Ltd

From September 2015 the Ecodesign energy efficiency requirements for boilers of less than 400 kW capacity will come into force, as will energy labelling for boilers of less than 70 kW capacity.

This is the first stage of Ecodesign measures which will introduce further challenging emissions targets by 2018 – including legislation for oil boilers to limit NOx emissions to a maximum of 120 mg/kWh.

“While 2018 may seem far away, in industry terms – and especially in terms of introducing new technologies to market – it is imminent,” says Barry Gregory. “In fact, to

meet these requirements burner manufacturers and their OEM partners will need to be rolling out low NOx products long before this time. This process will begin with field trials to gain experience and prove that the new technologies will deliver the required emissions whilst working with kerosene.

Advanced design

“Fortunately,” he continues, “There are already low NOx and ultra-low NOx oil burners available on the market. For example, our RDB <120 mg/kWh burners have been designed with a conical combustion head, standard photocell and choice of an electromechanical

analogue control box or a digital controller that provides extra features, such as diagnostics.

“Our ultra-low NOx RDB models, capable of achieving NOx emissions of less than 80 mg/kWh, dependent on boiler design, utilise UV flame detection, combustion heads with recirculation tubes and a digital controller.”

Barry stresses that, in parallel, there will be a requirement to “up-skill” installers and service technicians to ensure the industry is ready – not only with the products, but also the skills and experience to support them in the field. “To that end Riello will be



Barry Gregory, managing director of Riello Ltd

introducing low NOx oil burner training in 2015,” he adds. www.rielloburners.co.uk

Five year guarantee on Greenstar boilers

Worcester, Bosch has extended its five year guarantee on all its Greenstar oil boilers when purchased before 31st December 2015, and installed with a Greenstar system filter.

“Our products are of the highest quality and we are confident that they will provide customers with years of reliable service. We offer a two year guarantee as standard free of charge on our Greenstar oil-fired boilers,” explains the company.

“For a limited period, we are offering customers a fantastic five year guarantee on our range of oil-fired boilers. Qualifying Greenstar oil boilers purchased between 1st January 2015 and 31st December 2015 will receive an additional three year guarantee to the standard two years – that’s five years peace of mind free of charge.” www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Danfoss investigates pump seizing problem

Since spring 2014 Danfoss (UK) Ltd has experienced an increase in the number of returned BFP pumps caused by seizing. Although the returns account for less than 0.5 % of those pumps supplied to the market, the company is monitoring and investigating the problem.

Investigations so far show that nearly all returns are from three geographical areas: South Wales, North East England and the east coast of Scotland.

To identify the cause of the problem, examinations have concentrated on analysis of returned pumps; analysis of oil samples collected from various sites; enhanced lifetime tests on pumps with samples of kerosene collected from sites; and enhanced life time tests on pumps with Jet A1 and kerosene from the UK market. The company has also installed replacement pumps at selected sites where previous pumps have seized which will to run for a period of two months before being collected for detailed examination.

“To date it has not been possible to recreate the seizing of the pump in our internal tests,” says Mark McElroy, key account manager for Danfoss. “Nevertheless we act on the facts that we have observed and are working on different solutions to handle the types of oil we have seen in the geographical areas where nearly all of the pump seizures have occurred.”

He adds: “Whilst we continue to investigate the situation to find a solution, we strongly recommend the use of lubrication additives in the three geographical areas to avoid the risk of pump seizure.”

For further information Mark can be contacted at: mark.mcelroy@danfoss.com

New oil lifter from Anglo Nordic

Installing an oil lifter can often be a time consuming job for even the most experienced oil heating engineer and, with the potential problem of an incorrectly installed product leaking, it can also be a risky job.

As a safety measure it is recommended that oil lifters should be installed with either a return to the tank, or a leak detection device to shut off the flow of oil in case of failure.

Anglo Nordic now offers the OUF 88 oil up feeder, wired with a leak detector and drip tray – saving time and providing a protected installation where a return to the oil tank is not possible. For installations where a return to the oil tank is practical, the OUF 88 can also be supplied without a drip tray.

Anglo Nordic can also offer a leak detector and drip tray for existing OUF 88 installations which are not be protected with a return to the tank facility.

In addition Anglo Nordic is able to supply the OUF 88 , with or without the drip tray in an IP66 rated weatherproof enclosure to enable the oil lifter to be mounted on an outside wall.

www.anglonordic.co.uk



The Anglo Nordic OUF 88 oil up feeder, complete with leak detector and drip tray

Firebird adds to cooker range



The multi-fuel range cooker from Firebird

Firebird Heating Solutions has added a new multi-fuel version of its oil fired range cooker to its product portfolio.

Like its oil fired counterpart, the multi-fuel range cooker incorporates a heating boiler with an efficiency of up to 80 %. It is suitable for use with seasoned wood or Ancit smokeless coal.

It is also compatible with Firebird’s solid fuel heat exchanger which allows a multi fuel stove/solid fuel appliance of up to 12Kw system output to be coupled to an existing pressurised heating system to supplement the existing heating and hot water provision.

