

Fuel Oil News

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JULY 2023



THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION ISSUE

PREVENTATIVE SERVICING

SKILLS GAP INSIGHTS

FUEL THEFTS ON THE INCREASE



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Where your treasure is...

What's the most precious thing you've ever been given?

While that question may set many things running through your mind, I'd be surprised if most of us wouldn't arrive at the same answer – time.

Given the current economic climate, it's a relief the answer isn't something more material.

But what does make time so precious? Unlike money, we can't make more of it, however hard we try, so when you give it away to someone, or something, you are giving a piece of your life that you'll never get back.

There is a reference to a certain time-travelling DeLorean in these pages but, unless physics has moved on considerably since the heady days of my undergrad life, the flux capacitor sadly remains a bit of fun technobabble, and time continues to march stubbornly in one direction.

Given how unarguably precious our time is, it's interesting to consider what we do with it.

In this issue, you'll find inspiring stories of members of our community being hugely generous with their time –

not for personal benefit, nor for financial gain – but for the benefit of others. And they are doing it simply because they care.

The things that we give our time, and our money and our attention, to are the things that we care about the most – we invest in the things that matter to us. Interestingly, the converse is also true; when we invest in something, it begins to matter to us. It is unsurprising then, that there is so much heart in this industry.

Over decades, Fuel Oil News has covered the stories of those who have invested huge amounts of time, energy, money and heart in creating businesses that serve the energy needs of their communities. This issue is no exception.

The customer has always been at the heart of this sector and, whether a smaller independent or a large energy group it comes down to the same thing – looking after the customer's needs.

It's a focus that other emerging energy sectors would do well to emulate.



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Fuel Oil News

The independent voice for the fuel distribution, storage and marketing industry in the UK and Ireland.

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On the cover

Chris Bingham, CEO & chairman of Craggs Energy Group is pictured with wife Heidi at the company's recent 10th anniversary celebrations. Postponed from 2021, the event saw many glasses of champagne raised! More on page 5



In this issue

'Industry Analysis' on pages 26 to 29, considers different approaches to industry recruitment. On pages 12 & 13 we learn how timely servicing can avoid untimely disruption, and sector data is unpacked in 'Downstream' on pages 15 to 22.

OilMaxx gets top marks for generous support of local primary school

OilMaxx Preston Depot is donating £1,500 to Grindleton Primary School, Clitheroe along with an ongoing offer of financial support, and all because of one dad – Chris.

Stunned by the generosity of the support from the local fuel distributor, Rob Blanchet, the school's head teacher, commented: "Grindleton Primary School would like to give special thanks to Mr Chris Hewitt and OilMaxx for their generous donation to the school."

Cost-of-living bites

Chris is used to helping people save money on fuel as business development manager at the OilMaxx Preston Depot. But, recently, it's not just stretched budgets forcing businesses to cut down; the cost-of-living crisis is affecting matters closer to home.

Chris explains: "I have two daughters at Grindleton Primary School, where they thrive. It's an idyllic Church of England school with close links to St. Ambrose. The school receives limited government funding, as there are just under 40 children attending.

"I didn't realise how bad the pressure was on the school finances until the headmaster sent parents a letter telling us they could no longer employ the school cook, Mrs Hargreaves, after 20 years of service."



An impossible choice

"We can all look back fondly at our memories of the school dinner lady when we were kids," Chris continues. "I realised that Grindleton's acting head teacher, Rob Blanchet, has had to make an impossible decision.

OilMaxx and its parent company OilFast have high corporate responsibility standards and contribute significantly to their employees and communities as Chris explains: "We do loads of sponsoring for football teams and, as a family-run company, they are always keen to hear about what matters to us. So, I asked if we could help my daughter's school. When my boss said yes, I was so happy, and when I told the head teacher, he was quite emotional."

Mr Blanchet will decide what to do with the donation of £1,500. In thanks, he said: "The donation is greatly appreciated and will help us to provide further enrichment opportunities for all the children in our school. Initially, this will be used to fund additional sports activities at school, and we know that all the children will enjoy and benefit from the increased opportunities this will provide."

Some of the funds went towards hosting its Sports Day on 19 June – an important school day for any parent.

In the run up to the event Chris said: "I look forward to seeing the smiles on the children's faces."

Craggs Energy announces special award

Craggs Energy, the West Yorkshire-based distributor, recently announced Emily Yates as the winner of their special recognition award.

Craggs Energy regularly gives internal awards to showcase and appreciate the best and brightest within the business. Alongside their quarterly 'Employee of the Month' awards, they recently awarded special recognition to their operations and transport planner, Emily Yates, to say a huge thank you for all of her continued efforts and hard work.

Superstar

David Damary-Thompson, general manager at Craggs commented: "Emily has been with the business for nearly 8 years and has been an absolute asset from day one. She has been recognised as going above and beyond in her role, particularly in helping support our sister company Moorland Fuels in their routing department.

"A huge well-done Emily you really are a superstar."

Support

Emily also recently completed her Mental Health First Aider certification so she can better support all her colleagues, give advice and be a point of contact so everyone can talk about mental health and seek help when needed. This supports Craggs' vision for a mentally healthy workplace for all.

As a thank you, Emily was able to spin the wheel of the Craggs Energy lucky prize draw and walked away with a brand new air fryer!



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Craggs Energy finally celebrates belated ten-year anniversary

Calderdale-based fuel supplier Craggs Energy celebrated at The Venue in Barkisland. The event, which had been postponed since 2021, welcomed over one hundred and forty team members from all over the UK and from a range of different businesses that have grown from Craggs Energy since it was set up in 2011.

Chris Bingham, CEO and Chairman comments: "I was delighted to finally celebrate Craggs Energy's ten-year anniversary by bringing together all the colleagues from businesses we have established over the past twelve years.

"I'm a strong believer that the reason why these businesses have been so successful is because of the talented people I have surrounded myself with. This is why it was so important to me that these businesses were set up so that eventually my colleagues will share the success and reap the rewards.

"Last year we transferred one hundred per cent of the ownership of two of these businesses via an employee ownership trust and all other businesses have a generous EMI share scheme.

"The celebration was an opportunity to say thank you to the hundreds of people, both past and present, that have worked with me



and helped to grow all the businesses to the successful position they are in today!"

Chris has grown over seven separate businesses in the fuel and green energy sector and won Entrepreneur of the Year at the 2022 Calderdale Business Awards. His most recent venture, Greenarc Limited, ranked number fourteen on The Times100 list of Britain's Fastest Growing Companies.

Chris and his wife Heidi are passionate about supporting the local Calderdale area and as Craggs Energy's roots are from Cragg Vale in Halifax it seemed fitting that the event was held in the valley. Local comedian, Lea Roberts provided entertainment at the event and all materials were sourced from local providers.

The last decade has seen remarkable growth, challenges and investment, and the celebration was an opportunity to honour and recognise the success each individual and business has achieved since 2011.

"We had a fantastic time," Chris smiled. "It was rewarding to see so many people travel to Halifax from all over the UK to celebrate our joint successes."



Inver Energy extends low carbon fuel supply with HVO forecourt roll out

Inver Energy (Inver), part of Greenergy Group, has extended its HVO supply offer in Ireland.

Inver is able to supply competitively priced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) nationwide to support customers in reducing their emissions and has made the low carbon liquid fuel, which reduces net carbon emissions by up to 90%, available at selected forecourts.

A significant step

The first three forecourts have begun sales, with HVO now available at Inver Fermoy in Co.

Cork, Inver Johnstown in Co. Kilkenny and Inver Castletroy in Co. Limerick with further sites to follow. HVO fuel purchases can be made with Inver's fuel card, which operates across the DCI network.

John O'Leary, managing director, said: 'We are committed to providing our customers with a range of low carbon fuels that will help them reduce their carbon emissions and help support Ireland's decarbonisation targets. Making HVO available at forecourts marks a significant step in meeting the rising demands for reliable supply of low carbon fuels closer to our customers.'

