

# Oil Installer

Topical issues affecting the industry today

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Summer 2014 Volume 8 No 2



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# What does the future hold for oil heating?



The Government thinks it will fade away by 2025 and be replaced by renewable heating such as heat pumps and biomass boilers.

At OFTEC we recognise the need to decarbonise home heating but believe that this can best be done by installing condensing boilers and using biofuels to replace kerosene. Heat pumps and biomass will suit some homes but, for many others, they won't be the most practical or affordable option.

For that reason we don't think renewables supported by the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) in GB are right for most oil homes. On pages 4 and 5 we show that the upfront costs associated with the RHI are very high and that only the most affluent consumers may be tempted. However, we estimate that someone shifting to an air source heat pump, rather than a new condensing oil boiler, could be worse off – even with the RHI payments – so we doubt that take-up of RHI will be high. A bigger worry is that people could be mis-sold a technology that will fail to heat their home in the coldest weather.

On a more positive note, oil *can* work well with heat pumps and/or solar thermal panels and these hybrid options should be seriously considered. OFTEC will soon offer new scopes of installer registration for solar thermal and air source heat pumps. We hope it will enable many existing registrants to sign up for this training and register with us to provide a one stop shop for all their customers' off gas heating needs.

Your customers need to know that the most cost effective way to reduce their carbon emissions is to ignore the RHI and switch their standard efficiency boiler (sometimes as low as 60 % efficient) for a modern condensing boiler. Upgrading from an E-rated boiler, installing room thermostats and TRVs will also save them up to £300 pa.

You also need to have answers to the questions that they will be asking about renewables. A great place to find them will be at the OFTEC Big Event on 24<sup>th</sup> June (see page 5) which includes a morning trade show and seminar programme. On the same day we have the OFTEC Awards for Excellence lunch with entertainment from comedian Sean Collins. You can attend this lunch for only £10. Please sign up by emailing [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org) or via the Big Event website: [www.thebigevent.co.uk](http://www.thebigevent.co.uk)



*J. C. Hawley*  
Director general

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## Credits



Ashley & Dumville Publishing Ltd  
Caledonian House, Tatton Street,  
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9AB 6AG  
Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283;  
Fax: +44 (0)1565 755607  
[mail@andpublishing.co.uk](mailto:mail@andpublishing.co.uk)

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Printed by Pelican Press, Manchester Tel: 0161 273 3434

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Summer 2014 Volume 8 No 2  
ISSN 1755-3490

# Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) consumers pay the price for UK's green obligations

*Oil heating customers may be tempted to convert their existing heating system to renewable technologies, following the Renewable Heat Incentive's launch*

When ambitious claims are being made about the benefits of switching, with promises of lower bills as well as the annual RHI payments for seven years, this is not surprising.

*it's easy to forget that the RHI is designed to lower the UK's carbon emissions, not to reduce energy bills*

There's no doubt that many in the heating industry hope the RHI will bring new business opportunities – something that OFTEC is always keen to support. However, the most important priority must always be to provide the right heating solution for

customers, which means understanding the real purpose of the RHI and why it won't be suitable for many off-gas households.

While the RHI payments may seem attractive, it's easy to forget that the scheme is designed to lower the UK's carbon emissions, not to reduce energy bills. The RHI payment tariffs have been set carefully by Government to allow homeowners to recoup some of the high installation costs associated with installing renewables. They aren't designed to enable homeowners to profit from installing renewables and the switch won't necessarily save them money – in some cases they may end up paying more.

#### **Installation and running costs**

According to the Energy Savings Trust, installation costs for renewables are between £7,000 and £19,000. For most off-gas homeowners, such installation costs

will be the biggest barrier to participation. And, with the UK's rural housing stock among some of the oldest and least energy efficient in the whole of Europe, many of our rural homes are difficult to convert without substantial, expensive modifications.

Homeowners with significant savings, or those who can build the renovation and installation cost into their mortgage, may be tempted to make the investment. Those with modern, easy to convert properties may also find the RHI attractive. However, the vast majority of homeowners will be unable to meet the upfront costs without taking out a loan, making the widespread switch to renewables a non-starter.

The savings associated with running renewables are also often overstated. Figures from independent energy analysts, the Sutherland Tables, show that there is currently little to choose between the annual cost of running a radiator system with an



**Be part of the OFTEC Big Event**  
**Nailcote Hall. 24th June 2014**

**The Big Event** [www.oftecbigevent.co.uk](http://www.oftecbigevent.co.uk)



*At next month's OFTEC Big Event, Neil Schofield of Worcester, Bosch will be giving his views on whether there will be a market for renewable heating and how technicians should react*

Whether you're an installer or work in commissioning/servicing, there's certain to be plenty to interest you at the OFTEC Big Event, and attendance counts towards your continual personal development.

Some of the biggest names in the oil heating industry will be exhibiting at the morning trade show – **Adey, AGA Rangemaster, Carbery, Grant UK, Firebird, Harlequin, Kane, OFTEC Insurance Services, Prompt Payer, Riello, Sum Up, Teddington and Worcester Bosch.**

OFTEC technical staff will be on hand

to answer queries and there will be some great offers on the OFTEC Direct stand. The exhibition and seminar program, which will include presentations on the proposed changes to building regulations and new scopes of registration for renewable technologies, among other topics, is **FREE** to attend.

For just £10 join colleagues for a lunchtime buffet and the OFTEC Awards for Excellence presentations featuring top comedian Sean Collins. When you register for the lunch you'll be entered into a draw

for an Apple iPad and you'll also receive a special delegate pack with useful goodies worth over £40.

“Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's marketing and communications manager said: “At OFTEC's Big Event you'll meet exhibitors and hear seminars focused on the issues that **really** matter to oil heating technicians. Add a great lunch and our Awards for Excellence presentations and you have the must-see event of the year.”

Register now at [www.oftecbigevent.co.uk](http://www.oftecbigevent.co.uk)

## – at the OFTEC Big Event on Tuesday 24th June

air source heat pump or an oil condensing boiler. However, the average annual cost of electric heating has risen 16% in Great Britain over the last three years, while the average price of kerosene has actually fallen slightly. If these trends continue it is hardly a good reason to upgrade an oil boiler to a heat pump.

While each homeowner's circumstances will be different, OFTEC believes that most people will be better off sticking with oil and, if they haven't already done so, upgrading to a condensing boiler. We think that if householders were incentivised

*the most important priority must always be to provide the right heating solution for customers*

to do this – such as with a scrappage scheme similar to the one in Northern Ireland – it might well be more effective at reducing greenhouse emissions than the government's present RHI strategy.

We think the existing RHI is an example of the best being the enemy of the good. While the technologies supported under RHI are considered by some to be greener – even though most of the electricity that drives heat pumps comes from fossil fuels! – they are unable to compete on costs with conventional heating systems and are too expensive to install even with RHI payments. The more pragmatic approach advocated by OFTEC, with an emphasis on less costly, more consumer friendly solutions, would be much more popular and have a better chance of success.

## To compare the cost of installation and running costs, we look at two options for a typical off gas home with poor energy efficiency

Option 1: Replace the old boiler with a modern oil condensing boiler and keep the existing radiator system

Option 2: Replace the existing system with an air-source heat pump (ASHP) and fit new over-size radiators

	Results for option 1: Install a category A condensing oil boiler	Results for option 2 Install an ASHP under RHI
Capital costs	£3,000 installation cost of new condensing oil boiler Total capital cost £3,000	£10,500 installation for an ASHP and oversized radiators £8,656 cost of a £7,500 loan at 5.9% fixed for five years Total capital cost £11,656
Annual running costs	£986	Running cost for years 1-5 with RHI payments, less loan costs: £1,976 Running cost years 6 & 7 with RHI payments: £245 Running cost year 8 onwards without RHI payments: £946
	<p>The comparison was based on the following data and assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The homeowner has £3,000 of savings</li> <li>The annual heat requirement of the property is 16,000kWh</li> <li>The cost of oil is 5.6p/kWh and electricity 13p/kWh (current prices) and stays the same throughout the seven years</li> <li>A hot water temperature of 65oc is required</li> <li>The oil condensing boiler is 90% efficient and costs £986pa to run</li> <li>The heat pump has a seasonal performance factor (SPF) of 2.5 and costs £946pa to run</li> <li>Annual RHI payments of £701 are available for the heat pump installation for 7 years</li> <li>A loan of £7,500 @ 5.9% is taken out to fund the heat pump and oversize radiators, costing £1,731pa to repay over 5 years</li> </ul>	
	<p>From this comparison we can draw some clear conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oil boiler is £990 pa cheaper (50%) for the first 5 years while the loan is being paid off.</li> <li>The ASHP is £741 pa cheaper (75%) for years 6 and 7 than the condensing oil boiler (once loan repayments cease)</li> <li>After 7 years, when RHI payments stop, the annual running cost of the ASHP is only 4.2% cheaper than an oil boiler, based on current electricity/oil prices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall, over the 7 years of RHI, a household installing an ASHP would be £3,473 worse off than remaining with oil and simply upgrading to a high efficiency boiler</b></p>	

# Innovation inspired by you.



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### Oilsave – promoting you, promoting your industry

*With the RHI’s launch (see pages 4/5) producing an explosion of material promoting the advantages of renewable technologies and encouraging your oil heating customers to switch, 2014 is an important year for our industry*

It’s now more important than ever that our customers get good advice and information. The prospect of receiving big RHI payments will be tempting to many homeowners but, with high installation costs involved, making the wrong decision could be disastrous.

A new section on the Oilsave website is designed to help homeowners understand the financial issues and decide whether the RHI is right for them. Plus, there is a **NEW**

*It’s now more important than ever that our customers get good advice and information*

OFTEC Home Guide about the RHI which can be downloaded from the Oilsave site. **FREE** printed leaflets are also available for registered technicians to hand out.

Promoted jointly by OFTEC and the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS), the Oilsave website also offers impartial information to help people get the best from their oil heating systems. It includes tips and guidance about how to improve energy efficiency, save money and find an OFTEC registered technician in their area. A number of free downloadable guides are also available.

With the new website now live, activity to promote the Oilsave campaign to consumers is being much increased. It’s very easy to get involved and OFTEC can



provide you with **FREE** leaflets to hand out that highlight the benefits of oil and of using an OFTEC registered technician.