The 1020mm wide, cast iron Firebird range cooker unit features a large main oven with even heat distribution, a separate warming oven and two cast iron lids to give

heat retention for oven top cooking. It is thermostatically controlled and is available in a cream or black enamel finish. It carries a five-year warranty.

Firebird’s oil fired range cooker option incorporates an oil fired condensing boiler with a SEDBUK A rated high efficiency balanced flue model with 26 or 35kW output. It features a specially designed heat exchanger unit based on the heat exchanger from the company’s Enviromax and Silver oil boiler ranges.

Firebird is looking to create a national network of authorised dealerships and can offer opportunities for established range cooker specialists in a number of areas.

www.firebirdrangecookers.com

Parts Center: helping the installer to keep off-grid customers happy...

As harsh winter weather continues to bite in remote, off-grid areas of the UK, installers provide a vital lifeline to homes and businesses. **Colin McGregor**, category development director of Parts Center, explains how his business ensures the heat is on...

With the nation's heating systems taking the strain of winter, breakdowns are never far away. So it's vital for installers to be able get their hands on the right part at a moment's notice, to keep their reputation intact and the heat on.

The pressure is particularly acute in remote areas, where arriving with the wrong part for an essential repair has far greater repercussions. Yet identifying the critical part isn't always easy, even for the most seasoned installers, with the names and product numbers of some parts differing by a matter of a couple of digits, and the differences between some fittings being almost invisible to the naked eye.

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 the chance that they'll come across something they've never seen before.

With this in mind Plumb and Parts Center has produced a special Oil Engineer's Guide, which is free with this edition of *Oil Installer* magazine – making life easier for the hard-pressed installer to keep off-grid customers happy.

Identifying the critical part isn't always easy

But we don't stop there. We understand that technology in the plumbing and heating industry is improving all the time – with the lists of available parts ever-growing. So Parts Center has developed a parts identification system as a guide for installers.

"Parts Arena" enables customers to identify the products they need for any particular job. After logging in, installers can access parts lists, images and diagrams for fast and accurate identification of spare parts and accessories. The advent of hybrid systems, which combine conventional



Colin McGregor, category development director, Parts Center

heating systems with renewable and energy efficient technologies, means even more parts for installers to get their heads around.

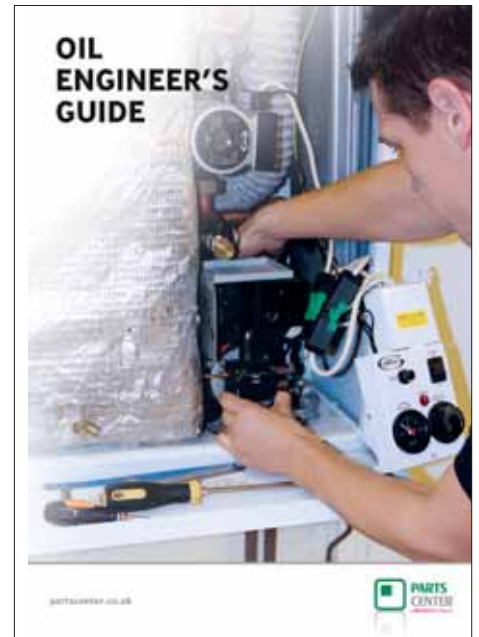
Keeping in the loop is important, but installers can't know everything, so it's crucial they are able to get as much information as possible from their parts suppliers.

In 2015 Parts Center is continuing to focus on staff training to ensure that installers get the best out of their branch visits. The plan is to continue to train all branch staff to add to their already considerable parts knowledge. Parts Center is also identifying the most appropriate branch staff to work as parts specialists, so they can confidently and correctly identify and advise on any of the products available.

Get it when you need it

We live in a world of convenience. The internet enables customers to buy something at the click of a button, and people don't want to wait for their purchases anymore. Next day delivery is therefore a vital part of any online trading business these days, and it's no different in the plumbing and heating industry.

Parts Center recently launched its exclusive, direct to customer, UK-wide, premium delivery service – "Parts Direct". It is available from all Plumb and Parts Center branches as well as their dedicated call centre, for next day delivery to any UK mainland address. Three levels of service can get installers the part they need as early



Your Oil Engineer's Guide is free with this issue of Oil Installer

as 10.30am the next day if they order it before 8pm.

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.

In an information age which is moving along at breakneck speed, knowledge is key for installers in getting the best out of their business. Installers don't have to know everything off the top of their head – but by using the correct tools, they can certainly make it look like they do!

www.partscenter.co.uk



High flier chooses a sustainable future...

A former WW2 pilot and self-confessed gadget man has shown the way to a sustainable future with the installation of a hybrid Ecodan air source heat pump (ASHP) to work alongside his existing boiler.

Mr Durward of Newick, Lewes, chose the Ecodan to reduce the heating bills for himself and his wife and with the installation of an 8.5kW Ecodan monobloc ASHP and packaged hydrobox they also qualify for RHI payments.

Designed specifically with a bivalent function for use in conjunction with conventional boilers, the hydrobox is pre-plumbed and wired for faster installation and also offers simplified SD card commissioning. With the capability of providing two-zone space heating via a modern, simplified graphical controller, the system ensures that Mr and Mrs Durward are able to completely control their heating.