Prax group enters North Sea market with successful acquisition

Lindsay Oil Refinery owner, the Prax Group has announced the strategic acquisition of UK-based exploration and production company, Hurricane Energy, in what it describes as 'part of a long-term growth strategy'.

After a court sanction of the deal, which valued Hurricane at £250m, was granted, the directors of the company, with a 100 per cent operated interest in the Lancaster offshore oil field in the West of Shetland basin, resigned and its shares on the AIM market were cancelled.

A natural progression

Describing the deal as 'a natural progression of strategy', Prax Group CEO Sanjeev Kumar Soosaipillai continued saying: "It is a very significant moment in the Group's history and a major leap forward towards achieving our goal of becoming a fully integrated global energy provider."

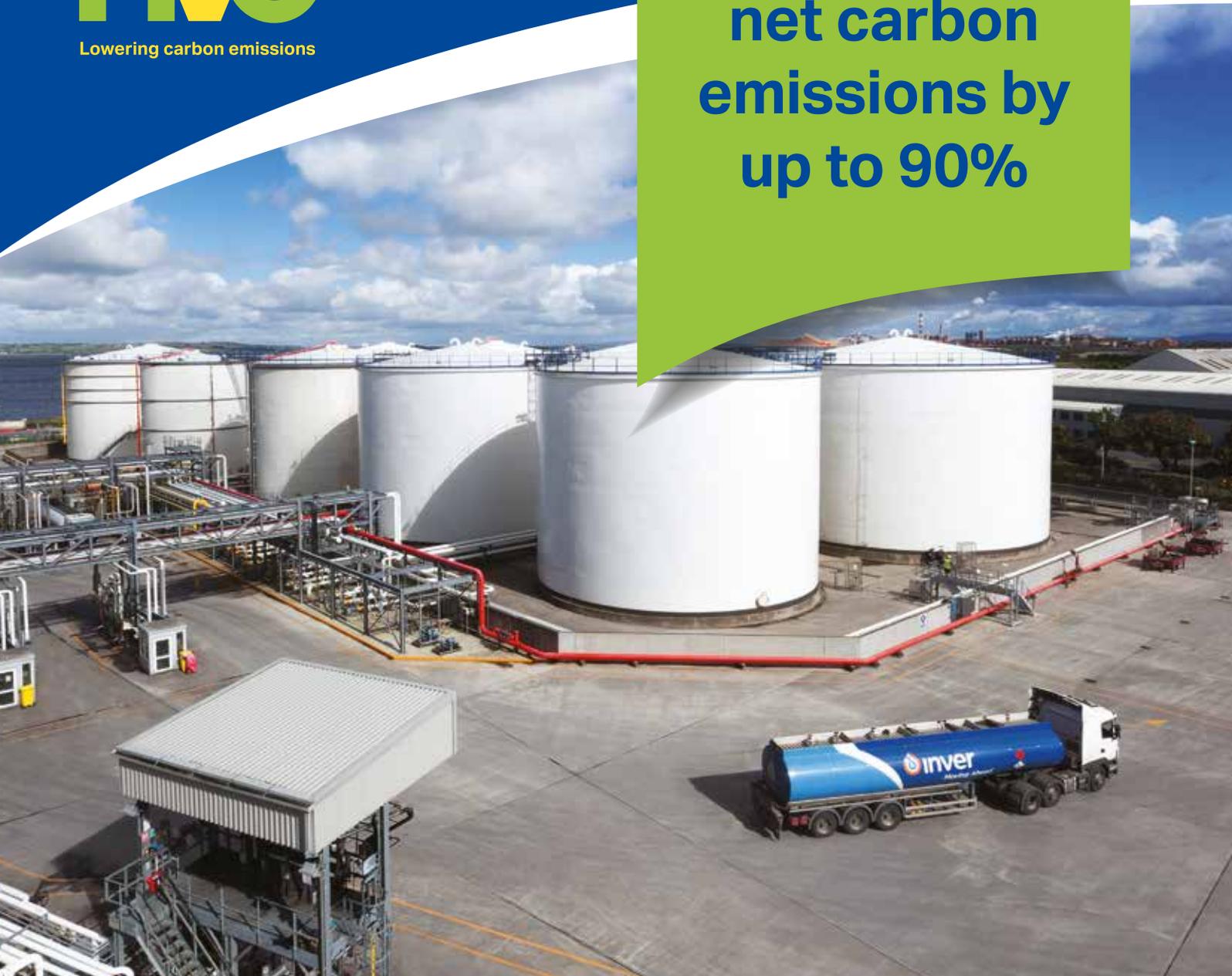
He added: "Our long-term strategy is to be fully integrated across the oil value chain from upstream to downstream, and today marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Prax Group.

"The acquisition of Hurricane Energy will create unique opportunities for synergies with existing Prax-owned assets, as well as demonstrating our ongoing commitment to building a solid and transformative supply chain to meet the needs of our customers for many years to come."

In its recently published 2022 accounts, Hurricane reported a 10-fold boost in profits from 2021. When the deal was originally announced in March, Hurricane chairman Philip Wolfe said it is expected to "deliver more cash" than shareholders would have likely received from the firm's Lancaster oilfield, and on an expedited time frame.

The Prax Group will continue to explore new business opportunities as part of a long-term growth strategy.

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A vital charity is set to benefit from Ben's golf fundraiser

Ben Firth, sales engineer for Mechtronic, is also taking part in some vital fundraising. Through his participation in a charity golf day, Ben will be raising money for the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT). The charity has supported and helped Ben's family directly as his son is currently dealing with Retinoblastoma and has undertaken 6 rounds of chemotherapy.

Ben explained: "On Saturday 29th July, I will be completing 4 rounds of golf in 1 day, raising funds for CHECT. This charity has helped support my youngest son Harvey, who was diagnosed with Retinoblastoma in August 2022 at the age of just 2 years old.

"CHECT are the only charity in the UK who are solely dedicated to helping children and families affected by Retinoblastoma. They provide support, raise awareness and fund research into prevention and treatment of this very rare form of cancer.

"I will be completing all 4 rounds at Dewsbury District Golf Club, where I am a member, and the event will start with my first tee time at 5.30am. My last tee time is 6.00pm and I am hoping to be finished by 10.00pm!

"If anyone would like to donate, then head to my JustGiving page which can be found at www.justgiving.com/page/benfirth-teamharvey. Thank you to everyone who has already supported me with this event, I really do appreciate it!"

Fuel Oil News sends its very best wishes to Harvey, Ben, and the family. We will let you know in a future issue how Ben gets on with his golf challenge.

Clocking up different meters on the Great North Run

Regularly updating us with the increasing number of Mechtronic systems out in the industry, Emma Allinson, marketing coordinator at the Leeds-based metering and gauging system experts, will be counting different meters when she takes on the Great North Run in September.

Raising money for Blood Bikes, Emma shared: "Back in 2008 I ran the Great North Run in memory of someone very special to me. Afterwards I swore I would never do it again as I suffered with cramp after running through a fireman's hose – something I thought was hilarious at the time and cooled me down nicely, but those last three miles were hard, and I never ran again!

"Fast forward to 'Lockdown 2020' and I, like many others, started the C25K and at 40 I was finally able to run 5k each week. Now, three years later, I entered the ballot for the Great North Run and was successful.

"I decided to enter, as I am running in memory of another very special person and this time I would like to help raise money for Blood Bikes, who do an amazing job supporting the NHS, using motorcycles to courier urgent



and emergency medical items including blood, human milk, X-rays, samples, drugs, and documentation between hospitals and other healthcare facilities."

"I have been out most weeks doing a 5k run but now need to get out more often and up the distance! I will be running solo, but my husband and two boys will be cheering me on, alongside family and friends too.