Order your **FREE** leaflets today – contact OFTEC’s marketing team on 0845 658 5080 (option 4) or email [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org).

**FREE** copies of the Oilsave logo are also available.

### New payments for boiler upgrades – but not if you live in the countryside!

In May the Government launched a new energy efficiency initiative called the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund. Available in England and Wales, it provides a cash payment to homeowners who install a new boiler and one other Green Deal measure. However, it is only available for homes on the gas grid. As it only applies to gas-fired boilers, many thousands of consumers with standard efficiency oil boilers will be unable to upgrade their boiler.

OFTEC has written to 238 MPs with rural constituencies, asking them to take action. Rural households are more likely to be in fuel poverty than those in urban areas and often suffer from low energy efficiency, so preventing them from accessing this scheme makes no sense and is clearly discriminatory and unfair.

OFTEC will campaign for **all** households to be eligible.

### Installers can transform the nation

Opening Plumb Center’s Practical Installer Arena at this year’s Ecobuild, *Countryfile* presenter Julia Bradbury said the nation’s army of more than 120,000 installers were “the key to convincing consumers that energy efficient technologies don’t have to cost the earth, but could save a fortune.”

“Installers are the key to winning hearts and minds,” said Simon Allan, Plumb Center’s renewables director. “We’re determined to give them the tools through our expertise and training, so they can help deliver a more energy efficient nation.”

“Plumb Center is supporting installers every step of the way through its UK wide network of more than 500 branches,” added Julia who believes “the UK can lead the world by building a genuinely low carbon economy.”

Using a heat pump, double insulation and rainwater harvesting, Julia is currently renovating a London home which was built in the 1800s. “We’re really trying to keep our running costs low for the future and that’s why we’re investing in energy and water efficiency now.”

Plumb Center was joined at this year’s Ecobuild by 19 of the industry’s top suppliers who demonstrated the benefits of solar,

biomass, heat pumps and water efficiency technologies to installers and homeowners. [www.wolseley.com](http://www.wolseley.com)



Julia Bradbury opens Plumb Center’s Practical Installer Arena with Simon Allan



## Oil heating – still a competitive choice for off-gas homes

*With around 1.1m homes using oil in Great Britain and a further million in Ireland, oil heating is one of the most popular choices for heating homes off the gas grid. But how does oil compare on price to its main competitors?*

The answer is, extremely well. The average annual cost of oil heating/hot water for a typical three bedroom semi, using an oil condensing boiler, is £1275, 5% less than the average price over the last three years.

By comparison, if you were to heat the same home with oil's off gas rivals, LPG and electricity (night storage heaters), it would cost respectively £1,923 and £1,565, .2% and 17% more than kerosene. Oil customers can also choose who they buy fuel from and can stock up in the summer when the price is usually even

lower, making the true annual running cost even less.

### Challenging competitors' special offers

To counter this situation, competitors such as LPG have been forced to use special offers to incentivise customers to switch. These include offering domestic customers a free tank and a fixed discounted price for LPG for 12 months. However, once the customer is out of this honeymoon period they can expect the price of fuel to be higher. They also pay a standing charge for the tank

and will be locked in with the supplier for a set period, usually two years. While it is probably a good deal in the short term, over the lifetime of the system, oil heating is likely to be considerably cheaper.

OFTEC monitors the advertising of competitors carefully. In a recent case, the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI) upheld an earlier complaint regarding misleading energy savings claims made by Calor Gas in its consumer advertising. ASAI demanded Calor Gas withdraw the misleading advertising

with immediate effect. Calor's current UK advertising is also coming under careful scrutiny and it is likely that further OFTEC challenges will be forthcoming.

Kerosene has also closed the gap on mains gas which, following several years of steep gas price rises, now costs on average £1,136 only 11% cheaper than oil. Kerosene is also competitive with renewable technologies such as biomass and air source heat pumps which have similar running costs to oil but are cost much more expensive to install.

## Free marketing leaflets

Finding a reliable heating engineer can sometimes be a challenge for home owners. Often they rely on a recommendation from a neighbour or friend but, without that help, how do they tell a competent technician from a cowboy?

Your OFTEC registration sets you apart, but many technicians find marketing their business difficult. To help we've produced a new leaflet to explain the many benefits of using an OFTEC registered technician to potential customers.

Easily slipped into an envelope with a quotation for work or handed out when you visit, the new leaflet contains everything consumers need to know about why they should use an OFTEC registered business, and on the rear there is provision for you to put your own business details.

A sample of this leaflet is enclosed with this copy of Oil Installer.

Available in quantities of 50, the leaflets are **FREE OF CHARGE** courtesy of your OFTEC registration. Just contact our marketing team on 0845 658 5080 (option 4) or email [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org) to order yours.

## Will the south west lead the drive in domestic renewable heat?

Recent figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change have shown that under the Renewable Heat Incentive, the south west was Britain's best performing region for the installation of renewable technologies at commercial premises. The region accounted for 20% of all applications with the West Midlands, the next best performer at 10%.

"It is great news that the south west is leading the switch to renewable technologies," said Tim Crook, renewable heat project manager at Regen SW. This centre of sustainable energy expertise aims 'to build a prosperous low-carbon economy in the south west of England and to give its businesses more of a voice in national policy and help draw in more investment'.

"Regen has worked with partners for over 5 years to develop and promote skilled local businesses that can help homeowners and businesses switch from oil to renewable heat," added Tim.

With the Renewable Heat Incentive now extending to domestic properties, will many south west homeowners be switching from oil to renewable heating?



Oil Installer welcomes the views of installers working in the south west – please email [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk)



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### Putting a face to a name on the inspection and compliance team

As the requirements of business audits and inspections have become more important, the work undertaken by the inspection and compliance teams at OFTEC has increased and the teams have grown in size.

Regular inspection visits are imposed on OFTEC by the Government. Competent person schemes are regulated in England by the Department of Communities and Local Government and in Wales by the Welsh Government. OFTEC also runs a competent person scheme on the Channel Islands and Isle of Man and operates a registration scheme in Scotland and Ireland.

At the heart of the inspection team is Tim Lock, inspection services manager. Tim has only recently taken on this role after being promoted from lead inspector and combines it with a life on the road as a regional inspector, covering the north east of England. Tim oversees the work of the team of inspectors which now numbers 14.

OFTEC inspectors have had varied careers before joining the team but a common ingredient applies to them all – extensive previous experience at the sharp end of the heating industry. All have worked on the tools or have run their own heating businesses, helping them to understand the issues facing registered technicians.

#### Giving feedback and taking corrective action

Making sure the inspectors know who to visit, and processing all the paperwork that arises from the inspection process, is the job of inspection administrators Sandra Mann and Judith Salmon, who are based at OFTEC's head office.

Giving feedback is an important aspect of the inspection process; the inspection administrators provide this service when a corrective action is raised and requires clearance for continued registration.

OFTEC allows a generous 28 days for clearance of any corrective action. Those that exceed the allotted time are then passed to the OFTEC compliance team which is managed by Adrian Wink with assistant, Julie Berwick. The team deals with the uncleared non-conformities that arise during inspections and also any complaints made against technicians by the public.

Another aspect of their work is to investigate the fraudulent use of the OFTEC logo by businesses that aren't registered. The OFTEC logo is a registered trademark and only those who register are entitled to use it on their websites, vehicles and company letterheads.

If you find someone using the OFTEC logo who you believe is not registered with OFTEC, please inform our compliance department on 0845 65 85 080 or email [enquiries@oftec.org](mailto:enquiries@oftec.org).

For details of OFTEC's registration team, see the Spring 2014 issue of Oil Installer.

### Non-registered Jersey technician fined

On the 18th February, Jersey-based heating company Kanetech Ltd was found guilty of installing 16 oil-fired boilers at different addresses, without having applied for a building permit as required under Jersey bye laws.

The work was being carried out as part of the States of Jersey Energy Efficiency Scheme – replacement boilers. Plumbers were contracted to do this work on the proviso that they ensured that compliance with building bye laws was adhered to. Not only did Kanetech Ltd fail to do this, the company also stated on the application questionnaire that it was OFTEC registered, and even 'borrowed' another plumber's OFTEC number, of which he was unaware, for its letterhead.

Following the verdict Kanetech Ltd were fined £9,000 by the Magistrates' Court. OFTEC assisted in the investigation and is delighted with the outcome.



Standing (l-r) Ray Tait, John Conboy, Phil Ketchen, Joe Bath, Andy Linehan, Warren Bellinger, Clive King, Andy Kilby, in section services manager, Tim Lock and registration services director, Adrian Lightwood  
Seated (l-r) Dean Wroe, Colin Russell, Sandra Mann, inspection services co-ordinator, Judith Salmon, inspection services administrator, Ken Frost, Norman Armstrong, Niall Plevin-Kelly and Sean McBride



# The Energy Efficiency & Renewables Awards 2014

26 September 2014, Kensington Roof Gardens, London



Energy Efficiency & Renewables Awards

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### Nominations

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**Renewable**  
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## Print your own copies of Building Regulations compliance certificates

OFTEC registered technicians now have access to download and print additional copies of Building Regulations compliance certificates for works they have notified

In the past, registered businesses and technicians had to contact OFTEC to obtain copies of Building Regulations compliance certificates for works they have undertaken, either for their own records or for their customers. Now it is possible to download a copy of a certificate direct from your notifications database.

To access the records, simply go to [www.ofteconline.com](http://www.ofteconline.com) and log in to your company area as you would to notify a new job. Select the Work Notifications icon and a search screen will appear. Enter any known details and click on the Search icon in the bottom right of the box on the screen.

This will then display the required certificate reference or, if using a broader search, a list of all notified works in chronological order. Each job now has the wording Request Standard Certificate in blue text. Simply click on the request text, enter a valid email address for the file to be sent to and our database will automatically generate and send a copy of the certificate in PDF format which can then be downloaded and saved or printed accordingly.