“Heat pumps seem to offer a real solution to the problems associated with fossil fuel heating, which is no longer a sustainable way of keeping our homes warm,” explained Mr Durward, who has always had a fascination for self-sufficiency. He has already sunk a 200 feet borehole to supply water to the property and has a photovoltaic system to generate his own electricity.

East Sussex-based Payne’s Heating and Plumbing Services – an accredited Ecodan installer and renewable specialist – fitted both the heat pump and PV system.

At Mr Durward’s request, the company has also incorporated a power diverter, which transfers any excess electricity generated to the immersion heating, giving the couple regular – and totally free –



Enjoying complete control of his heating system, former WW2 pilot Mr Durward

tanks of hot water.

Mitsubishi Electric has also arranged for a MELCloud Wi-fi control system to be installed so that the heat pump can be monitored and Mr Durward can control his system from either the comfort of his armchair or anywhere else in the world.

“Mr Durward is delighted with the way the system is working and we often use him as a contact for other clients looking at similar works,” explained Dave Crock of Payne’s Heating and Plumbing Services.

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Shackleton & Wintle: Award-winning installers – with experience of the dog house!

Established nearly 40 years ago, Shackleton & Wintle has become one of the leading heating and plumbing contractors in the south west of England, operating from modern premises in Cheltenham

“Our domestic business has always been important to us – it’s the foundation on which the company was built,” says managing director, Robin Heffter.

Although Shackleton & Wintle specialises in all plumbing services and heating options, because of the company’s location and rural catchment area, oil has always played an important role in the business – accounting for around 20 per cent of the company’s work. Eight members of staff are OFTEC registered.

“It’s no use having the best products if they’re not installed and maintained by highly-trained and competent industry professionals,” continues Robin. “Our accredited engineers possess expert technical knowledge backed up by years of experience, whilst our field staff are ably supported by our head office ‘call and response’ team who can help customers with any queries they may have.

“Our customer base spans both domestic and non-domestic work projects for builders, developers and housing associations. We also have strong links with a number of architectural practices and letting agents and have evolved our services in direct response to the needs of our customers, our manufacturer partners and the demands of the market.”

Since it was established in 1978, the company has won



Members of the Shackleton & Wintle team at the company’s Cheltenham head office... from left to right: Robin Heffter, Dan Fisher, Neil Richards, John Rogers, Malcolm Faulkner, Ian Tuffin, (front) Trish Turner and Marina Green

many industry accolades, the most recent being in September when Robin was presented with the High Efficiency Boiler Installer of the Year award at the 2014 Energy Efficiency and Renewables awards ceremony at London’s Kensington Roof Gardens. “It was fantastic to win this award – our winning installation has saved the customer almost half of their heating and hot water bills during the first year.”

The house building sector accounts for a major part of Shackleton & Wintle’s business. Work is carried out on behalf of both national builders and smaller developers local to Cheltenham, and during the past few years customers have included Barratt Homes, Bloor Homes, Charles Church Developments and Taylor Wimpey plc.

“There are no limitations to the services we can deliver on new build schemes, including leadwork and guttering and sanitaryware fitting, installation of above-ground drainage, provision of domestic water

supplies and the design and installation of complete heating systems.

Keeping pace with technology

“Our expertise in heating systems includes conventional solutions such as oil, gas, and LPG, as well as renewable products such as heat pumps and solar panels. The economic climate has made the market more competitive and customers are naturally becoming more demanding, setting the most stringent standards for quality of work and pricing.

“At Shackleton & Wintle, we take what we do very seriously and there are few more serious issues confronting us today than that of the environment. We’re learning more and more about alternative sources of energy and our role as consultants and engineers means we have to keep pace with changes in technology and products.

“We do see a future for oil as some properties cannot be heated by any other means without major capital expense. However, renewable energy

is becoming more and more important. We aim to be leaders in this field and have invested heavily in order to provide solutions to every challenge.”

Asked what it would be if there was one thing he could invent to make life easier for both the company and his customers, Robin – with tongue firmly in his cheek – replied: “A high temperature, cost effective fuel that does not pollute and is self-generating!!!”

And the company’s most unusual installation? “At Shackleton & Wintle we work to design a total system solution to meet our customers’ needs and requirements. But perhaps one that we did not expect was the heating of some dogs’ kennels with the requirement for the recycling of ventilated air!! Needless to say, no problem!”

Robin concludes: “At Shackleton & Wintle, we’re not only plumbing and heating engineers... we’re advisers and partners to our customers too, and it’s a role we’re committed to playing for the long-term.”

www.shackleton-wintle.co.uk

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Candid cameras capture the catastrophes!

A picture paints a thousand words... and our request for those pictures in the winter issue of Oil Installer has obviously fired the imagination of many OFTEC registered technicians!

Judging by the response to our request for humorous – if not disturbing – photographs, bad workmanship and dodgy installations are obviously all too common... especially when it comes to oil storage tanks. But tanks do not have total exclusivity. One reader from the Channel Islands sent photographic evidence of willfully shabby workmanship after he discovered a floor full of oil from leaking compression fittings.