"Last time I did it in 2 hours 41 minutes; I hope I can beat that this time, but I am quite a bit older now and, to be honest, I will be glad to get to the end and hopefully raise some funds for the Blood Bikes. I will definitely be having a pizza at the end and a gin to celebrate!"

If you would like to sponsor Emma then please visit: <https://greatnorthrun2023.enthuse.com/pf/emma-allinson>.

Good luck from Fuel Oil News!

Prince Petroleum visits Cobo in Spain... again!

Aaron (Mitch) Mitchell, transport director at Prince Petroleum, recently enjoyed a lovely, relaxing holiday in Spain with his wife, Nicola but managed to combine it with a little bit of work when he took Nicola to visit the Cobo factory in Santander. Aaron had attended the recent Cobo factory trip but couldn't resist another visit!



"Santander was amazing," Aaron shared. "I went on holiday for a week



with my wife Nicola and managed to squeeze in one day of work. It was a great opportunity for Nicola to see a bit of what I do at work and she really enjoyed a tour of the Cobo facility (obviously I pointed out that normally my work is without the sunshine!). She did remind me that I was last there just a couple of weeks ago!

"Lupo kindly took time out from his busy schedule to give us a guided tour of the local area. As a stroke of luck, the weather was much better in the north of Spain compared to the south of the country."

Aaron was also able to see the latest additions to the Prince Petroleum fleet rolling off the production line!



Celebrating 25 years with Centre Tank Services

Last month, Centre Tank Services Ltd (CTS) celebrated warehouse manager Neil Dolan, who has enjoyed an impressive 25 years working for the leading trade distributor of fuel dispensing, storage tank, AdBlue™ and lubrication equipment.

The last quarter of a century has seen Neil involved with: a move to larger premises, CTS taking on a second warehouse unit, the assembly of many hose kits and pump kit builds for OEM customers and making sure the stores run like clockwork. As part of the celebrations, all staff members joined Neil for a buffet lunch, speeches, and a gift presentation.

Neil said: “A stand out moment for me was when I’d not long started working for CTS, and it was just sod’s law that I broke my leg at football. I remember coming into work the next day with my leg in a cast, on crutches and determined... because I really wanted to keep this job and I wanted to prove that I wasn’t going to be a liability.

“Here we are 25 years later, the leg is better – despite having numerous different sporting injuries over the years – and I think that my having been here for 25 years just proves how much I love my job and enjoy working here.”

Congratulations to Neil! If you have any colleagues celebrating a work anniversary, then please do share them with us: claudia@andpublishing.co.uk

Certas accelerates transition strategy with appointment and acquisition

Certas Energy has accelerated its mission to transform the way homes and businesses are powered with the appointment of a new Renewable Energy Director and the acquisition of Hafod Renewable Energy, a leading supplier of sustainable energy solutions.

Sustainability goals

With a commitment to supporting customers on their energy transition journeys, Certas has appointed Mark Deeney, a specialist in renewable technologies, to spearhead its diversified and growing portfolio of sustainable energy solutions and services.

In his new role, Mark will head up the company’s newly-formed Energy Solutions Renewables Division. He commented: “I am delighted to be joining Certas Energy at this pivotal point in its energy transition journey. The path to net zero is not always straightforward and the pace of change varies significantly across different sectors, but I am passionate about building Certas Energy’s alternative energy solutions propositions and realising value from key acquisitions.

“Our overarching aim is to help our customers achieve their sustainability goals by ensuring they have access to the right renewable technology solutions and expertise, at the right time.”

As well as welcoming Mark on board, Certas Energy has recently acquired Hafod Renewable Energy, one of the UK’s fastest growing renewable energy businesses.

A pipeline of renewable acquisition

Based in St Asaph, Wales, Hafod Renewable Energy offers a wide range of sustainable energy solutions to domestic, commercial and agricultural customers, including air source heat pumps, solar panels, EV chargers and underfloor heating. Hafod Renewable Energy is the second major investment Certas Energy has made to grow its renewable solutions offering, having acquired Preston-based Freedom Heat Pumps, one of the UK’s leading distributors of air source and ground source heat pump equipment, in late 2022.

An unwavering commitment to transition

Steve Little, MD at Certas Energy, said: “Transitioning homes and businesses towards



cleaner energy options to create a more sustainable future will require a combination of technologies and services. We’re dedicated to developing and investing in our business model to do exactly that.

“Mark’s appointment and the latest acquisition of Hafod Renewable Energy is testament to our unwavering commitment to powering the energy transition, and we are excited for the significant contribution they will make to Certas Energy and our customers. By expanding our portfolio, growing our renewables division and harnessing industry-leading expertise, we are confident that we can continue to drive meaningful change.”

“Certas Energy is also driving change in liquid alternative fuel through national supply of HVO for commercial customers and participating in the UKIFDA and OFTEC Future Ready Fuels Project, demonstrating HVO’s capabilities as a 90% reduced carbon emission heating solution alternative to kerosene.”

Leading by example

“Further to this,” Steve continues. “The company has established an ESG and Sustainability Committee to articulate, develop, drive and monitor its ambitious sustainability strategy and environmental, social value and governance goals. These efforts combined saw Certas Energy being crowned winner of the highly coveted UKIFDA Green Award for 2023.

“Sustainability and ESG is the golden thread running through our growth strategy, building on sustainable principles, standards and products,” added Steve. “We strive to lead by example and have already exceeded our 2025, 20% carbon reduction target.

“As a company, we are on track to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and, by continuing to invest in lower carbon energy products and expertise, we are optimistic that our customers can join us on this journey and achieve their own carbon neutral goals.”



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‘Team Stobart’ completes Lake District Trek to raise funds for Alzheimer’s Society

A team of employees from Carlisle-based fuel supplier, Allan Stobart, has raised vital funds by completing the Alzheimer’s Society Trek13 challenge on one of the hottest days of the year!

Supplying householders, farmers, and businesses for over four decades, and a proud member of the West Cumberland Farmers (WCF) group, Allan Stobart Lubricants and Fuels is one of the UK’s largest independent fuel oil distributors. A depot near Dalston enables the supplier to deliver across Northern Cumbria and Southern Scotland.

When an opportunity came to participate in a charity walk in the Lake District, there were several volunteers from Allan Stobart, and the team that completed the challenge was made up of employees from across the business.

Lead by routing assistant, Willie Johnston, the team included general manager Steven Hindmarsh, drivers Colin Davidson, David Lamb, and Ian Bouch and sales and marketing coordinator Layla Marks.

The event took place on Saturday 10th June, one of the hottest days of the year so far, with the 13-mile route beginning in Patterdale and venturing through the tranquil Ullswater lake scenery with stunning views of Helvellyn along the way to the finish at Dalemain Mansion.

An incredible cause

The group has been raising funds for Alzheimer’s Society, a charity close to the hearts of many, but especially Steve and Willie who both have family members who are suffering with the disease.

Dementia is the biggest health and social challenge of our time, currently affecting an estimated 900,000 people in the UK. Many are undiagnosed and facing the realities of their condition alone.

Willie came up with idea of completing the walk to raise funds on behalf his father, saying: “My Dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s over 5 years ago and is now in a dedicated residential care unit. He is comfortable and well looked after but this disease is very cruel and distressing for both patient and family. I’m hoping we can raise as much money as possible for this incredible cause.”

For those wondering what it’s like to take on a challenge like this we asked some of the team to tell us about their experience.

What was the best bit about the challenge?

Ian: The camaraderie of the team helping us through the tougher parts of the route.

Layla: Meeting fellow walkers along the way and finding out why other people were doing it, especially those doing it alone. Also, the stunning scenery and getting a real appreciation for what we have on our doorstep.

Why did you personally decide to join the team?

Ian: To help raise awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and to support my colleagues who have personal experience with the disease.



Layla: It sounded like an incredible challenge, whilst raising funds for an important cause that needs our support.