## June 2014 Workmanship warranty mandatory

From June 2014 OFTEC registered technicians must offer workmanship warranty insurance when carrying out installation work in England and Wales

The warranty covers any domestic work that is notifiable under England and Wales Building Regulations, which includes the following if covered by your scope of registration:

- Oil boilers, cookers, storage and supply installations covered by Building Regulation Approved Document J
- Plumbing installations covered by Building Regulations Approved Document G and L.
- Installation of ventilation covered by Building Regulation Approved Document F (does not including air conditioning)
- Electrical work covered by Building Regulations Part P

In the unlikely event that a non-compliance occurs and the installer is no longer trading to correct the matter, the workmanship warranty gives homeowners peace of mind that self-certified work will be covered. The warranty also protects the deposit paid by customers for up to 90 days, to 25% of the contract value (to a maximum of £10,000), until work commences – a powerful reason to use an OFTEC registered technician.

For further information about workmanship warranty, please contact OFTEC Insurance Services on 0845 520 1360 or visit online [www.oftecinsuranceservices.co.uk](http://www.oftecinsuranceservices.co.uk).

## Renewables – OFTEC to offer classes of registration

An increasing number of heating companies are beginning to add renewables to the services they offer – a trend also highlighted in OFTEC's technician survey last year

Believing that the off-gas heating market will eventually feature both conventional and renewable technologies, OFTEC is keen to help registered technicians exploit the new opportunities.

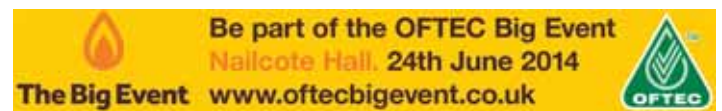
To this end, OFTEC has developed new classes of registration for solar thermal (OFT 501) and heat pumps (OFT 504). OFTEC will soon offer installation businesses the opportunity to extend their scope of registration with OFTEC's competent person scheme and to join its Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MSC).

The competent person scheme enables registered technicians to self-certify

renewable technologies in accordance with Building Regulations in England and Wales. In addition OFT 501 and 504 registrations also give the option to obtain MCS certification, making your customers eligible for Renewable Heat Incentive payments.

To join, it is necessary to have appropriate qualifications for the class of registration for which you are applying and to go through the business auditing and inspection process. To request an application form call OFTEC's registration team on 0845 65 85 080 (option 1) or email [registration@oftec.org](mailto:registration@oftec.org).

More information can be found on a new information sheet – Expand your business with the OFTEC Renewable Scheme (Pub73) which is available electronically on request or can be downloaded from the OFTEC website.



## OFTEC Direct – 10% off all stock and FREE shipping

The above SPECIAL OFFER is only available to technicians attending the OFTEC Big Event in June. Technicians attending will also find Control Documentation pads available to take away on the OFTEC Direct stand.

To find the latest products and offers now, check out the OFTEC Direct website at [www.oftecdirect.co.uk](http://www.oftecdirect.co.uk). New products are added regularly so it's worth taking a look if you haven't visited recently.

The next issue of the OFTEC Direct catalogue will be sent to all registered technicians later this summer.

Come and see OFTEC Direct at the OFTEC Big Event and take advantage of the special offers.

# Where next for oil heating in Ireland?

*Oil still has the lion's share of Ireland's domestic home heat market with approximately 68% of homes in Northern Ireland and 39% in the Republic using oil as their main heating source. But, while oil may still be the most popular fuel in Ireland, a significant change has taken place over recent years*



Driven by the dire economic situation of the past seven years, many thousands of consumers have embraced the solid fuel stove craze. Reflecting a post recession society where disposable income has been, and still is, in short supply, it is relatively cheaper to buy one bag of coal, logs or peat and just heat one room, rather than opt for a bulk fill of oil.

The current energy buzzwords are wood pellets, heat pumps, solar panels, wind turbines and the Renewable Heat Incentive. Visit any self-build show and the myriad of options available for space/hot water heating in a new house are amazing. But do these technologies pose a threat to the oil sector in Ireland or do they offer an opportunity?

Under the UK's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), homeowners in Northern

---

*even with subsidies to offset high capital costs, homeowners are still required to dig deep into their depleted pockets to fund a renewables installation*

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Ireland will be offered a subsidy to offset the high initial cost of some of these renewable technologies and bioliquids. As this issue of Oil Installer went to press, domestic tariff details were expected to be announced for Northern Ireland homes; a non-domestic RHI scheme was launched in Northern Ireland back in 2012.

There are currently no incentives to support renewable heat in the Republic of Ireland.

The push for renewables is being partly driven by the EU requirement to reduce emissions by 2020 as part of the agreed 2020 RES-H targets. But even with subsidies to offset the high capital costs, homeowners are still required to dig deep into their depleted pockets to fund a renewables installation. With a low response to Green Deal and other products in Great Britain, it is unlikely that Ireland's homeowners will have the spare cash to invest in renewables.

Given this scenario, how likely is the take up of renewables across Ireland?

### **Additional work for registered technicians in Ireland**

OFTEC is not against renewable technology per se, indeed the trade association sees oil households utilising complementary renewable technologies such as solar hot

water and biofuels, working alongside the existing technology to offer savings.

OFTEC has lobbied the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to include B30K – a blend of 30% FAME in kerosene – in the Northern Ireland domestic RHI and this is currently being given serious consideration.

With around one million homes in Ireland utilising oil for heating there is little chance of this market disappearing overnight. Oil will be heating Irish homes for a long time to come and this has been recognised by Government with the current grant offerings for boiler and control upgrades.

OFTEC believes the introduction of mainstream renewable technology will take some time. In the meantime, oil homes will adopt less costly and complementary renewables, offering further opportunities for registered technicians in addition to work in oil installation and servicing.

**Oil Installer welcomes comment from readers about the future of the oil heating market in Ireland.**

Email [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk).



# The boiler replacement scheme – learning the lessons

*Looking at the success of Northern Ireland's boiler replacement scheme, run by the Department of Social Development (DSD), there are lessons to be learnt*

The scheme offers a cash grant of up to £1,000 to households earning less than £40k to replace an oil or gas heating appliance over 15 years old with a new condensing version. Depending on income level and whether controls are added, the grant is stepped from £400 to £1,000.

The beauty of this scheme is its simplicity

- ✓ **No large capital outlay**
- ✓ **Majority of the replacement boiler cost is covered by the grant**
- ✓ **Boiler efficiency level is increased dramatically 90%+ v 65-70%**
- ✓ **Available to low income earners, those in fuel poverty and critically, the working fuel poor – often excluded from schemes due to an income level just above that required for inclusion in Warm Homes Schemes and others offering similar assistance.**

To date, DSD has approved 16,000 applications for grant funding and has installed 10,682 new boilers of which 74% have been new

oil condensing boilers. [www.nidirect.gov.uk/grant-to-replace-your-boiler](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/grant-to-replace-your-boiler)

A similar scheme is also available for homeowners in the Republic of Ireland with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) offering grant assistance to upgrade boilers over 15 years old as well as offering a grant for heating control upgrades only. [www.seai.ie/Power\\_of\\_One/Grants\\_Available/](http://www.seai.ie/Power_of_One/Grants_Available/)

As these boiler replacement schemes offer quick wins for governments looking to both improve the energy efficiency of consumers' homes and reduce energy spend, OFTEC would argue that this money is well spent.

*these schemes make real sense – consumers see an immediate benefit without paying out large sums of cash*

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*Danfoss*

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# Looking ahead with AGA Rayburn

*The AGA has been the warm beating heart in kitchens for many years but is that now changing?* Oil Installer spoke to AGA Rayburn marketing manager, Nigel Morrison about the company's current and future oil-fired market



There will be a place for highly efficient oil-fired appliances in the long term future says AGA Rayburn's Nigel Morrison but they will need to be easily integrated with renewable technologies



## The state of the oil market

**Oil boiler sales have risen over the past year, have oil-fired AGA Rayburn appliances such as the Rayburn 600 series seen a similar rise?**

Yes. We've seen a reasonable increase in sales of our oil-fired 600 series cooker over the last 12 months.

**Rayburns run on solid fuel, wood, oil, gas and electricity, what percentage sold are now oil-fired?**

At the moment, around 35% of Rayburns sold are oil-fired.

**By how much has the A rated Rayburn 600 series reduced average oil consumption?**

The A rated Rayburn is about 6% more efficient than its non-condensing counterpart (80k BTUs) at 92.2% efficiency.

**Is oil consumption in a traditional AGA Rayburn appliance around 40 litres per week?**

A Rayburn 400K is around 18 litres per week, while an AGA oil model will typically use about 40 litres per week.

**Is there any market in the new build sector for oil-fired AGA Rayburn appliances?**

Yes, certainly for our A rated condensing models, particularly the room-sealed options.

**Is AGA Rayburn actively supporting the OFTEC Oilsave campaign?**

Yes we are.

**What is the recommended timescale for servicing of traditional AGA Rayburn oil-fired appliances?**

We recommend a service every six months.

**Have any oil-fired AGA Rayburn appliances experienced fuel quality issues recently?**

Yes, on vaporising burners, but there are blended fuel options available from most fuel oil distributors to resolve the issue.

**Does AGA Rayburn still operate Stanley Cookers in Ireland?**

Yes, Stanley cooker and stoves are very much part of the AGA Rangemaster Group and we continue to work very closely together on both cooker and stoves projects.

**What is AGA Rayburn's view as to the likelihood of biokerosene being adopted under the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) in Northern Ireland? What implications could this have for oil-fired appliances?**

Still in the hands of politicians, it isn't yet clear to us how likely biokerosene is to be adopted in Northern Ireland, however it is more likely to succeed compared to the UK mainland. If adopted, there would still be the option to use an oil-fired central heating product.

**For AGAs, renewables and the future, please turn to page 19.**



# Grant dual fuel – oil and biomass in harmony...

*A large and impressive residence in Norfolk has been converted from a standard oil-fired system to a hybrid (or bivalent) renewable biomass boiler and condensing oil boiler combination, reaping the benefits of high energy efficiency and low running costs – along with additional benefits from the Renewable Heat Incentive*

A beautiful 19th century, six-bedroomed, three bathrooms and one shower room residence on the Norfolk Broads has undergone a complete heating review and renovation under the care and guidance of Great Yarmouth Plumbing and Heating. The property's previous heating and hot water system featured two large, rather antiquated standard efficiency oil-fired boilers which were consuming vast amounts of expensive fuel. The owner was under the impression that being such an old building, much of the heat loss that was resulting in larger than ideal fuel bills, would be escaping through the windows and doors. However, having completed a thermal assessment of the property, Steve Botson, managing director of Great Yarmouth Plumbing & Heating, discovered that the majority of the loss was leaking through the roof. Prior to installing the new system carefully placed insulation was fitted reducing the loss to a negligible level. A secondary issue was discovered with the existing boilers' frost thermostat settings being incorrectly set, these were rewired to minimise fuel consumption.