Andy is a qualified plumber, electrician and oil engineer and currently holds OFTEC 101, 102, 105E, 107 and 600A.

“This was a new customer for me. The boiler is on the other side of the wall, the fire valve would have originally been outside until a conservatory was built 15 years ago. I discovered the problem during a routine service as I couldn’t find the fire valve body and was therefore unable to test as per the service schedule. The customer has submitted an insurance claim and I have been asked by the loss adjuster to excavate the floor to remove the oil contamination and to reinstate to British Standards and Building Regulations.”

From another job, Andy sent in photographs of a tank which he came across. “This again is a new customer who purchased the house two months ago. This tank had just been filled with no comment being made. There is a regular service record for the boiler from the previous owner.”

Meanwhile, Hugh from Ballymoney recently spotted another particularly dodgy tank installation at the rear of a cottage in County Antrim – with a couple of bricks and the odd broken roof tile or two precariously supporting a considerable weight!

And finally, Robert Wells from Hampshire spotted his questionable masterpiece whilst visiting a farm in Guildford. By the looks of it, one good gust of wind could easily lead to more work for Robert’s company, Home & Industrial Heating in Eastleigh, which is currently submitting a quote for a new base and bunded tank!

If YOU spot anything that can equal any of these photographs, share them with us – send them to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Send your photographs to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Hugh came across this installation in County Antrim



State of the art... or in a state of neglect? Robert’s masterpiece in Guildford



Andy’s dodgy fire valve and oil-soaked floor!



Andy’s second discovery... and, shockingly, still in use!



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Making the most of oil opportunities...

Just like the wider market for heating and hot water technologies, the oil-fired boiler market showed a dip in 2014 when compared to the previous 12 months. Here, Martyn Bridges, Worcester's director of marketing and technical support, gives an insight into why oil-fired boiler sales could be performing better, and what needs to change for the market to reach its potential during 2015

"The oil-fired boiler market is commonly overshadowed by the gas market, as it plays a much smaller role than natural gas in terms of overall sales. The market in 2014 did not maintain the same level of momentum as 2013, but there are clear reasons for this and it's important to acknowledge them. Not only was the autumn and winter particularly warm, but 2013 experienced a considerably colder winter and in this instance the government also played a part in not helping oil.

"Firstly, while building regulations don't prohibit the installation of oil-fired boilers in newbuild properties, they have made it very difficult for the market and also for installers to achieve the required dwelling emission rating. The Green Deal has been an additional legislative barrier for the oil market, in particular the short-lived Home Improvement Fund, which did not recognise off mains gas properties. With energy prices on the rise, the UK government has also failed to recognise bio-kerosene – a combination of kerosene combined with a 30% blend of Fame waste cooking oil, which is CO2 friendly. There is some hope that it will soon be acknowledged by the Irish government, whereas it's safe to say that the UK is lagging behind.

"It's not just the UK experiencing barriers to oil market success, as we're seeing a similar lack of support for oil across Europe. In areas of Scandinavia they have banned the use of oil-fired boilers in certain property types altogether, although there is an appeal taking place to fight this decision.

The focus for 2015

"With up to two million oil-fired boilers in the UK and Ireland, there needs to be some support for end-users looking to upgrade their oil boilers with the latest efficient technology. All research proves the cheapest replacement for a broken oil-fired boiler is another one, as opposed to substituting the existing product with LPG or a heat pump. This also fits in with the purchase pattern for oil-fired boilers, which is one where the requirement is rarely planned, but normally

as the existing one is broken beyond repair. The dilemma is that oil-fired boilers are so robust that they literally go on for decades.

"Whilst this makes the oil market sound a little more difficult to tap into, there is a definite opportunity for installers to educate homeowners about the cost and CO2 savings they could be making if they were to swap their very old boiler for a brand new high-efficiency model. In turn, this can lead to new business opportunities and repeat business for installers in the form of regular service checks, for example.

"Consistency of installation and servicing is another important issue. Installers are under increasing pressure to keep on top of accreditation and training courses, and consistency throughout a product range can help to lift some of the pressures that affect installers on a daily basis. Once installers have mastered a certain type of manufacturers' installation guidelines, it should not be too difficult for them to apply this to another installation across the same range of products. There is quite often a commonality across the product offering and quite often the same flue system or optional controllers fit all the models in the series. Because of this, manufacturers are often tasked with enhancing the design of their products without a major shift away from the designs and features installers have become familiar with.

Improved efficiency levels

"Manufacturers, such as Worcester, have continued to innovate in the oil market to ensure the products work at the very highest efficiency levels. To support installers and the oil market, we recently made adaptations to our oil range which sees our Greenstar Danesmoor system boiler lead the way. This model gives installers of oil-fired boilers the chance to offer vastly improved efficiency levels and maintenance potential, thanks to its new primary heat exchanger. Because the heat exchanger is smaller in size than its predecessor, access to the boiler's internal components is easier than



Martyn Bridges, Worcester's director of marketing and technical support

ever before, without compromising on its exceptional efficiency levels.