Funniest moment of the day?

Ian: Everybody’s reaction to seeing the food station at the 6-mile mark!

Layla: The attempts at climbing over a stile after the 11-mile mark when our legs were heavy, and our feet were sore. It wasn’t as elegant as anyone would have hoped!

Toughest moment of the day?

Ian: Walking past the ice cream shop in Pooley Bridge – our legs were cramping by that stage, and it was hot, but if we’d stopped we probably wouldn’t have been able to start again!

Layla: The initial climb after the break station – it was in the blazing sun, without a breeze or any shade. That was when the team camaraderie really helped – just checking on each other, encouraging hydration, snacks or taking a breather. Just being patient and supportive with each other to keep us moving.

Congratulations!

We take our hats off to the group, who completed the challenge in an impressive 4 hours and 47 minutes, and to Paul Ingleton, also a driver at Allan Stobarts, who decided to tackle the Trek26 challenge which starts and finishes at Dalemain Estate but covers the distance of a marathon!

Do your bit

Everyone involved agreed that even though it was hard work, it was worth it and that they’d be interested in doing it again next year! If you fancy giving it a go you can find out more here: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/events-and-fundraising/join-event/trekking/trek26/trek26-lake-district>

In total, the group has managed to raise an amazing £2,904 so far. Donations to the team’s fundraising are still being accepted and you can support this vital cause by visiting www.justgiving.com/team/TeamStobarts.



A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Chloe Crofts

WELCOME TO OUR FEATURE WHERE PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT ROLES IN THIS INDUSTRY WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH A TYPICAL DAY IN THEIR WORKING LIFE. THIS MONTH, FUEL OIL NEWS SPEAKS WITH **CHLOE CROFTS**, CEO AT EXSWIFT, TO DISCOVER HOW CHLOE SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

06:33am. I know that's very random and particular but those extra 3 minutes make such a difference – lol!

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Head downstairs and let our miniature dachshund, Daisy, outside.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Making myself a coffee with an extra espresso shot. Then I sit and go over my diary for the day, before the kids wake up and the juggling act begins!

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

My phone, my laptop, and my lip oil!

MY TYPICAL DAY – I try to wake up early, before my two daughters, as my eldest has autism and needs a lot of support to get ready for her day at school. With that in mind, I'm up with a coffee in hand checking my diary and emails before mum duties begin.

Then it's a mad dash for the school run. I'm a hybrid worker so will go between home and the office. I tend to work from home in the mornings to get any important tasks or any updates to the website (my third baby!) done without any distractions.

I then like to head into the office to catch up with the team, after that it's usually into my office for strategy planning with my business partners. We are all very passionate about what we are building so these sessions are usually dynamic. Then later in the afternoon the drivers start coming back and I like to check in with them and hear how things are going out on the road.

After the office I am back home, and I will try to head to my PT



session followed by a circuit class, or I will go to our home gym and get on the treadmill and watch a 'Masterclass' session. Then it's a shower, cook dinner and relax with Adam.

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

This is a bit of a personal life meets work life moment, but it was when my youngest daughter, Aria, who is 11, came home to me and said: "Mummy I saw two of your tankers!" She was very proud, and realising that she is watching how hard I work and is aware of what I am trying to build was a real high.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

That I'm never 'off the clock' – we operate pretty much 24/7 so it's hard to fully step away although I am getting much better at this now that our team has grown.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

How no day is ever the same.

My role is so varied and affords me opportunities to work with some great people and suppliers who have become friends along the way, too.

My other favourite part is calling our monthly 'Win it Back' draw winner and telling them they have won the full cost of their order back, then heading out and visiting them to hand them their winnings!

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

Relaxing with my husband, watching some sort of true crime series with a glass of Gavi!

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS...

Evening meal – Steak. Medium rare. Perfection! Plus, I get to enjoy it with my husband, and we can catch up on how our days went.

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

Phone charger, my favourite scented candle, and our watch winder.

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

Check about 38,000 times that I have set my alarm for the next day!

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

Midnight – there literally aren't enough hours in the day!



Prioritising people to keep fuel systems running smoothly

WITH 50 YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN THE FUEL SECTOR, OTS GROUP KNOWS THAT REGULAR INSPECTIONS CAN HELP TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES BEFORE THEY ESCALATE INTO SERIOUS PROBLEMS. **EMMA TILLEY**, SERVICE AND LOGISTICS MANAGER FOR THE GROUP, EXPLAINS THEIR 'PEOPLE FIRST' APPROACH AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN KEEPING OPERATION DISRUPTION TO A MINIMUM.

"We recognise that we are in a people business," Emma shares. "When something goes wrong, it causes problems for the people involved, which is why we focus on building strong relationships with our clients' on-site teams.

"By prioritising these relationships, we can better serve our clients and help them avoid the significant losses associated with refuelling problems."

A comfort blanket

"We get the job done, but it's about more than that. We're really proud of the relationships that we have with our service clients, and that's testament to our team of service engineers.

"Our clients trust us to be there for them whenever they need us, like a comfort blanket that always delivers quality service."

OTS has evolved a number of approaches that ensure any disruption created by equipment or system downtime is minimised to reduce business impacts as Emma elaborates.

"Our *People-First* objective ensures that our clients receive the best service possible while also minimising disruptions to their operations.

"We keep fuel storage and distribution systems running smoothly to support our clients' success!"

Achieving first-time fixes

"We also focus on minimising downtime with our First-Time Fix objective that requires us to get our clients' fuel storage and distribution systems back up and running as quickly as possible.

"In cases of reactive call outs, our service and logistics manager takes detailed information about the fault over the phone



before the service engineers head out to the site equipped with the parts that we think will be most helpful.

"While there are some faults that require us to order parts that we don't have in stock, our motto is 'whatever it takes', and we will move heaven and earth to get everything we need ASAP, and get the job done on the first site visit avoiding diagnostic-only call outs where possible."

"WE BELIEVE THAT PREVENTION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CURE."

As Emma notes: "I'm really proud of our service engineers. They work really hard, not just in a reactive way to fix problems that have been reported, but they take the time to have a look at the entire set up and to talk with the transport and maintenance managers on site. We believe that prevention is always better than a cure.

"This proactive approach is about more than just fixing immediate problems. We take the time to assess the entire setup and identify potential issues before they become major problems. By doing so, we can help our clients

avoid unexpected downtime and prevent potentially costly future reactive call outs."

A holistic approach

"We want to ensure that our clients are well looked after from every angle to minimise call outs and downtime," Emma continues. "Our holistic approach includes prevention and education to give our clients a comprehensive service."

And Emma notes the importance of the engagement between the OTS and client teams in meeting these expectations: "An important part of avoiding future faults is educating and empowering on-site staff. We take this approach seriously, and our service engineers are always available to provide advice and support to clients.

"We believe that a proactive approach to tank care can help our clients to avoid unexpected downtime and prevent costly call outs, so we also offer a Planned Preventative Maintenance Service (PPM). This helps clients identify and address potential issues before they become major problems.

"By combining education, prevention, and a responsive service to keep our clients' fuel storage and distribution systems running smoothly we support our clients in delivering success."

IFC Inflow expands skid services to deliver future fuel ready loading systems

We're only halfway through Summer, but when we met with IFC at the recent UKIFDA show they told us they have already had a busy few months with customers taking advantage of the quieter season to get their skids serviced.

Kiran Shaw, sales director for IFC, urges others to do the same: "With the hotter days creating less demand it's the ideal time, so we are encouraging everyone to make this a priority!"

"Loading skids are at the centre of operations for our customers, so it is important that they are in safe and reliable working order," Kiran explains. "Skids have a number of critical systems that allow them to operate safely and correctly which need regular inspection and maintenance to ensure that this continues."

Act now to avoid unexpected issues

"To help save our customers any risk of disruption or hold ups in operation, we offer expert skid servicing to keep systems in safe and reliable working order."