The property's owner was excited by the prospect of introducing a renewable heating solution to his home, but still

wanted the reassurance of a traditional oil-fired boiler with the added benefit of the much higher efficiency available from a modern condensing oil boiler. A new Grant oil-fired condensing model was chosen as the preferred back-up solution, providing immediate savings on fuel expenditure.

The main heating solution selected was based around a 36kW Grant Spira condensing wood pellet boiler which would provide up to 85% of the building's heat requirements with the added option of a Grant Vortex condensing oil-fired boiler kicking in when required, if the external temperature dropped to -3 degrees C. A Grant 264 Sequence Controller was fitted to ensure there was a seamless, automatic transition when switching between fuel sources.

Steve Botson's earlier projects have in the main been oil-fired boiler projects, but with growing interest in renewables, over the past few years he is seeing significant growth in the renewables sector with consumers becoming more renewables aware and looking for eco-friendly options for their homes. The added incentive of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive highlights the potential return on investment when installing MCS approved

equipment.

Steve has worked with Grant for a number of years and is impressed by the options they give him and his business: "Grant has an excellent range of oil-fired condensing boilers that are easy to work on, reliable, well made and require minimal maintenance. Their renewable options are similarly well built and reliable, so it was logical to embrace them as well in the solutions we offer to our customers. They also provide great training and support to installers like myself. I am already working on a number of other renewable projects using their products and see them as a vital partner to my business, as is evidenced by a look around my working showroom in Great Yarmouth!"

Andy Smith, regional sales manager for Grant Engineering said: "It's a pleasure to work with Steve. He is one of our key customers who understands the benefits of renewables and is actively introducing the options we offer to his customers. With the new domestic RHI tariff now live, there are great incentives on offer to embrace renewable technology in heating systems. In the long term these can potentially provide an income, so it's a serious investment well worth considering." See also page 10.  
[www.grantuk.com](http://www.grantuk.com) [www.gyheating.co.uk](http://www.gyheating.co.uk)



The heating and hot water of this 19th century house is now powered by an oil-fired boiler and a wood pellet boiler

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Continued from page 16

## AGAs, renewables and the future

**In 2009, sales of electric AGAs represented over 50% of sales, has this figure further increased?**

Yes, over 60% of AGA's sold today are electric. This has been driven by the introduction of new products like the AGA Total Control and AGA Dual Control.

**Do you think the RHI's introduction on the UK mainland will affect AGA Rayburn sales?**

No, not really.

**After AGA Rayburn suffered a decrease in profits in 2012, you stated that 'we're confident that we have the right mix of products.' Are you still confident and what is the right mix?**

Yes, this was demonstrated in 2013 when we saw a 15% increase in sales on the previous year. This has been driven by the aforementioned new product introductions – Total Control and Dual Control – over the last three years.

**Back in 2008/9 the Love AGA campaign was running, are there any further initiatives planned?**

We have continuous marketing activity in place to support the AGA brand, however there's not currently a major campaign like the Love AGA campaign running.

**Does AGA Rayburn still have an Energy Management Centre?**

Yes, we still have the Centre in place in Kidderminster.

**The future of oil lies with combining oil products with alternative technologies, do you still agree with this statement made in 2012?**

Absolutely, we continue to see more and more demand for combining renewable technology with oil heating products in the field.

**Are more installers opting for courses to link AGA Rayburn appliances with renewables?**

Interest in link-ups is increasing, but we're not yet offering dedicated training packages for renewable.

**Has there been a good take up of the Eco-Connect system which won OFTEC's innovative product of the year award in 2010?**

The uptake has been steady and continues to increase year on year.

**Is AGA Rayburn expanding further into markets such as the USA and China?**

We've been operating in the US market for over a decade and continue to develop the market there. We recently signed a reciprocal distribution and product development partnership with Zhongshan Vatti Gas Appliance Stock Co. (Vatti), a leading Chinese supplier of household appliances specialising in gas hobs. This new collaboration will allow both companies to distribute each others' products in their respective geographies thereby building on individual product and brand strengths.

**How do you see the long term future for oil-fired appliances?**

There will be a place for oil-fired appliances in the long term, but they will need to be highly efficient and easily integrated with renewable technologies.

## Questions over MCS bureaucracy

With an increasing number of householders opting to partner an oil-fired boiler with solar, Worcester, Bosch Group has criticised the number of barriers now in place for those installers looking to achieve Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accreditation.

Labelling the bureaucracy associated with the MCS as 'astonishing', Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support said: "As if installers' access to MCS isn't difficult enough given the sheer volume of prerequisites in place for funding qualification, manufacturers also have to overcome their own set of challenges in getting products tested for compliance under MCS 012 – the scheme's very own product standard."

Given the prevalence of the Solar Keymark, Martyn has questioned the

need for a new UK-specific solar testing procedure. "Despite the fact that the majority of solar products are certified with the Solar Keymark – a Europe-wide quality label for solar thermal – MCS now lists an extensive list of additional requirements over and above what has already become a harmonised European standard."

"The requirement stipulates that to enable the testing to take place, the manufacturer must not only pay for the testing and provide numerous products and ancillary equipment, but they must also build the roof for them to be tested on and disassemble it again afterwards. What is notable here is that the notified body tasked with testing products isn't equipped with the facilities required to complete the task and is placing the onus back on the manufacturer.



To gain approval under MCS local requirements, it will cost well over £30K for Worcester's five solar thermal products to be tested at an independent test house

"We've reached a point where the bureaucracy associated with MCS – both for a manufacturer and its products, and the installer – is astonishing. With the renewables market already struggling to meet its potential, should we not be doing all we can to stimulate sales rather than deter them?" [www.worcester-bosch.co.uk](http://www.worcester-bosch.co.uk)



# Can a healthy future for oil installers be secured in these challenging times?



Renewables, non-registered installers, escalating prices, depleting supplies... familiar words? As an oil installer today, not only in Scotland, but throughout the UK, you will probably associate these words with, to varying extents, a potential or existing threat to your business. But how much of a threat are they in reality?

### The market today

According to Consumer Focus, there are 135,000 oil heating systems in Scotland, which equates to around 5.8% of total properties. It is thought that more than 50% of all households in Scotland are off the mains gas grid, and are supplied by LPG, electricity or oil. These are strong statistics which show that although there is a huge potential market for new technologies in Scotland, the overall appetite for oil-based energy products is still high.

*Of the 2.4 million homes in Scotland...  
5.8% are oil-fired*

Sources: Scottish Government Housing Statistics; Consumer Focus

“There is still a large market for oil installation in Scotland; the high cost of renewables and the lack of suitability of many rural properties for renewables is a big factor in the slow adoption of the technology in this country,” claims Philip Ketchen, OFTEC regional inspector, Scotland.

Colin MacLean of Rammac Ltd t/a Deeside Gas Services agrees. Whilst he has seen a slight decline in traditional oil installations, they still account for 20-25% of his business. “In particular, I’ve noticed that customers are increasingly future-proofing their

*“... the lack of customer knowledge of and faith in renewables, coupled with the cost, will see traditional boiler heaters remain the primary heating form amongst Scottish customers”*

*Colin MacLean,  
Deeside Gas Services*

existing oil systems to make them more efficient before they take the final plunge and buy a new HE oil boiler,” he admits. “Customers like to spread the cost over time. They are becoming more aware of the need to protect their oil systems and increasingly, they’re asking for safeguards, such as remote acting fire valves, to be fitted. This trend is increasing amongst our oil installation clients.”

Alan Kerr of Perth-based L.W. Haddow Plumbing & Heating, on the other hand, explains that his company has witnessed a reasonably significant reduction in customer demand for oil-based products. He owes this to the growing renewables sector: “Historically, oil accounted for around 50% of our installations; however in recent years, we’re finding that those customers who would have previously opted for oil over gas, are switching to renewable technologies, in particular biomass,” he says.

In fact, biomass systems are currently one of the most popular installations amongst Alan’s commercial clients, mostly as a result of the 2011 non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). Meanwhile, traditional boiler systems still account for the majority of his domestic installations – no surprise given the catalogue of delays to the launch of the domestic RHI.

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## RHI: friend or foe?

The domestic RHI was launched on 9 April 2014 and while opinion on the extent of its impact on the oil installation business in Scotland is divided, it is generally accepted that there will be a definite impact.

"I personally believe that the lack of customer knowledge of and faith in renewables, coupled with the cost, will see traditional boiler heaters remain the primary heating form amongst Scottish customers," believes Colin. According to Philip the performance ratings of renewable technologies are not truly representative of the performance achieved in properties in rural locations. "These impressive ratings are probably unachievable in a substantial number of existing oil-heated properties."

While this may be the case, the threat to the traditional installations business is not to be underestimated. "Now that the domestic RHI has been approved, I think it will seriously push up biomass sales in Scotland to the detriment of oil boiler sales. Solar thermal and PV are still popular, and although we have seen the rate of uptake of these systems decrease, there are still lots of them being installed. This is usually happening alongside an oil or gas installation," says Alan.

## Government boost to renewables

It certainly appears that the Scottish government is actively encouraging the move to renewables. Whilst the domestic RHI is an incentive in itself – householders will certainly be tempted by the financial rewards given in return for heat produced from renewable technologies – the *Home Energy Scotland renewables loan scheme* makes the appeal even greater by offering interest-free loans of up to £10,000 to buy and install renewables. These incentives could totally change the landscape of the heating installations market in Scotland.

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*"[MCS accreditation] has cost a lot of time and money, but we are already starting to see a return on our investment"*

*Alan Kerr,  
L.W. Hadow Plumbing & Heating*

Consumer awareness will be key to the success of renewables, and it is Philip's hope that installers take responsibility for educating their customers, allowing them to make balanced and informed decisions.

Many domestic properties will benefit from renewable technology, in particular in combination with existing oil installations, however a healthy future for oil installers will require the expansion of their repertoire to incorporate renewable energy alternatives. This is easier said than done though – installers will need to gain MCS accreditation. "The financial costs involved are a major problem for installers, who are currently struggling for cash flow due to a reduction in private work," says Philip "It's important that OFTEC offers these new schemes in an affordable price range to make it a realistic opportunity for its members."