"Additional features also make it a suitable fit for a stored hot water system. With a built-in circulating pump, pressure relief valve, pressure gauge, and expansion vessel, it ticks all the boxes for a quicker, neater, easier and more efficient installation. The hope is that this sort of innovation will keep the domestic oil market flowing, with high performance products available.

"Installers should be encouraged to keep an eye out for oil opportunities. Whilst a degree of uncertainty perhaps surrounds renewables, oil still remains one of the most suitable fuels for delivering domestic heating and hot water in off-gas mains areas and continues to present a number of business opportunities. The challenge for manufacturers and installers is identifying the potential for servicing and upselling in this area of the market."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Prepare for your inspection – and make it a breeze!

The inspection process is a key part of OFTEC registration. To understand why, ask yourself why heating technicians become OFTEC registered? For most it has to do with professional pride and a wish to separate themselves from the ‘cowboys’. The OFTEC logo is widely recognised by consumers as a sign they can trust.

The ‘find a technician’ section on OFTEC’s website receives hundreds of hits from potential customers every day and the number of homeowners using the search facility increased by 15% last year – proof that consumers recognise and value OFTEC registration.

To retain consumer confidence it is vital to ensure that everyone registered actually deserves to wear the badge. That is where inspection comes in and, with about 2000 routine inspections completed annually, they take place all year round.

Obviously, time is money and some technicians see an inspection visit as an unwelcome burden or a waste of their valuable time. However, the majority view it positively as an opportunity to demonstrate both their competence and professionalism. Missed or poorly planned inspections increase OFTEC’s costs, so it is better for everyone if things go smoothly.

“Be prepared...and save time”

To ensure this happens, the best advice is to be prepared. Your OFTEC inspector will confirm the visit by letter or email, accompanied by OFTEC information sheet No.23. It is vital to take time to read the information sheet as it explains what needs to be organised in advance. This includes access to a site (or sites) so that the inspector can view recent samples of work.

The information sheet also explains what documentation should be available to the OFTEC inspector on the day, such as a copy of the business’s current public liability insurance certificate and policy schedule, and evidence of current calibration for any test equipment. For further clarification, the inspector can be contacted by phone or email – contact details can be found on the confirmation letter.

Remember, demonstrating your competence is what OFTEC registration is all about. So a little time spent preparing prior to your inspection visit is certainly going to help – and save time on the actual day.



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ASK OLLIE!



The following Ask Ollie questions and answers highlight some of the updates made to the suite of OFTEC technical books following the release BS 5410-1:2014 – effective from 31st December 2014.

I have heard that ventilation calculation requirements have changed for oil, is this correct?

The principles of ventilation have not changed. The changes are that ventilation should now be calculated on the maximum appliance output and that 5kWs are no longer subtracted for adventitious air.

Also, the calculations for free area are now performed using centimetres rather than millimetres.

I have been approached to install an external appliance under 45kW output and have heard that the fire valve is no longer required to be one metre away. Is this correct?

Unless specified in regional building regulations, BS 5410-1:2014 now states that the fire valve should be positioned so that it will cut off the oil supply externally to the appliance casing in the event of an accidental fire occurring in or around the appliance.

I am looking at installing a 25kW open flued appliance in a room but I am unable to get the dedicated air supply direct to outside from that room. Is it permissible to create an air supply path to the outside through neighbouring rooms by fitting two or more grilles “in series” and where can I find further information on this topic?

Where more than two air grilles are fitted in series across an air supply path, the free area of each grille should be increased by at least 50% over that required for a corresponding single air grille. For further information, see section 1, diagram 22a on page 51 in OFTEC Technical Book 4.

I have heard that secondary containment should be provided with new oil tanks. Is this true?

BS 5410-1:2014 requires that all new and replacement oil tanks should be provided with secondary containment.

I have heard that the scope of BS 5410-1:2014 has been updated and covers oil storage tank installations under 3500 litres at buildings used “primarily” as dwellings. What does this mean?

A building used primarily as a dwelling is a residential property where a single family resides, but may contain a home office or micro business such as one offering beauty treatment or consultancy from a single room.

How can I update my technical books?

Registered technicians can update their books free of charge by visiting the registered technician’s area of the OFTEC website, downloading, and printing the files. Alternatively, due to the many updates forced on the books by BS 5410-1 being published, book update packs are available for purchase through OFTEC Direct. These update packs have been printed by the original OFTEC book publishers, on original paper, hole-punched, and ready to insert into the 2010 version of OFTEC Technical Books.

Expansion vessel sizing: a technician’s guide

Over the heating season, OFTEC’s technical department received a higher than average number of enquiries relating to failed boiler expansion vessels and the correct sizing of vessels.

It should be borne in mind that expansion vessels supplied within a boiler will typically be the largest vessel that will fit within the boiler casing. However, it may not always be adequate to accommodate the expansion from all systems, as this is dictated by the total water content of the system and is outside of the boiler manufacturer’s control.