"Our highly trained service engineers have the expertise, experience and knowledge to ensure that every skid is inspected and serviced properly. We regularly assess and train our engineers, so they are competent in carrying out any service and maintenance work necessary, as well as answer any questions and provide expert

advice for prolonging the lifetime of skids.

What's new for 2023?

Recent years have seen big changes in the fueling industry, a trend that is set to continue. Kiran explains how IFC has evolved its range of service offerings to ensure the company continues to support customers in the most effective way.

"Having a Future Fuel Approved loading system has been a priority for many of our customers recently, as they increasingly looking to pivot their product range to accommodate future fuels. To facilitate this, we have added future fuels inspections as standard to our service packages ensuring that every skid we service is properly equipped to accommodate the fuels of the future.

"Our team are experts on future fuels, so can also provide free consultations on how to best equip a site to accommodate future fuels and prepare for big changes in the fueling industry."



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Experience is a valuable commodity

IN MY RECENT MONTHLY COMMENTARY, I HAVE FOCUSED ON THE EFFORTS OF OUR INDUSTRY TOWARDS DECARBONISING OUR CUSTOMERS' HOMES. HOWEVER, THE RECENT UKIFDA SHOW IN COVENTRY HAS HIGHLIGHTED THAT THE SUCCESS OF DECARBONISATION IN RURAL HOMES REQUIRES COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BEYOND THE DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY.

I was pleased to see Grant Engineering and Aga Rayburn receive recognition for their work creating and promoting HVO boilers. I was also delighted by the number of entries to the Young Person of the Year Award that mentioned work on renewable liquid fuels.

In addition, it is worth noting that OFTEC will shortly be issuing revised training material which includes detailed information on conversion from kerosene to HVO.

Delivering the renewable liquid fuel customer experience

The success of our project depends on providing customers with a smooth and cohesive experience, which goes beyond just delivering fuel. In order to achieve this, I believe it is vitally important that we maintain consistency with what our customers are used to.

This means working closely with our fuel suppliers, RLF producers, boiler manufacturers, and OFTEC technicians. Soon, we'll invite customers to be a part of this process.

2026

We are putting in a lot of effort to revise the government's plan of prohibiting new heating oil boilers from 2026 and making HVO (or other RLFs) a feasible and economical option for household heating oil. As the deadline approaches, a growing number of customers will learn about the ban and will reach out for assistance and advice.

A seamless experience

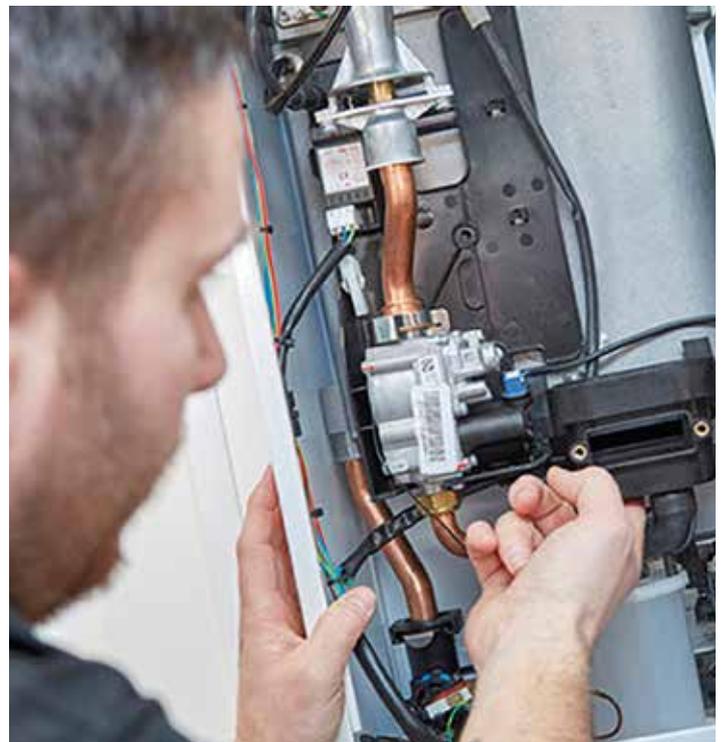
Customers will want to be informed about the RLF, including its provenance and how it will work within their homes. They will need advice regarding the alterations to their current boilers or about transitioning to a new HVO one. Additionally, ongoing support might be necessary after the RLF is in use.

By working together, we can ensure clear and consistent communication to achieve a positive customer journey.

The heat pump experience

It is probably the recognition of this whole 'experience' approach that is currently lacking in the deployment of heat pumps.

Although heat pumps may not be suitable for every home, particularly those off the gas grid, they will contribute significantly to reducing carbon emissions in many UK households. However, an approach that considers how customers interact with their heating



systems and their current experiences is crucial for successful implementation.

There are two areas that require further consideration: how, and which, manufacturers are incentivised to meet demand, and gaining a better understanding of the purchasing process.

The government has proposed, and is currently consulting on, the clean heat market mechanism (CHMM). The CHMM will, from 2024, place an obligation on the manufacturers of heating appliances (including oil boilers) to meet targets for the proportion of low-carbon heat pumps they sell each year relative to fossil fuel boilers. These targets will steadily increase year-on-year, starting at 4%. The objective of the policy is to encourage manufacturers to invest in building the heat pump market.

Why penalise the manufacturers?

One major issue with this mechanism is that it solely relies on sales to

end users and fails to take into account the customer's experience. When a customer needs a new heating appliance, they typically contact a plumber first, conduct online research, and potentially visit a builders' merchant or DIY shop.

Due to the lack of direct interaction between manufacturers and customers, there is limited opportunity for manufacturers to directly influence the ultimate purchase decision. Therefore, it seems unfair to penalise manufacturers under these circumstances.

The customer experience in other sectors

Some mandates prioritise the customer experience, such as car manufacturers that are required to produce a certain percentage of electric vehicles. Since they have a direct relationship with customers through their franchisees, they have the power to influence the customer experience. However, in the home heating sector, many customers may not be aware of the brand of boiler they use, and I am sure it is not a subject regularly discussed down the pub.

The stats

A recent survey by NESTA recorded that 85% of heat pump purchases were planned and 13% were 'distress' purchases (made of necessity due to the failure of a previous system). In contrast, 51% of gas boiler purchases were planned and 48% were made due to necessity.

The research determined that transitioning to a heat pump is currently all but impossible at times of distress due to the time taken to design, receive the necessary components and install a heat pump.

The survey also shows that a heat pump is typically installed by an independent installer, with a lead time of one to two months. By

comparison, gas boilers are typically installed by independent installers or energy companies in less than a month.

Now take these results and add them to the OFTEC experience, which indicates that about 60% of oil boilers are distressed purchases, and it becomes apparent that the proposed system is not aligned with the customer experience. For a practical item such as a boiler, individuals usually replace it only when it breaks down and they have no other choice.

What next

It's important to acknowledge that the car manufacturer example I provided is not without other factors to consider, including cost and infrastructure challenges like charging points. Nevertheless, it's commendable that the system takes into account the customer's journey and overall experience.

When it comes to the heat pump policy dilemma, the key challenge is figuring out how to align with the customer's experience. It's not practical to expect the customer to adjust to the product process – the solution lies in adapting the product process to meet the customer's needs.

A recent report by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) highlighted some of these issues, advocating more needs to be done to address the lack of customer information, the claims by the green heating industry and the complexity of the standard setting process.

This report serves as a warning for the industry to take action on these issues. Although renewable liquid fuels are not yet available for domestic customers, it's reassuring to see that the industry is already taking these concerns into consideration.

Back to the future

(see page 29)



HYTEK



Data: the latest update from the UKIFDA databank

UKIFDA'S DATABANK BRINGS TOGETHER RECENTLY PUBLISHED GOVERNMENT AND OTHER THIRD-PARTY DATA CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIQUID FUELS IN THE UK.