"We are already MCS accredited for solar PV, solar thermal, air source and biomass," says Alan. "It has cost a lot of time and money, but given that we became accredited for solar PV and solar

thermal in January 2012, and in December 2013 for biomass and air source, we are already starting to see a return on our investment."

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*"A lot of consumers in Scotland don't know who OFTEC are. The only way we can change this is through better marketing. Consumer awareness is paramount to the continued success of the oil heating industry in Scotland"*

*Philip Ketchen,  
OFTEC regional inspector, Scotland*

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## Non-registered installer woes

While Scottish oil installers are well aware of the changes that lie ahead, the threat of the non-registered installer is one that they have been dealing with for many years. Going by recent estimates, which cite almost 6% of Scottish homes to be oil-fired, coupled with the number of registered OFTEC installers which currently stands at 320, it is obvious that there are a lot of unregistered people currently undertaking servicing and installation work.

"More often than not, the jobs that I'm seeing by non-registered installers are so bad that the customer has to grudgingly pay us to return and correct the defects," explains Alan. Colin agrees: "I'm visiting properties more and more frequently where work has been completed by non-registered installers. Only yesterday I was at a property where the burner had been hard piped in with 10mm copper pipe and the condensate disposal was left dripping onto a path – the boiler was installed three years ago!"

"While these faults are readily fixed, it does beg the question – what else is happening in peoples' homes that is more dangerous?" he asks. "The regulations should be more robust and a tactic, similar to the GasSafe/HSE, should be instigated which will allow only OFTEC registered installers to buy oil-related products. Customers are getting fed up with being taken for a ride and then having to spend more money to get systems up to standard."

## What is OFTEC doing about it?

OFTEC has recently worked with and provided detailed information to a consultancy firm commissioned by the Scottish government to report on the compliance levels for plumbing, heating and electrical work, in the hope of getting to grips with the full scale of the problem.

"OFTEC's director general attended a conference hosted by Derek Mackay MSP, minister for local government and planning, to discuss the future of building standards certification in Scotland. Based on this meeting, it's clear that the Scottish government is considering whether the current building warrant system is fit for purpose and if some form of certification of installers might be appropriate," says Philip.

OFTEC has already produced evidence showing non-compliant heating systems in Scotland (to Pye Tait Consultancy) and hopes to persuade the Scottish government to introduce some form of formal accreditation of heating installation and servicing engineers.

**Continued on page 22**

## Installer Focus – Scotland

“There is a high level of quality work from registered installers,” says Philip. “I feel that this is down to them following OFTEC and Building Standards Regulations. It’s frustrating when I know these technicians are doing a great job yet there are non-registered people doing the same job sometimes to a much lesser degree of competency and putting customers at risk. We need to have a mandatory regulation and all installers on board and OFTEC registered,” insists Philip.

### Consumer awareness of OFTEC is critical

Where there is a demand, there will always be supply. The absence of a compulsory regulation and the lack of consumer awareness of the importance of OFTEC registration and the dangers of employing a non-accredited installer, mean the non-registered installer is here to stay, at least for now.

*“Consumer concern has never been greater about cost so this is a golden opportunity for OFTEC installers to push forward with oil heating in Scotland”*

*Philip Ketchen*

“A lot of consumers in Scotland don’t know who OFTEC are. The only way we can change this is through better marketing,” admits Philip.

Another topic which needs addressing is consumer education of oil prices. “Customers notice the rise and plateau of fuel costs at the roadside pump and this translates into a perceived rising cost of heating oil. They don’t look at the like-for-like cost of fuel/kW of energy produced. As soon as someone feels their wallet is going to take a hit, it becomes quite difficult to persuade them otherwise and they don’t realise that oil is actually a good option,” explains Colin. “The only way to overcome this is by trade magazines continuing to produce articles highlighting the differences. Installers can then produce non-biased information that the customer can look at.”

### Where to now?

“Consumer awareness is paramount to the continued success of the oil heating industry in Scotland,” agrees Philip. In the past five years, oil heating prices have risen considerably less than those of gas and electricity. Oil is still a viable and cost-effective source of heating and hot water, especially if linked with an air source heat pump or solar hot water. Consumer concern has never been greater about cost so this is a golden opportunity for OFTEC installers to push forward with oil heating in Scotland.

“In the future, I do see more emphasis on renewables in Scotland and I don’t think that oil installers should ignore it. Given the increasing concerns around cost, the addition of renewables to existing oil installations is a big plus as customers will still qualify for RHI payments and will have a system that is capable of heating their property more efficiently. This is something that oil installers need to accept.

“While the renewables market will inevitably grow, there will always be a sizeable market for oil installers in Scotland. There are many areas where renewables as the sole source of heating just won’t be viable,” he concludes.



The team at L C Haddow

**To comment on this article and the oil-fired market in Scotland, please email [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk)**



*“There’s still a large market for oil installation in Scotland.... however a healthy future for oil installers will require the expansion of their repertoire,” says Philip*



*Historically, oil accounted for around 50% of our installations,” says Alan Kerr, In recent years, L C Haddow has found more customers switching to renewable technologies, in particular biomass.*



# The importance of oil supply filters

*They may be in need of attention but filters within a heating oil supply system are frequently overlooked when it comes to an appliance service*

However, when it comes to equipment reliability, oil supply filters are of utmost importance, and in the view of OFTEC and its manufacturing members, correct selection, installation and maintenance of oil supply filters is vital.

## Maintenance of oil supply filters

There are two types of filter commonly used in oil supply systems.

Firstly, there is the strainer type filter, which should be fitted as close to the oil storage tank as possible. Designed to be washable, it serves to stop larger particles, typically greater than 150 microns in size from entering the oil line.

The second type typically comprises of a disposable filter element and is fitted downstream of the tank to protect the appliance and other oil supply components such as fire valves, de-aerators, etc. The filtration rate on disposable filters should not exceed 70 microns and it is important to check the filtration requirements of the appliance or equipment manufacturer. In some cases, a filtration rate as low as 15 microns may be required.

BS 5410-1:1997, which covers oil supply systems serving oil-fired appliances up to 45kW output capacity, requires filters to be inspected and checked for correct operation at regular intervals. For kerosene burning appliances this is typically at least once annually and twice annually

for gas oil appliances. The use of original equipment manufacturer's (OEM) service kits is recommended as these include the necessary replacement elements and seals for the fuel being utilised. Neglected filters will ultimately lead to fuel starvation and appliance breakdown.

## When a technician suspects fuel starvation, but the customer insists equipment has been serviced recently, what can he/she do?

Other factors, such as incorrectly sized pipework or poorly formed bends, can affect oil flow, but if the equipment has been in and working for some time, neglected oil supply filters can often be the root cause of the problem.

Obviously filters can be checked or replaced, but prior to breaking seals on filter bowls, it is worth performing a vacuum test on the burner fuel pump. In the case of gravity supply systems, as the burner tries to fire under correct conditions, a pressure gauge should register the correct pump pressure for the nozzle size and appliance output, whilst a vacuum gauge should indicate zero vacuum. As a rule of thumb, a reading greater than negative 0.3 bar is a good indication that there is an abnormal resistance to flow, and that upstream filters and pipework should be investigated. In the case of sub-gravity oil supply systems, again the vacuum reading should not exceed



Ensuring fuel is delivered to the appliance without containments or restrictions to flow - the importance of oil supply filters should not be understated

negative 0.3 bar or the manufacturer's specifications.

The importance of oil supply filters should not be underestimated. Their integration into the oil supply system and periodic maintenance helps ensure fuel is delivered to the appliance without containments or restrictions to flow. Details on suitable filters currently available can be found in the OFTEC Equipment Directory (Section 12).

Enter [www.oftec.org/technicians/equipment-directory](http://www.oftec.org/technicians/equipment-directory) in your web browser to download your copy now.



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# Sound tanks let down by poor installation and checking failures

*When responsible tank manufacturers design and produce environmentally friendly oil storage solutions, such as those above, it is particularly galling when many tanks are then abused at the installation and delivery stages*

Graeme Waters of **Northern Tank Services** has taken issue with some tanks recently. Submitting the photographs below, Graeme said: "I think in my 21 years of plastic tanks these are about the worst installations I've seen."

"The low profile tank is at a domestic property in North Yorkshire and horrified one of our engineers when they were called to the property to sort out the tank's fuel line."



A Yorkshire pudding?

"I found the other tank at a factory on Tyneside when I was asked to attend the site."



A Tyneside terror

Apparently, the base had not been supported so a couple of planks were just slotted in, then when the frame began to tip some side supports were welded alongside. Needless to say I was not climbing up to do a tank inspection!"

A third photograph showed an incorrect outlet valve on a tank near Gateshead.

### Questioning delivery procedures

Oil consultant Clive King recently put the following question to

Oil Installer – *how many tanker drivers check the security of oil storage tanks before they fill them?*

"In the past tanks were not checked prior to filling as drivers used the excuse that they were not technicians and therefore did not know what they were looking for," said Clive. "Today that situation has much improved but there are some drivers who still refuse to check a tank before a delivery."

"I understand that some delivery companies offer a commission or bonus, dependent upon the amount of tanks filled or litreage sold each day which may deter drivers from checking tanks....."

### A negative impact

At Preston-based tank manufacturer **J Seed & Co**, sales manager Wendi Whittle reports that the company is being called out to fix bad tank installations with increasing frequency.

"We're being asked to help with failed tanks more often. Having to put things right may be good business for us but I really do think that rectifying tank installation mistakes really does have a negative impact on our industry overall."

The company was recently called out to a site by a remediation company where the customer had a large bunded plastic tank that had been installed with the incorrect underground pipework. When the pipework failed causing a massive loss of fuel, the customer decided to convert to an alternative form of heating. "Had that tank been installed correctly the customer would have still been purchasing oil for several years to come," added Wendi.

**Oil Installer invites your comments on improving the lot of the oil storage tank – email [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk).**



### ASK OLLIE!



**I have been asked to install a balanced flue, which will terminate adjacent to a non openable window, do I still require a minimum separation distance of 600mm?**

No, the requirement of 600mm separation applies to an opening into a building. Where a window is made permanently non openable, consideration should be given to making sure that the flue terminal is sited a minimum distance of 300mm from combustible materials i.e. window frame. Possible plume nuisance for residence or neighbours must also be considered.