To be able to calculate the expansion vessel required for an installation, the total water content of the heating system must be established by adding the volume of water contained in the various components, such as the boiler, DHW cylinder coil, pipe work, and heat emitters. This is usually published by the equipment manufacturers. Information on the water content of

pipework can be found in the ‘CIBSE domestic heating design guide’, available to purchase via OFTEC Direct, or by multiplying the cross sectional area of the pipe bore by its length.

Calculations...

After the total water content of the system has been established, the rating of the boiler pressure relief valve should be noted. The static water pressure for the system then needs to be calculated by establishing the distance between the highest point on the system and the centre line of the expansion vessel. Using the formula that one meter is equal to 0.0981 bar, multiply the static head by 0.0981. For example, if the static head is 4.7m x 0.0981 = 0.46 bar (0.5 bar rounded).

Taking multiplying factors from the ‘CIBSE domestic heating design guide’, we can now calculate the correct vessel size knowing the total water content of the system, the rating of the PRV, and the

static head pressure. For example, if a total system water content is 125 litres at 0.5 bar x 0.0833 = 10.4 litres.

In this scenario it would be prudent to use a 12 litre vessel. Alternatively, if the manufacturer has provided a 10 litre vessel, it could remain in place and an additional 6 or 8 litre vessel can be installed in the heating return pipe to the boiler.

Caution should be exercised in the siting of external expansion vessels, because they need to be accessible for maintenance and not subjected to freezing conditions.

When charging vessels and systems, first inflate the airside of the vessel to 0.2 bar above the static pressure in the system. This will displace the vessel diaphragm and drive the water from the vessel into the system. Then charge the system via a filling loop to the required system pressure, and finally disconnect the filling loop to eliminate the possibility of contamination entering the mains water supply.

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Annual boiler service . . . great, but who's servicing the oil filter? – by Stuart Bratt

Well-known in the industry for many years, Stuart Bratt started out as an apprentice heating engineer and soon progressed to become an installer, service engineer and specialist fault finder. More recently Stuart has been trading as "Specific Oil Solutions" and designs, produces and markets a range of tools and equipment specifically for the oil-fired heating and cooking industry. In this special article for Oil Installer, and based on his decades of first-hand experience, Stuart stresses the importance of oil filter servicing...

Fuel filters serving domestic oil-fired central heating and cooking appliances play a vital role in both overall appliance reliability and prolonging the life of individual components. Yet for many domestic installations these filters are rarely inspected, let alone serviced or replaced.

In order to understand how vital servicing the fuel filter is, we need to break it down into a number of areas. Firstly, if there's a sight gauge fitted, the technician should ensure the rain/dust cap is fitted and the top is not visible or exposed. Over time, due to exposure to UV light and contamination by kerosene or gas-oil, the originally clear plastic tube both discolours and contracts, often leaving a gap between the end of the tube and the cap. Here, not only rainwater penetrates but insects too.

Next, there's the debris within the bowl and particles that are trapped by the filter element as the fuel is drawn through the unit for burning. Then there's the filter element itself. Whether it is paper, nylon, fine foam or a fine metal mesh, this should be discarded and replaced, not simply cleaned or sprayed with a solvent aerosol and refitted. The only exception being a stainless steel gauze, where the openings within the gauze are particularly large, which can be washed with a suitable liquid to act as a solvent.

Debris trapped by a paper, nylon, fine foam or fine metal mesh element is heavily moisture laden. This is why in colder weather, issues of blocked filters are far more likely to be the cause of an appliance breakdown on a site where the fuel filter has not seen regular maintenance.

First to fail...

Vaporising appliances are the first to fail if sufficient fuel flow is not maintained. Yet different vaporisers often work in a variety of ways. For example, an Aga or Rayburn employing a wick and fuel within channels system simply does not maintain the correct operating temperature when fuel flow is reduced. If pushed to extremes, it will

eventually extinguish itself.

A pot burner, on the other hand, for example fitted to an Esse cooker, will stop vaporising if the fuel flow reaches a critically low flow rate. When this happens the fuel is simply being burned as neat liquid immediately it enters the pot. The result is an appliance choked with soot and soft carbon within a few hours. Eventually when the flue-ways are completely blocked this too will extinguish itself, but obviously leaving the householder with a far bigger problem.

Filtration provided by different products on the market ranges hugely. Grades range from a coarse 100 micron stainless steel mesh to a fine 10 micron pleated paper unit – with the majority of nylon, plastic, fine foam and paper elements fitting in somewhere between.

Without regular checks, debris finds its way into every component

Poorly maintained filters don't just block-up and hold the debris back, they pass a certain amount. Without regular checks, debris finds its way into every component, all the way to the flame.

Some of the places that debris can reach include fuel pipe, remote acting fire safety valve, de-aerator, fuel pump, lift pump, secondary filter (if fitted), oil control valve, fuel nozzle, and metering column. Many of these components have their own protective filters, but are rarely stripped and serviced.

Continuous lack of filter maintenance can also lead to fuel pipe work becoming contaminated with both sediment and water. When winter temperatures plummet, this often brings yet more problems as the water element of the contamination within the pipe freezes. As the water becomes ice it expands, reducing the fuel passage within

the pipe, thus causing vaporisers to run cooler and in extreme cases fail all together.

Changes in kerosene...