IN THIS EDITION, WE PROVIDE DETAILED MONTHLY DATA TO THE END OF MARCH 2023 (THEREFORE, ONE YEAR SINCE THE INVASION OF UKRAINE).

WHERE COMMENTS ARE MADE REGARDING COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCES, THEY ARE UKIFDA COMMENTS BORNE FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH THIRD PARTIES.

N.B. PRIOR PERIOD DATA (2021/2022) HAS BEEN UPDATED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND MAY THEREFORE DIFFER FROM PREVIOUS UKIFDA REPORTS. ROAD DIESEL FIGURES FOR 2022 HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY REVISED.

In this edition:

1. Temperature review
2. Update on the diesel, gasoil and heating oil consumption to the end of March 2023.
3. Update on prices of heating oil to the end of April 2023
4. Recent ONS Inflation numbers
5. The impact of OFGEM's new price cap for gas and electricity

Temperature and heating days

December 2022 was the coldest December since 2010. However, Q1 2023 was warmer than the 30-year average.

The daily average temperature was 8.6 degrees Celsius, 0.5 degrees Celsius lower than April 2022 and 0.3 degrees Celsius lower than the long-term mean. The average number of heating degree days (HDD) was 6.9.

Average temperatures	30-year mean	2019	2022	2023
January	4.9	4.2	5.2	5.3
February	5.2	6.9	6.8	6.6
March	6.8	7.9	7.7	7.0
April	9.0	9.1	9.1	8.6
May	11.8	11.2	13.0	
June	14.6	14.3	15.1	
July	16.7	17.6	18.2	
August	16.5	17.1	18.3	
September	14.2	14.3	14.5	
October	10.9	10.1	12.7	
November	7.6	6.5	9.1	
December	5.2	6.0	4.0	

Heating oil Consumption

March 2023 saw the highest consumption since February 2021.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, heating oil consumption in the UK, when compared to April 2019 to March 2020 (the last year pre pandemic), declined by 13%, mainly due to the high prices post the invasion of Ukraine, warmer weather and changing delivery patterns as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

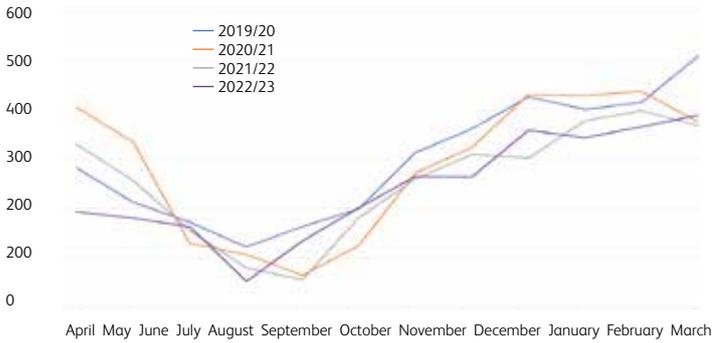
While the consumption reduction seen in 2022 continued into March 2023 compared to March 2020, this figure was materially impacted by the pandemic as residential customers started to work from home and made significant purchases.

Consumption between April 2022 to March 2023 was 12% below consumption between April 2018 and March 2019.

Average heating degree days	30-year mean	2019	2022	2023
January	10.6	11.3	10.3	10.2
February	10.3	8.6	8.7	8.9
March	8.7	7.6	7.8	8.5
April	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.9
May	3.9	4.3	2.5	
June	1.7	1.6	0.9	
July	0.6	0.1	0.1	
August	0.7	0.2	0.0	
September	1.9	1.4	1.7	
October	4.6	5.4	2.8	
November	7.9	9.0	6.4	
December	10.3	9.5	11.5	



Kerosene Heating Oil Consumption



Pricing

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently produced its April monthly figures for domestic heating oil prices alongside broader inflation numbers.

Heating oil prices in April 2023 were 68.5ppl compared to 96.1 ppl in April 2022. This is the lowest price since February 2022 (69.5ppl), against a peak of 110.9ppl in June 22.

ONS Heating Oil Price (ppl)



since October 2020 that monthly gas prices have fallen).

- Electricity prices fell by 1.1% between March and April 2023, compared with a rise of 40.5% between the same two months in 2022.

Gas oil and DERV

Gas Oil Consumption

Between April 2022 and March 2023, Gasoil consumption in the UK, when compared to April 2019 to March 2020 (the last year pre pandemic and prior to the duty changes), declined by 13%:

However, the overall number masks a significant decline in the last 5 months.

Gas oil consumption (KTOE)



Gas Oil Consumption

KTOE	2019/20	2022/23	% Change
April	462	553	20%
May	434	371	-15%
June	421	369	-12%
July	455	493	8%
August	486	389	-20%
September	459	495	8%
October	452	497	10%
November	433	306	-29%
December	400	277	-31%
January	318	180	-44%
February	367	158	-57%
March	375	222	-41%
Annual Total	5,063	4,412	-13%

The headline Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 8.7% in the 12 months to April 2023, down from 10.1% in March. However, the headline masks that Core CPI inflation (excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco) rose by 6.8% in year to April 2023, up from 6.2% in March – the highest rate since March 1992.

CPI annual inflation rate for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels was 12.3% in April 2023, down from a peak of 26.7% in January 2023 and from a rise of 26.1% in March 2023.

This fall is largely because of the upward contribution from the higher April 2022 Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) energy cap dropping out of the annual estimates.

- Gas prices fell by 1.0% between March and April 2023, compared with a rise of 66.8% between the same two months in 2022. (First time

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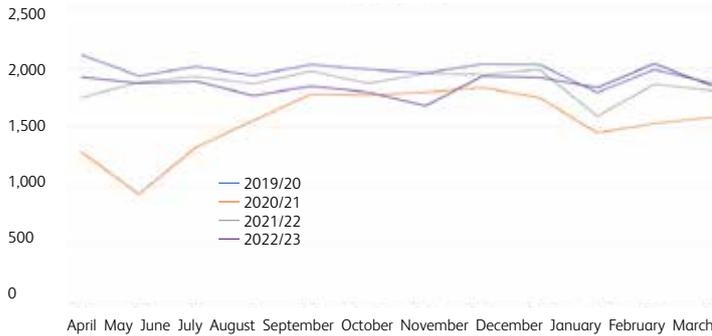
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Road Diesel consumption (KTOE)



Derv Consumption

Road Diesel consumption is still about 6% off 2019 levels.

Demand for all transport fuels increased, with petrol and diesel up by 7.1 and 8.7 per cent, respectively, and demand for jet fuel up by 40 per cent compared to last year.

Pricing

The ONS' recent inflation figures reported Motor fuel prices fell by 1.3% between March 2023 and April 2023, compared with a 1.9% increase in the equivalent time period last year. Average petrol and diesel prices stood at 145.8 and 162.4 pence per litre, respectively in April 2023, compared with 161.8 and 176.1 pence per litre in April 2022.

OFGEM Price Cap

Ofgem has recently announced a new price cap for the 3-month period starting July 1.

The normal figure publicised is the cap expressed as an average home (this is a 3-bedroom semi with electricity consumption of 2900 kWh and gas consumption of 12000 kWh).

The price cap has been set at £2074. This compares to the current price cap of £3280 which was reduced to £2500 by government action. So, consumers will see roughly a 17% reduction in average bills.

Customers that use oil for heating are highly likely to be significantly above the "average" price cap level as their homes tend to be larger and detached.

It is therefore important to put some context to these numbers, in particular against the cost of electricity on a per unit basis given this would be the alternative in terms of heat pumps:

The electricity prices above do not include the daily standing charge which is likely to add £110 to an average yearly bill.

Most predictions do not see prices falling significantly in the short term and the CEO of OFGEM commented, "In the medium term, we're unlikely to see prices return to the levels we saw before the energy crisis."