**I have been asked by a customer to install a new oil contents monitoring device on their integrally bundled oil tank, can a sight tube contents gauge be used?**

No, where secondary containment is provided a sight tube contents gauge must be contained within the secondary containment system. Therefore, on an integrally bundled oil tank this set up would be impracticable and an alternative type of contents monitoring device should be used e.g. electronic, hydrostatic, pneumatic, mechanical, etc.

**I am quoting to replace a boiler in an old property which has recently had loft insulation and double glazed windows fitted. I know the old boiler is too big, is there a quick and useful tool that can be used to calculate the approximate output of the replacement boiler?**

Yes. As a benefit of registration, OFTEC technicians have access to a *boiler sizing* tool and a whole host of other calculation tools – all of which are available by logging into the registered technicians area on the OFTEC website [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org).



Installers can promote the benefits of compliant oil storage by way of customer friendly Home Guides which can be downloaded at [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)

**I have been asked to install an oil storage tank only, what documentation should I be completing for this work?**

The OFTEC CD/10 form should be completed as a declaration of compliance. It is important to remember that only sections 1 and 10 of the form – *Oil storage details* and *Declaration of Completion* respectively – should be completed. Alternatively, the tank may be supplied with an OFTEC CD/10T which is a dedicated tank installation form, and should be completed in full.

**I have a routine inspection coming up and need to make sure that my suite of 2010 edition technical books are up to date. Where can I find the latest technical book update?**

Technical book updates can be found and downloaded from the OFTEC website [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org) using the following steps.

- From the homepage, go into the *Oil Technicians'* section;
- From the tool bar at the top of the page, hold your cursor over *Technical Information* and wait for the drop down box to appear;
- From the drop down box, select *Technical book updates*.

**I have been asked to install an integrally bundled oil tank at a large single family dwelling. It is likely that the capacity of the tank will exceed 3500 litres. Where I can find the correct fire separation distances for this application?**

Where the capacity of an oil storage tank exceeds 3500 litres, it is classed as a non-domestic installation, irrespective of the use of building that it serves. For information on the siting of non-domestic oil storage tanks, reference should be made to OFTEC Technical Book 3, section 3.5.

**Whilst inspecting a 3000 litre integrally bundled tank during a service visit at a domestic property, I reported to the owner the non-compliant issues in relation to fire protection. The owner is adamant that it complies, are there any leaflets I can use to promote the benefits of compliant oil storage.**

OFTEC has devised informative consumer friendly *Home Guides* which can be used to promote safety and compliance in an oil-fired installation. These are available to download from the OFTEC website, [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org).

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# Energy efficiency requirements for circulators

On 1st January 2013, it became a requirement under the Eco Design legislation for new glandless standalone circulators for heating systems to have an energy efficiency index (EEI) value of not more than 0.27. Current high efficiency A rated circulators do meet this requirement

Circulators contained within a product (combi/system boiler) do not have to be high efficiency rated until 1st August 2015 in new products and 1st January 2020 as a replacement component in an existing product. On these implementation dates, the EEI value in both cases will be reduced to 0.23. The table below summarises the transitional timeframe.

Compliance with Eco design requirements is market lead with the onus being placed upon manufacturers to produce compliant products. Once the supply chain has cleansed itself of older stock, it is expected that only compliant products will be available.

## Fully pumped circulation

In response to a number of enquiries relating to an article published in the last Oil Installer entitled *April 2014 update to Building Regulations Approved Document L*, OFTEC would like to confirm the oil-firing industry position on fully pumped circulation.

In this article, OFTEC summarised changes to the England Domestic Building Services Compliance Guide. Also adopted in Wales and Scotland it was reported that fully pumped circulation was no longer an

	1st January 2013	1st August 2015	1st January 2020
Standalone circulators For heating systems	No EEI requirements until 1st January 2013	EEI ≤ 0,27 from 1st January 2013	EEI ≤ 0,23 from 1st August 2015
Circulators integrated in a product New installed products	No EEI requirements until 1st August 2015		EEI ≤ 0,23 from 1st August 2015
Circulators integrated in a product Replacement case	No EEI requirements until 1st January 2020		EEI ≤ 0,23 from 1st January 2020

expected minimum requirement on boiler replacement.

Following consultation with OFTEC appliance manufacturing members, OFTEC can confirm that oil-fired condensing boilers are not designed to perform satisfactorily when connected to gravity circulation systems. This means that where the replacement boiler is of the condensing type, the connected system must be upgraded to fully pumped circulation as part of the replacement.

There will be some cases where upgrading an historical gravity system to

fully pumped circulation cannot be achieved without causing major disruption to existing building fabric and technicians should take advice from the boiler manufacturer.

## Are there any exceptions?

Some cooking appliances, capable of contributing to hot water production may be compatible with gravity circulation and manufacturer's advice should be followed. This article is also available as a downloadable Technical Notice at [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org).

# CE marking of plastic oil tanks

Directly applicable to UK law, the Construction Products Regulations (CPR) came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013. The aim is to provide a legal framework in order to break down technical barriers to trade within the EU and harmonise the technical specification and conformity assessment of products

## Are all oil storage tanks within scope of CPR?

No. Only products manufactured to a European *Harmonised Standard* are covered by CPR. Whilst new or updated standards are being released all the time, only plastic oil tanks manufactured to EN13341 are currently within scope. Steel oil storage tanks to BS 799 or OFTEC Standard OFS T200 are not covered by CPR.

## How do I know if a plastic oil tank complies with CPR?

Tanks that have been tested and deemed to comply with the manufacturer's *Declaration of Performance* will display a CE Mark as above.

Importers and distributors have a responsibility to assure themselves that a manufacturer has done all that is required under CPR, prior to placing a plastic tank on the market. Distributors must ensure that it is CE marked and is accompanied by the correct

documentation, instructions and safety information.

Notwithstanding the above, the responsibility for ensuring that a product has the correct characteristics for an application rests with the specifier, installer and local building authority.

## Does CPR have any influence on Building Regulations?

No. CPR relates to the performance of the tank. Its installation and use must still meet the requirements of regional Building Regulations.

## Who is responsible for enforcing the requirements of CPR?

The enforcement authority for England, Wales and Scotland is Trading Standards. Environmental Health Officers will provide enforcement in Northern Ireland.

Download this Technical Notice at [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org).



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# A confused market

Below David Knipe OFTEC training manager, speaks to Piper Assessment's chief executive, Steve Wright

Based in Sittingbourne, Kent Piper Assessment offers competency assessment in various trade related disciplines from Gas ACS to ductwork cleaning. It has been offering oil training for over ten years.

## What sort of working background do attending technicians have?

It's a mixed bag. Many attendees are renewing expiring qualifications whilst others come from related industries such as plumbing and gas. We find that there are many transferable skills particularly from gas operatives. Terminology can pose a small problem though with nozzles as opposed to injectors and gas ventilation is calculated in centimetres rather than millimetres. I often receive comment from trainees as to why the two sectors cannot harmonise their procedures more.

## How do you see the market developing?

I think the market is confused at the moment. There are so many ideas and initiatives that no one knows what to believe anymore. The RHI has eventually been launched but what will happen to ECO?

With messages still confused, I struggle to see how businesses can decide on a strategic direction. We have offered our clientele subsidised courses looking at business development to aid SMEs

in developing their business through these uncertain times. At Piper we try to offer solutions, not just training courses – we can only succeed if our customers do.

## Are there any problems/issues for training centres at the moment?

Training centres experience many of the same problems as technicians. If oil installation/maintenance firms are affected by external issues then you can guarantee that centres will also have the same problems.

I believe the way forward in these lean times is through diversification. Feedback suggests that in today's world, home owners are looking for a one stop shop. The more an engineer can do and the more schemes they can access – like Green Deal, MCS etc – the more work they can secure. Good training centres don't just offer courses – but also give guidance about how to maximise opportunities. Many of my customers contact me to talk about what's happening in the industry and how to benefit from the opportunities arising from these changes.

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



Piper Assessment's Steve Wright believes that the way forward in these lean times is through diversification

# Flexible training

Worcester's new Qualifications and Credited Framework (QCF) affiliated training and assessment around renewables has been designed to make it easier for installers to attain MCS accreditation

The QCF courses, which run in partnership with Logic Certification, take the form of a 3-day solar thermal programme, or a 4-day heat pump course, providing delegates with the knowledge to specify, install and maintain the particular technology.

The training initiative comes after DECC has committed to investing £250,000 in funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive Training Support Scheme (RHITSS). This voucher scheme subsidises up to 75% of the cost of renewables-based training for installers who are already qualified in the heating and/or plumbing discipline.

Training manager, Phil Bunce commented: "With the RHI launched this spring, there's the strong possibility that growing numbers of homeowners will express interest in renewable technologies, these qualifications can give installers the cutting edge above competitors."

Offered at Worcester's network of Training and Assessment Academies nationwide, QCF renewables training also



Opened in 2013, this new training facility at Normanton near Wakefield demonstrates the company's 'continued drive to provide enhanced service and training to our customers'

feeds into a wider professional development initiative whereby the installer can claim credits and work towards a diploma in

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



## Engineer-friendly electrical connectors

Heating World of Spares is pleased to announce the launch of a range of innovative, easy to use and low-cost Wago electrical connectors and junction boxes. Lever and push-fit connectors make secure, reliable connections in seconds. With connectors priced from just £0.10, why not see how much time you can save by using Wago electrical connectors on your next job? See also inside front cover.

Go to [www.hwos.co.uk](http://www.hwos.co.uk) or call 01388 760 333 for more information.



Find out more about the Heating World of Spares business on page 37



## Pumps proven to last

For pumps that last, look no further than Anglo Nordic. Supplying heating and ventilation components for over half a decade, the firm is still going strong.

An early version of the Suntec pump had been previously supplied 53 years ago to one customer. That was the Suntec Pump Model A2 ZAL 1048-4, manufactured back in 1960.

Having run its course, providing over five decades of service, it had packed up, and has now retired for life. A new pump will be replacing it, and is set to be installed in a car body repair shop, where it will be used on the burner for drying paint.