Over the years, many technicians have noticed changes in the kerosene we burn. With more sulphur being removed to meet international regulations, such changes include colour, odour and consistency. Technicians often blame premature carbon build-up within their Agas on this "new" fuel. Addressing issues of modern fuel composition by introducing a suitable additive is defiantly worth considering, but only when the technician has carried out all preventative maintenance steps necessary to reap any potential benefit provided by such an additive.

The recognised test to determine the measure of carbon produced by kerosene provides us with the "char value". This is the weight in milligrams of carbon produced when one kilogram of fuel is burnt. One such test recently carried out took two fuel samples from one site – one from within the storage tank and one from the fuel pipe connected to the burner. The tank sample provided a char value of around seven whereas the sample taken at the burner was nearly twenty-seven. Further investigation confirmed a heavily contaminated fuel filter. Once the filter element had been replaced the char value returned to that of the stored fuel.

Finally, the changing chemical composition of modern kerosene brings yet more issues for our industry to deal with. Modern kerosene has the ability to absorb more water than historic fuels. As the fuel within the storage tank warms during summer, the water absorption rate increases yet further. Absorbed water in kerosene can now easily reach 200/300 parts per million, or in percentage terms 0.02/0.03%. The issue of absorbed water in kerosene is not a problem unique to oil-fired heating and cooking appliances, it's one the aviation industry is also coming to terms with.

Expanding into renewables?

– Register with OFTEC

With oil heating now so competitive, a question many technicians are asking is whether it is worth investing in the training required to offer alternatives such as renewables. OFTEC believes the answer is a definite “Yes”.

The government seems firmly committed to carbon reduction, and measures such as the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) are certain to be catalysts for growth in the renewables market, both this year and in the future. Forward thinking installers will always look to gain an advantage over competitors, so there’s never been a better time to add a renewable string to your bow.

The idea that OFTEC is only about oil has now changed

For technicians who do make the move into renewables, or who have already done so, OFTEC now offers extremely competitive registration for heat pumps and solar thermal, with or without MCS accreditation. Biomass and solid fuel boilers will soon be added to the list, alongside the existing oil, Part P and Green Deal registration. “The idea that OFTEC is only about oil has now changed and we aim to offer a registration service that will appeal to a wide range of businesses, including installers who are solely engaged in renewables,” says the association.

To find out more, visit the renewable registration section of the OFTEC website, where a copy of the information sheet ‘Expand your business with the OFTEC renewables scheme’ can be downloaded, together with other useful links and resources. Alternatively, call the OFTEC registration team on **0845 65 85 080** or **01473 626298**.



Renewables showcase for off-grid heating engineers

With market analysts predicting the renewables market will triple by 2017, installers are being urged to head to Plumb Center’s “Practical Installer” at Ecobuild 2015 – a unique working showcase demonstrating the installation and operation of renewable and energy efficiency products in a retro-fit environment.

Forecasts are suggesting that the market will increase from 30,000 low carbon heat installations in 2014 to 90,000 in 2017. This, says Plumb Center, “presents a significant business opportunity for heating engineers, especially those working in off-grid areas.”

Practical Installer will include a ‘business clinic’ promoting opportunities across the biomass and heat pump markets. Installers will also be able to see products in action from leading manufacturers including: Mitsubishi Electric, Dimplex, Grant, Trianco, Honeywell, Fernox, Wilo, Heatrae Sadia, Pumphouse, Adey and Pegler. Experts will also be on hand to deliver business advice to installers on how to profit from renewables and energy-efficiency.

Tim Pollard, Plumb Center’s head of sustainability, says: “The renewables market is already presenting a significant business opportunity for installers and the size of the prize is very significant indeed. DECC has predicted that by 2020 installations could total nearly 750,000, if not more! That represents a sizeable revenue stream for installers who make the move into this sector. We don’t want our customers to miss out which is why we have put in place people and services to support them 100% of the way.”

Ecobuild takes place March 3rd to 5th at London’s ExCel.

Video testimonials

Three new testimonial videos featuring Mitsubishi's Ecodan renewable heating in real life situations have now been released.

The videos feature the views and experience of a social housing tenant from Prices Risborough, Buckinghamshire; a heat pump installer; and the project manager from Red Kite Community Housing in High Wycombe.

"As a manufacturer we know the benefits that heat pumps can bring to homes, but it's a far stronger message if you can hear from existing users of the technology," says Graham Temple, marketing manager for Mitsubishi heating systems.

The video testimonials can be seen at: <http://heating.mitsubishielectric.co.uk/downloads/Pages/Customer-Testimonials.aspx>



"It's a far stronger message if you hear from existing heat pump users," says Graham Temple, marketing manager for Mitsubishi heating systems

ThermaWave: combining traditional and renewable heating systems

Grant UK's newly launched ThermaWave range provides a new way to combine renewable technologies with traditional heating systems – allowing multiple heat sources to be connected, all with a 3kW immersion heater back-up.

The Grant ThermaWave is available in three variations: open-vented with solar coil, open-vented with solar and domestic hot water (DHW) coils, and sealed system with solar and DHW coils.