In addition, OFGEM has also increased the profit margin (earnings before interest and tax) for October bills to £37 per average bill (an increase of £10). This equates to around 2.4% of the price cap level.

Road Diesel Consumption			
	2019/20	2022/23	
April	2,114	1,925	-9%
May	1,933	1,872	-3%
June	2,011	1,890	-6%
July	1,938	1,767	-9%
August	2,028	1,848	-9%
September	1,989	1,795	-10%
October	1,959	1,681	-14%
November	2,034	1,933	-5%
December	2,030	1,922	-5%
January	1,794	1,834	2%
February	1,989	2,039	3%
March	1,872	1,849	-1%
	23,690	22,356	-6%



	2019 Price Cap	Guaranteed by Government October 2022	Price cap announced Feb 2023	New Price Cap for July 1	% movement since 2019
Electricity (p/kWh)	18	34	51	30	+67%
Kerosene (ppl) at equivalent points in time	53	97	75	68	+28%



Industry show sees BoilerJuice unveil new platform features

With the industry gathered in Coventry in May for the annual UKIFDA event, BoilerJuice took the opportunity to showcase 2 new platform features.

One has already been implemented – What 3 Words, which saves suppliers time and money by making it easy to locate properties and tanks within a 3m square accuracy.

Zoe Blackhall commented: “We are always keen to offer supporting features to ensure suppliers are optimising their logistics and not incurring wasted time or money.”

You asked – BoilerJuice delivered

“The other new feature is our upcoming Order Management functionality,” Zoe continued. “Going live on the 1st of August, this will significantly streamline and speed up the communications with BoilerJuice regarding the management of orders.

“Suppliers who saw this at the show were really excited about this new development as it’s been built on the back of 12 months of supplier feedback. It is designed to make working with BoilerJuice as hassle free as possible.”

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OPTION 3

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A reduced service/inspection of the skid, combined with full meter calibration.



On UKIFDA Show & Conference 2023

WHEN ASKED 'HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?' OUR COMMUNITY SAID:

"I thought the 1-day programme worked really well; it was great to catch up with so many people. The only downside was that I didn't manage to see everyone I intended to meet with!"

Clive Morin, managing director, Barton Petroleum

"For FoxInsights it was a very successful show. We were able to generate plenty of interest from the industry for telemetry, especially for our data analytics approach. We also had intense exchanges about current trends and needs with existing clients and prospects."

"The drinks reception we sponsored, and the dinner were of course a great networking opportunity. We cannot wait for next year!"

Sylvia Kerscher, head of sales, FoxInsights

"We thought Ken and the team did a great job with the new format of the show this year. There was a fantastic atmosphere in the venue, and we were happy to see such a great turnout."

"It was brilliant to catch up with our friends and colleagues in the industry and there were some great industry insights discussed at the conference too."

Kiran Shaw, IFC Inflow

"Wednesday was very busy on our booth, great catching up with customers old and new! Roll on Liverpool!"

Ben Firth, sales engineer at Mechtronic

"We were really impressed with the event; it was a very successful day for us. This new format of smaller show plus dinner worked well and we'd welcome this becoming a regular feature alongside the larger expo."

Alison Buckley, Collins Youlden

"Otodata was pleased to present at UKIFDA for the first time. We made a lot of great connections and look forward to bringing our ultra low-cost, extremely accurate tank monitoring systems to partners in the UK and Ireland."

Eric Wise, Otodata.

"We thought the show went well. It was busy and we saw plenty of customers, which was great."

"We are looking forward to next year when the show will be across two days again - we will have our demo van on the stand and be celebrating our 20th anniversary!"

Emma Allinson, Mechtronic

"Great industry, great people, great show."

"Great platform to showcase our innovative delivery technology options!"

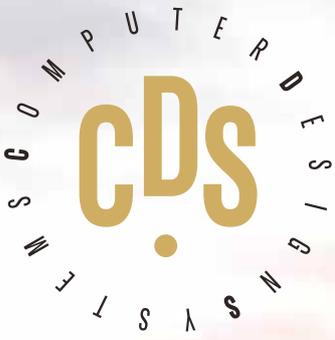
Mike Smith, managing director at D.T.S. Ltd

"A great show, but one day just isn't long enough for me!"

Mark Gamble, general manager, Barton Petroleum

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Fuelling success: overcoming talent and driver shortages

IN THIS RECRUITMENT-FOCUSSED ISSUE, MARGARET MAJOR, MANAGING EDITOR SPOKE WITH **JASON CRISPIN** OF INDUSTRY RECRUITMENT SPECIALIST, GI GROUP HOLDING, TO FIND OUT HOW A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELPED TRUSTED FUEL DISTRIBUTOR, WP GROUP, OVERCOME A CRITICAL RECRUITMENT ISSUE.

About WP Group

WP Group, a trusted and comprehensive UK fuel partner, goes beyond traditional fuel services, assisting customers in enhancing efficiency, sustainability, and fuel management. With a firm commitment to a net zero emission goal, WP Group leads by example through initiatives like using HVO in their fleet and implementing operational efficiencies. The company's expertise and dedication makes the Group a vital force in fuelling UK businesses while driving positive environmental change.

Background

In the fast-paced and challenging fuel industry, WP Group faced a critical issue: recruiting and retaining skilled talent. Amidst economic uncertainties and talent shortages, finding innovative solutions became a priority and the group embarked on a transformative journey, collaborating with recruitment and HR solutions provider Gi Group Holding. This case study recounts this partnership, offering insights into how it is possible to overcome recruitment and retention challenges while fostering a thriving work environment.

Navigating the changing talent landscape

WP Group, a prominent player in the industry, has experienced exponential growth over the past decade. With expansion came the pressing need to attract and retain top talent as Caroline Ellinor, distribution manager at WP Group, explained: "It has been an incredible experience to witness the substantial growth of WP Group over the years. Our expansion has brought forth exciting opportunities and successes, but it has also presented us with distinctive recruitment and retention challenges."

The demand for skilled candidates soared, creating bottlenecks, especially in securing qualified HGV drivers. Like many

other companies in the industry, WP Group encountered frustrations as the pool of candidates became increasingly competitive.

Confronting challenges

WP Group already understood the pivotal role of a strong company culture in employee relationships and retention and core values such as teamwork, openness, safety, continuous improvement, and simplicity run throughout their operations. Within the fast-paced Operations department, prioritising employee well-being and safety is paramount, with teamwork essential to effective delivery. WP Group actively listened to their drivers, fostering a culture of "Real Talk" and "Open Mind," with honest and transparent communication and regular communication, bonuses, and recognition reinforced the drivers' value and contribution.

However, despite having this exceptional company culture in place, recruitment remained an ongoing challenge. The Group initially turned to in-house recruitment, hoping to leverage internal expertise and knowledge, but soon encountered several common hurdles of this approach.

Diverting resources

One of the main issues was the strain on internal resources. The recruitment process demanded significant time and effort from the already busy HR team, diverting attention from other crucial tasks. Balancing recruitment responsibilities alongside regular duties, led to potential delays and inefficiencies in the hiring process.

Additionally, similarly to many companies in the industry, WP Group found it hard to reach a wide pool of potential candidates. Without the access to external networks and platforms that specialised recruitment agencies often utilise; their reach was limited.

The absence of specialised recruitment expertise presented another hurdle with the lack of market insights and advanced sourcing techniques translating into a narrower candidate selection.

Recognising these limitations, the Group decided to consider alternative solutions.

Searching for a solution

WP Group embarked on an extensive search to find a strategic talent management partner. Their goal was to identify a partner who not only possessed a strong understanding of the industry but also had the capability to address urgent hiring needs, handle substantial workforce demands, and adhere to industry regulations and safety protocols.

They also sought a partner who could access talent pools of specialised skills, such as operating specific vehicles and transporting specialised loads.