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## Show business

Having refitted its demonstration and training vehicle, Firebird Heating Solutions is taking the vehicle to county shows around the country. The new vehicle completed its first assignment at the East Anglia Game and County Fair in April; its next appearance will be at the Royal Norfolk Show in June. "County shows have a large number of visitors from rural communities where oil is often the choice for central heating and hot water provision," says general manager Debbie Coley. "It makes a lot of sense to take our message about quality heating systems to potential customers and to create interest and enquiries for our installer colleagues."



Firebird's presence at the show generated good leads for local installers to follow up reports regional sales manager, Dan Fox

# Use of LABC type approved products



As the UK's heating industry continues to evolve, innovative products are coming into the marketplace on a frequent basis. For practical reasons Building Regulations guidance documents such as Approved Documents in England are commonly only updated on a 5- year cycle. This means new products designed to meet the functional requirements of the Building Regulations enter the marketplace, but are not captured in an Approved Document, or presumed to offer compliance. In some cases, a product manufacturers' installation or user instructions may even contradict an Approved Document. The following information is provided to aid installers and consumers in deciding whether they wish to use such products or equipment.

## Do I have to comply with guidance in an Approved Document?

Following the guidance in an Approved Document is one way of ensuring – but does not guarantee – compliance with the functional requirements of the Building Regulations. What is considered to be reasonable provision will be for the building control body, or ultimately the courts to determine on a case by case basis.

By following guidance in an Approved Document the person carrying out the work can be reasonably assured, and will enjoy the benefit of a statutory presumption of compliance, i.e. they will be presumed to have complied unless it can be proven otherwise given the individual circumstances of the building work.

## What if a product carries LABC Registered Detail?

The LABC Registered Details Scheme is run and administered by LABC and serves to evaluate products and systems so they can be used in common situations. Through technical review of testing in accordance with relevant British or European standards, and peer evaluation, a product or system may be registered so that any local authority building control department requested to approve its use does not have

to perform an evaluation process again. Effectively, this can accelerate the building control application process.

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

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

No. The LABC Registered Details scheme was put in place to minimise the Building Control checking and approvals process. Whilst there is no need to seek approval from a building control body where oil installation or commissioning work is carried out by a registered technician belonging to a competent persons' scheme, the work is not exempt from enforcement should the local authority consider that the work has not been carried out within the requirements of the regulations.

As the scope of LABC Registered

Detail process is primarily intended to help building control surveyors working in local authorities decide whether a regulation has been met in a given set of circumstances, and may require a professional judgement beyond the guidance given in an Approved Document, OFTEC's view is that it would be inappropriate for technicians to apply this approach when self-certifying work, particularly where the LABC Registered Detail offers an alternative approach to that specifically recommended in an approved document. In these circumstances the technician would be entirely liable for a decision they have made.

OFTEC's advice to registered technicians is that all oil installation and commissioning work should be carried out in accordance with the relevant approved documents. This is to limit exposure to the installer/technician who will enjoy the benefit of a statutory presumption of compliance. Where a registered technician proposes to carry out work which is at variance with, or outside the scope of guidance in an approved document, then they are strongly advised to seek advice from OFTEC before starting work unless a suitable application is to be made to the local authority for approval under the Building Regulations.

# Planning permission – when is it required?

Planning permission is not normally required for the installation of an oil-fired appliance or oil storage tank. Providing certain criteria is fulfilled, this type of work generally falls under the category of *permitted development*. For example, a flue serving an oil-fired boiler would generally protrude from the rear or side elevation of a building and terminate no greater than 1m above the highest part of the roof. Similarly, an oil storage tank is not often sited forward of the principal elevation fronting a highway.

However, there are occasions when prior planning approval is required. This would include installation work undertaken within the curtilage of listed buildings, in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, and tanks and flues sited forward of the principal elevation fronting a highway, etc.

A full list of the conditions that must be met in order for an installation to be considered as a *permitted development* can be found at [www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/) and selecting the relevant project from the *Common Projects* section.

Where one or more of the conditions cannot be achieved, it is the legal responsibility of the property owner to obtain planning permission. However, as an installer, if you are aware that planning permission maybe required at the specification stage, it is worth suggesting to your customer that they should seek clarification from their local planning office. OFTEC recommends that you include a statement in your terms and conditions of trading that gaining planning permission, if required, is the responsibility of the property owner.

# A trend not to be ignored

*As customers in affluent areas fall out of love with oil sooner than others, Toby Buchan, managing director, Cotswold Efficient Energy Centre tells Oil Installer about the trends he is witnessing amongst his customers and explains why oil installers across the country need to adapt*

Change is coming to us all, making it increasingly impossible for oil installers to ignore the *threat* that initiatives, such as the Renewable Heat Initiative (RHI), now pose to their livelihood. But how imminent is this threat and is it really a threat at all or can it be turned into a golden opportunity?

Serving a fairly affluent and largely rural region of the UK, oil would have previously been the fuel of choice and the only realistic option, for most of Toby's customers. But things have changed.

"Not only is the end user paying a premium rate for their oil, but they have the added concern of protecting it from theft," explains Toby. "Rising costs, higher security risks and lower sustainability are key reasons why customers are turning their attention away from oil and towards renewable technologies."

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*A steady appetite also still exists for new oil installations with oil-fired AGAs still top of most homes' must-have list*

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### **The renewables market – far from a bed of roses**

Given the government's apparent commitment to reducing reliance on traditional fuel sources in favour of renewable technologies, the recent launch of the domestic RHI is predicted to bring an inevitable surge in demand for renewables.

Although one would expect renewables manufacturers and installers to be rubbing their hands together, the market has been far from a bed of roses.

"In 2010, the government announced its solid commitment to renewable energy technology and yet it took four years and several delays for the RHI to be finally approved," says Toby. "These delays have impacted badly on consumer confidence. Given the expensive nature of renewable technology installations, customers

have been reluctant to proceed and this has impacted negatively on business. Delays have also dented people's trust in government promises."

### **Regional variations**

"We're slightly more fortunate in the Cotswolds as our customers have a higher disposable income than other areas in the UK and they're more able to invest in these technologies," says Toby. The most popular installations amongst his domestic customers today are biomass and heat pumps, and biomass for commercial customers.

Despite the increasing interest in renewables, commercial and domestic customers will rarely look to install a full renewables package unless they are building a new property or undergoing major renovations. A steady appetite also still exists for new oil installations.

"In rural areas, oil-fired AGAs are still at the top of most homes' must-have list," says Toby. "Also large, old properties don't have the right fabric insulation for most renewable products and owners look to install the most energy efficient oil boiler whilst also taking the opportunity to improve the control devices for their heating system."

For customers sticking with their existing fuel supply, after good insulation, the greatest cost savings can be made by a good control system. "It is widely advocated that as much as 33% of fuel savings can be made by installing good energy saving controls," adds Toby. Even for these customers, Toby still urges them to consider renewable technologies. "Solar thermal is a good investment for heating water, in particular for large properties that have a

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*Depending on how quickly the RHI takes off, there's a huge shortage of qualified installers available to meet the scheme's requirements*

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high demand for hot water; customers stand to benefit from reduced oil usage and the prolongation of the life of their boiler."

### **A reluctance among installers to upskill?**

No matter how quickly customers begin reducing their reliance on fuel as a heating source, oil installers must begin thinking about diversifying their business by offering alternative services. "Fuel prices are only going one way and the end user will always seek advice from their installer, so it's critical that they are aware of and can offer more cost-effective alternatives," insists Toby.

"Depending on how quickly the RHI takes off, there's a huge shortage of qualified installers available to meet the scheme's requirements." According to DECC's latest estimates, 70,000 renewable technology installs are expected in the first year of the RHI.

"Installers need to upskill," says Toby. "A large number of installers have already gone down the Green Deal route for the sole purpose of installing gas boilers under the ECO Scheme. With this now pretty much dead in the water, I can understand their reluctance to upskill for the RHI. But, for those who have been through the process of becoming Green Deal accredited, there is a route into MCS, given that MCS and Green Deal Quality Management System (QMS) accreditation is essentially the same process. Installers with QMS will simply need to upskill to their chosen technologies," adds Toby.

### **Fortune favours the brave**

Although it's difficult to predict how customer demands for energy products will evolve over the next few years, things will not stay the same. "Homeowners' disposable income is more likely to be used to improve the insulation fabric of their home rather than on the new installation of an oil-fired appliance since insulation is needed for a home to qualify for the RHI," says Toby.

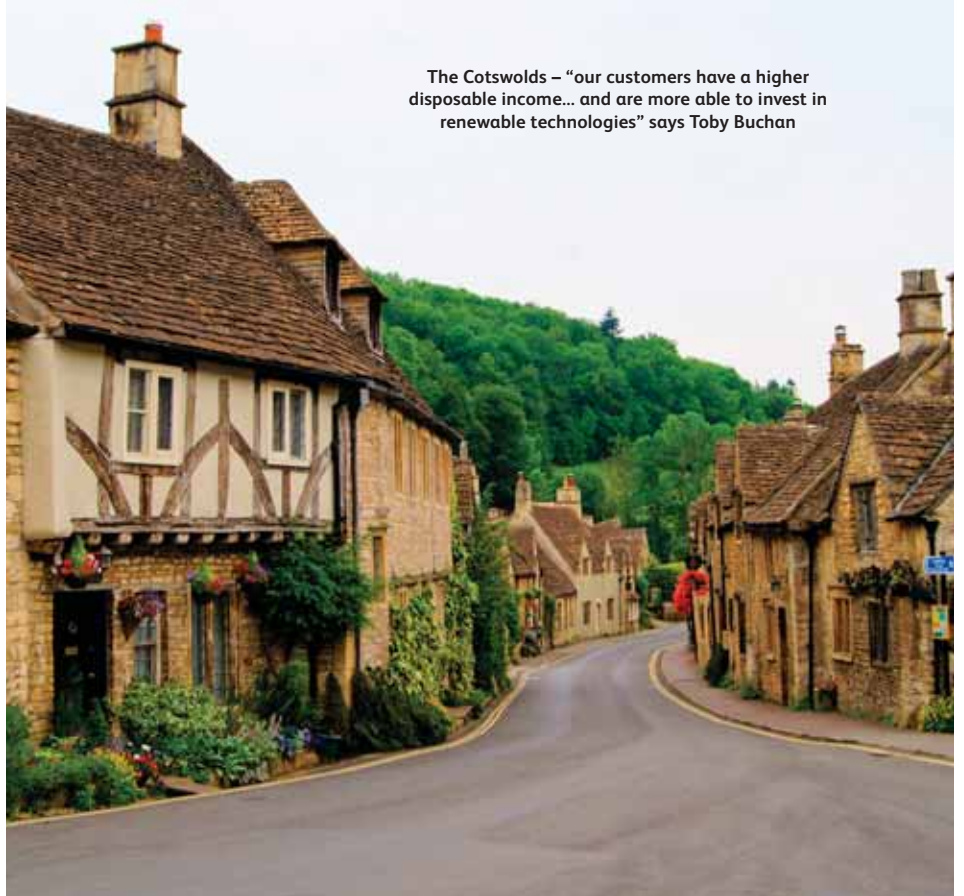
With the number of people in the UK deemed to be in fuel poverty steadily



*Change is coming to us all – oil installers must adapt and seize this opportunity to secure a healthy future for their business*

increasing and ongoing government initiatives incentivising the move towards more sustainable heating alternatives, the next few years could be very challenging for the oil installation industry.