ThermaWave DHW stores have been designed for situations where there is a greater demand for domestic hot water. However, there is no need to link the store to an additional cylinder, resulting in a more cost effective and compact installation, says the company. The units also feature

compression fittings, cutting installation time for plumbing and heating engineers.

The stores range in size from 250 to 500 litres and have 40mm injected polyurethane foam insulation to ensure low standing heat loss.

"Thanks to ThermaWave, a homeowner can have a gas or oil fired boiler connected to a solid fuel appliance and also a renewable heat source, such as a solar, thermal or a heat pump. Underfloor heating system manifolds as well as radiator circuits can also be directly connected to the store," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing manager for Grant UK.

www.grantuk.com



Grant UK's DHW thermal store



New heat pump joins the Ecodan line-up

Mitsubishi Electric has launched a new 11.2kW Ecodan air source heat pump to join the existing three monobloc models.

The line-up for the self-contained outdoor units now boasts a 5kW, 8.5kW, 11.2kW and 14kW to make Ecodan suitable for most situations. The new PUAZ-W112VHA model is a single phase, MCS-certified 11.2kW capacity unit.

"We are constantly reviewing our line-up to ensure that we deliver what the market wants," explained John Kellett, general manager of the company's Heating Systems. "This new model slots nicely into the range to ensure we can deliver renewable Ecodan heating to almost any home in the country."

<https://heating.mitsubishielectric.co.uk>

Communities encouraged to create their own energy schemes

The number of community owned renewable energy schemes in England could increase as a result of a £10 million fund unveiled by energy and climate change secretary, Ed Davey.

The “Urban Community Energy Fund” will give community groups in England the opportunity to bid for grants of up to £20,000, or loans of up to £130,000 to help kick-start their projects.

In East Sussex, beer is now being made using the sun’s rays after the country’s first ever community energy scheme installed solar panels on Harvey’s Brewery. The brewery benefits from lower energy bills, while the community benefits from money back under the Feed in Tariff.

Announcing the funding on a visit to the brewery, Ed Davey said: “I want to give more people the power to generate their own electricity and by supporting community energy projects we can – helping

them drive down their energy bills at the same time.

“That’s why we’ve pledged £10 million, so communities can play their part in generating renewable power at a local level. This is all about investing in renewable energy sources, creating jobs and changing the way renewable energy is developed in the UK.”

Major shake-up...

The community energy sector will also see its first major shake-up since the launch of the Community Energy Strategy in January last year. Community electricity projects will now get further support under the Feed in Tariff Scheme – which pays the owners of small-scale renewable generation for the electricity they produce – to get their community energy projects off the ground. Changes include:

- For the first time, registered charities

will be entitled to the same benefits as other community groups;

- Two community projects (or one community project and one commercial project), each up to 5MW, will now be able to share a single grid connection and receive separate Feed in Tariffs;
- The FIT will now be guaranteed for an extra six months – giving communities more time to get their project up and running.

Welcoming the changes to the FITs scheme, Kathy Smyth, policy director of Community Energy England said: “Without risking the integrity of the wider Feed in Tariff scheme, this will stimulate community involvement in larger renewable schemes. It will be a great boost to projects using the split ownership model under the voluntary protocol for Shared Community Ownership, which Ed Davey launched recently.”

Biomass tutorials from Grant UK

Grant UK has launched a series of online video tutorials for installers and end users wishing to learn more about biomass boiler technology.

“The Grant guide to biomass” explains what biomass is, the different fuel types that are available, why biomass is carbon neutral and how it is used in heating systems. A second film, “The Grant guide to the domestic RHI”, tackles the Renewable Heat Incentive, how payments can be accessed and what paperwork is required to claim payments. For end users Grant has produced a guide to the practicalities of owning a biomass boiler.

Complementing the videos is a downloadable guide, “Living with biomass”, which has been produced featuring the Grant Spira condensing wood pellet (biomass) boiler to explain the technology, what to expect in terms of cleaning cycles and how to get the most out of the appliance.

“When installers and consumers are selecting or installing a Grant biomass appliance, such as the Spira, providing them with the best quality information is all part of our service,” explains Anna Wakefield, marketing manager for Grant UK.

The online films are accessible on Grant’s YouTube channel, “MyGrantUK”. www.grantuk.com



Correct advice and training needed for high quality installations

With over 13,000 accredited installations now registered for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), Sustainable Building Solution (SBS), part of the Travis Perkins Group, has called for the industry to continue its support by offering easy access to services.

SBS predicts that the RHI will improve efficiency and growth in the renewables sector. Market demand will continue to fluctuate with an already identified increase in the uptake of air source heat pumps and biomass boilers in particular. As a result, on-going training needs to be encouraged if high-quality installation standards are to be maintained and uptake is to remain strong.

To help installers access RHI opportunities, SBS has developed a range of assessment, training, and mentoring services covering biomass, solar thermal, and heat pump technologies. MCS accrediting can also be achieved through SBS’ official partner PPL Training. www.tpsbs.co.uk



“Installers must be able to have confidence that, as the RHI reaches new milestones, they have easy access to the correct advice and training,” says SBS managing director Paul Joyner

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