“Years ago people were keen to save the planet from CO2 poisoning and now they’re more concerned with the continuously rising cost of energy. This will be the key driver towards renewable technologies. Different regions across the UK are noticing this trend at different rates, but it is coming and oil installers can’t afford to ignore it. They must adapt and seize this opportunity in order to secure a healthy future for their business,” concludes Toby.



The Cotswolds – “our customers have a higher disposable income... and are more able to invest in renewable technologies” says Toby Buchan

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# Team work keeps customers happy

*Established in 2006, Heating World of Spares (HWOS) wished to 'offer a better service and price to the trade.' Oil Installer spoke to manager Aaron Scott to find out how has this been achieved over the last 8 years*

“Hard work, determination and a clear goal has allowed us to give the very best of price to the trade,” said Aaron. “Having maintained our roots as a family company, excellent service to our loyal customers is our back bone.”

Known for ‘keeping it simple’ and ‘doing things right’, the HWOS team really appreciates the importance of getting the correct product to the customer as fast as possible. “Our goals are excellent price and service and keeping our customer informed and happy.”

In the last year, the HWOS team has been joined by Gary Johnston, business development manager and James Dawson, operations and efficiency manager. “Having been in the industry for over 30 years, Gary’s knowledge and ambition has already helped the company,” said Aaron. “And, with considerable experience in product supply and demand, James is taking our internal processes to a new level.”

### The Trade Store

The HWOS Trade Store can supply a vast selection of main line heating spares for oil, gas, LPG and solid fuel from stock. The company also has access to an even larger number of products direct from supply ready for same day dispatch. “To meet our customers’ needs, we’re always looking to expand our range and to this end, we’ve added even more new products to our latest magazine and to the online Trade Store.”

Already stocking a range of renewable spares, HWOS is seeing a large growth in this sector. “We always try to stay ahead by continuously updating our spares profile, and by having spares for new products ready for when engineers need them,” said Aaron.

To gain access to the HWOS Trade Store, an engineer simply needs to enter company name and post code. “We carry out a quick Internet search to confirm they are a bona fide trade engineer working within the heating industry,” explained Aaron. “In particular, we look for engineers being OFTEC and/or Gas Safe registered.”

HWOS knows how key it is to maintain a low cost but fast delivery service. “That’s why in the last 8 years, our charges have



Aaron, James and Gary – always looking for innovative ways to improve the HWOS service and for new technologies and products to offer to customers

changed very little,” said Aaron. “Our next day service starts from £7.50 with a super fast pre-noon option for just an extra £2. Orders over £180 +VAT have FREE delivery (discounted to areas outside the UK mainland) and we can now offer a later same day dispatch up to 6pm.”

### The Select Range

Keeping customers informed, HWOS renews its magazine yearly. In May over 20,000 copies were sent direct to trade engineers with a further 3,000 kept in reserve for requests. A monthly newsletter now keeps customers up to date with special offers and new products, including the Select Range of HWOS own brand products.

Since its launch on 1st February, the Select Range has been a great success. “Putting our brand onto a product was a big decision,” said Aaron. “For the initial launch of 10 products, we carefully selected high quality products from well established manufacturers, picking German engineered controls, chemicals and British made service brushes. Having heating engineering backgrounds, we wanted to make sure that we offered only products that we ourselves would be happy to use.” This

range of products offering quality, price and performance will be expanded over time.

### Oil, renewables and the future

Asked how HWOS views the future of the market in which it currently trades, Aaron said: “We see increasing integration of renewables, with more households combining a heating system with a solid fuel or wood burning heat source.

“As technologies shift to more advanced systems, we’ll move away from the days of heating having very few components or controls to go wrong. More appliances will need more repairs, leading us to the inevitable conclusion that more replacement parts will be needed!

With respect to the oil market, Aaron added: “Oil is a tried and tested solution to heat most off gas homes and businesses. I believe renewables will only ever support a main heat source and that there’s still a good future for oil and its fantastic network of skilled engineers.

“It’s been a joy to watch HWOS expand and develop and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our suppliers who continue to support us as we move into the future.”



# Integration – a way forward

*Energy prices are one of those hot topics of the moment, with households concerned about the ever rising cost of their heating bills. Toby Mayes, technical training officer at Specflue, a leading supplier of renewable heat products, explains how renewables can be integrated into existing oil-fired systems to increase efficiencies*

“The UK is an ideal place to make the most from renewable energy. Not only is it one of the windiest places on the planet, but it also has a lot of coastline that can be used to generate power through marine energy plants. And, despite the UK being known for its wet climate, solar power can be a profitable option if enough panels of the correct type are installed at a property.

However, the Government seems to favour promoting the energy efficiency route, leaving the decision on whether to invest in renewable energy down to the householder. Various bodies have called on the Government to commit and take action, by making a major investment in renewable energy infrastructure, but so far they appear to be holding back, with only the recent roll-out of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) offering a glimmer of hope that they are serious about sustainable energy.

*there has been a steady rise in the number of traditional solid fuel engineers and plumbing and heating engineers that are now working within the renewable sector*

### Improving efficiency and reducing cost

The dilemma comes for those consumers with perfectly adequate traditional heating schemes. Is it possible to integrate renewable energy sources to existing systems, to improve efficiency and reduce cost? The simple answer is yes. If you already have an existing oil or gas boiler and your house is well insulated, you could easily add solar thermal, heat pump and pellet stove technology, which could all be integrated into a multi-fuel thermal store such as a HEATBANK Xcel.



Toby Mayes, Specflue's technical training officer, sees opportunities for installers to grow their business with renewable heat products to complement traditional oil-fired systems

The system could then be configured so it uses the most efficient heat source at the lowest cost to the customer. During the summer, the customer could benefit from solar thermal as a free energy source for all their hot water. In milder weather, a heat pump system could be used; both cutting down the use of oil.

The thermal store allows multi-fuelled systems to be connected at one source giving more flexibility over fuel options, as it uses the energy generated through renewables and calls on oil only as and when required. Overall, there are good savings to be made by the customer and, in turn, more work to be carried by the installer, who should view the RHI as a great business opportunity.

### RHI – a business opportunity

The RHI scheme is set to run for several years, and it's an easy sell to customers, who will understand that, although they may have to pay a higher initial capital cost, they will be paid annually to run the system, therefore getting paid back on the financial investment they've made; something they can't get with a traditional system!

To give you an idea on the savings that could be made through the RHI, the following figures are promised to be paid back per kilowatt produced: Biomass 12.2p, solar thermal 19.2p, air source 7.3p and ground source 18.8p.

The number of biomass installers has increased considerably over the last 12 months and there has been a steady rise in the number of traditional solid fuel engineers and plumbing and heating engineers that are now working within the renewable sector.

There is no doubt that the opportunities for installers to grow their businesses are there for the taking and success will come for those that have the ability to explain the benefits of installing renewable heat products, both as an alternative option and as a complement to the traditional oil-fired systems.” See also pages 28 and 36. [www.specflue.com](http://www.specflue.com)

*the RHI scheme is set to run for several years, and it's an easy sell to customers*

# New heights for Mitsubishi

*A pioneering mixed-used development in Surrey has secured the Best New Technology award at the 2014 Climate Week Awards*

Kingston Heights is a £70m scheme situated near the banks of the River Thames. It utilises Mitsubishi Electric's advanced Ecodan heat pump technology to produce zero on-site carbon emissions, in contrast to the estimated 500 tonnes of CO2 that would otherwise be emitted by a combustion-based system.

The system recovers the solar energy

stored naturally in the river water to provide heat and hot water for 56 homes and 81 luxury private apartments. Later this year, it will also provide hot water and cooling for a new 142 bedroom hotel.

Up to 150 litres of water a second is abstracted after passing through a two-stage filtration process. The water then passes through high-efficiency heat



Ecodan heat pump technology is being used at Kingston Heights to produce zero carbon emissions

exchangers to harvest the low grade heat before being returned to the river with a temperature change of no more than +/- 3°C. [www.mitsubishielectric.eu](http://www.mitsubishielectric.eu).

# Farmers flock to renewables

Ledbury-based Bavenhill Mechanics has installed six 14kW Ecodan air source heat pumps to provide underfloor heating in a new agricultural shed on a Gloucestershire poultry farm.

Farmers Reg and Graham Watkins say the Ecodan system is already providing a much more comfortable environment for the chickens as it enables the temperature to be easily altered to match the flock's requirements. Under the Renewable Heat Scheme, the farm is eligible for a payment of £11,250 per year.

"Although the new shed has better levels of insulation than

our older sheds, the difference is outstanding," said Reg. "We'll be looking at using this technology in the existing sheds."

At Bavenhill Mechanics, managing director Chris Chapman said: "We've regularly installed Ecodan's into people's homes and several offices, but this is the first time we've fitted the renewable heating on a farm; although with the savings we'll see here, I am sure it won't be the last."

Ecodan heat pumps are available in individual units from 4kW to multiple systems up to 688kW, with the ability to work in tandem with other heating technologies.

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## **Seminar programme**

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and how should technicians react?**

- Neil Schofield of Worcester Bosch

**Proposed changes to building regulations**

- Matt Northcott

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