Their extensive research led them to Gi Group Holding, with WP Group reassured of the recruitment provider's credibility in the fuel distribution sector by their status as the only one with UKIFDA membership.

Transforming talent and driver recruitment: from perplexing predicament to effortless efficiency

Forming the partnership with Gi Group Holding proved to be a key moment for WP Group. Under the leadership of Jason Crispin, a skilled expert in fuel oil industry talent, Gi Group's team assigned vacancies to appropriate specialists, ensuring smooth and effective communication throughout the entire process.

Grasping the culture and unique business requirements of WP Group enabled Gi Group to leverage its extensive talent pools to successfully identify candidates who both aligned with the company's values and possessed the necessary accreditations.



Gi Group built solid relationships with the WP team. Open communication in a collaborative approach greatly facilitated the recruitment process, leading to a notable improvement in the quality of applicants. Finding suitable drivers became a more efficient and straightforward task.

In addition to their in-depth industry understanding, Gi Group also leveraged advanced technology and data-driven insights. They were able to identify trends, preferences, and patterns that led to improved quality of recruits as well as enabling WP Group to make more informed decisions and optimise recruitment strategies for long-term success.

Tangible results

The partnership achieved exceptional results. With Gi Group's assistance, WP Group overcame their challenges, seeing tangible improvements. Significantly shorter recruitment cycles allowed WP Group to on-board drivers and other recruits more efficiently than ever before minimising operational disruptions. Reduced shortages meant a more stable workforce, and retention rates experienced a remarkable boost.

One of the standout achievements of this collaboration was the impressive reduction in the time it took to fill positions. Thanks to Gi Group's ability to present multiple candidates who were already well-matched to the job description, WP Group had a wider range of highly suitable candidates to choose from for each new role. The result was a transformative shift, with the average time-to-hire decreasing from three months to just one in many cases.

Implementing improved retention strategies also yielded exciting results. WP Group experienced a notable improvement in employee loyalty, leading to a significant decrease in turnover rates. This improved workforce stability but also resulted in the

reduced recruitment costs associated with frequent turnover.

“We are extremely pleased with the results achieved through our partnership with the Gi Group. They consistently provided us with employees who not only aligned with our company culture but also possessed the necessary accreditations of an HGV driver. Gi Group Holding's understanding of our business and their ability to ask the right questions when sourcing candidates significantly improved the quality of applicants over time. As a result, filling new vacancies became much easier and more efficient.”

Caroline Ellinor – distribution manager, WP Group.

The bottom line

The strategic partnership between WP Group and Gi Group Holding proved to be a game-changer. By leveraging the recruiter's expertise, extensive talent pools, and data-driven insights, WP Group successfully transformed their recruitment and retention strategies resulting in shorter recruitment cycles, reduced talent shortages, improved retention rates and, ultimately, fostered a thriving work environment.

What can your organisation do to overcome recruitment challenges?

- Partner with trusted recruitment and HR solutions providers, who have a deep understanding of the sector and can provide tailored strategies.
- Leverage the expertise of industry-specialised partners, who have access to extensive talent pools and advanced sourcing techniques to identify and attract top talent.
- Develop partnerships with vocational schools and technical training institutions to create

specialised training programs for roles specific to the industry.

- Collaborate with industry associations and organisations to establish apprenticeship and mentorship programs that attract and develop young talent.
- Invest in promoting STEM education and careers to attract individuals with strong technical and engineering skills.
- Foster a positive company culture: Create a supportive and inclusive work environment that values employee contributions and recognises their efforts through regular feedback, recognition programs, and opportunities for career advancement.
- Offer attractive benefits and incentives for roles that are in high demand, such as HGV drivers, petroleum engineers, and environmental specialists.
- Consider providing incentives such as performance-based bonuses, sign-on bonuses, and retention bonuses.
- Develop robust succession planning programs to identify and develop internal talent for key positions within the organisation.
- Explore international recruitment strategies to tap into global talent pools and attract skilled professionals from other countries.
- Establish partnerships with community organisations and NGOs to promote the industry's environmental sustainability efforts and attract individuals passionate about green initiatives.
- Leverage technology and automation to improve operational efficiency and reduce the reliance on manual labour, allowing talent to focus on more specialised tasks.

Recruitment and retention are two of the industry's biggest current challenges. If you have other examples of effective strategies, please share them with us: margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk

Recruitment and retention at NWF Fuels

NWF FUELS DELIVERS HEATING OIL AND COMMERCIAL FUEL ACROSS THE UK FROM ITS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED DEPOT NETWORK USING A MODERN FLEET OF 120 FUEL TANKERS. IN THE LAST YEAR, THE COMPANY HAS INTRODUCED A NEW RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY WHICH HAS ALREADY HAD A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS. WITH THIS ISSUE OF FUEL OIL NEWS FOCUSING ON SECTOR RECRUITMENT, CLAUDIA WEEKS, CONTENT EDITOR, SAT DOWN FOR A CHAT WITH **MELISSA CLUTTON**, HEAD OF HR AT NWF FUELS TO FIND OUT MORE.

Right people, right place, right time

“NWF is focused on growing our business through domestic and commercial customers,” Melissa began. “We need to make sure we’ve got the right people, in the right place, at the right time to achieve this.

“If there is a specific area of growth, whether that’s regionally or at a specific depot, then we can forecast what the headcount requirements will be. The senior leadership team look at where the hot spots are for key growth, and we build a plan from that.

“We have now brought our recruitment process in-house headed up by our recruitment manager Michaela and she is fantastic! Our main recruitment focus currently is for sales and drivers and Michaela is building talent pools in these core areas. Without the sales team and our drivers, we haven’t got a business to run!”

Where people make the difference

Melissa was clear about how much of a positive impact this decision has made: “At NWF our strapline is ‘where people make the difference’ and this is one of the main reasons for bringing the recruitment process in-house.

“We wanted the recruiter to be someone who would live, breath and feel our culture. Michaela gets to know the people that make our business work. She works alongside the senior leadership team, the depot managers, the depots, and embeds herself in those areas and then she knows instinctively what talent she needs to find.

“Without internal recruitment, we were taking an average of 55 days to hire for a position, now it is 0 to 7 days for driver recruitment and 20 days for sales. It’s effective and has made a big difference.

“When we conduct interviews and talk to new people about joining NWF, it makes such a difference to be able to discuss the opportunities that we can offer to them to learn, to develop and to have a structured career pathway. We have that investment in people.

“Our on-boarding process, when people first join the business, has improved significantly too. In May this year, we



relaunched our company induction day for those starting at NWF, we’ve redone the company handbook and we have a comprehensive starter pack.”

A structured career pathway

“We want to grow and invest in our people and talent. We believe that one of the best ways to do this is to have clear and structured career pathways so people know what they can achieve. For example, we tend to bring sales colleagues in as a customer service advisor which is a junior position. Their next step would be to become a commercial sales executive, then an area sales manager, etc.

“Recruits can see their future career pathway and that we will help and support them through it. Training our own people shows that we invest in, and grow, our own talent rather than looking outside of the business.

“As many in the industry are experiencing, retention can be a challenge in the current market. But we have found that, by being so proactive in engaging our employees in their own career and our business, they want to stay with NWF Fuels.”

The learning and development programme

“We have also internalised our learning and

development programmes. Our latest initiative is The Aspire Programme which is a 9-month programme that launched in July last year, so we have just celebrated our first cohort graduating. The core objective of The Aspire Programme is to develop and grow our internal depot managers to support our growth as a business.

“As part of that programme, the graduates complete a series of workshops and exercises aimed at developing their skills in everything from self-awareness, sales excellence and health and safety to project management. These are areas that a depot manager needs to understand and be proficient in. It’s giving them the right tools to operate.

“At the end of the programme, the graduates were split into different groups. They had 9 weeks to come up with a business proposal that would make a genuine positive impact to the company and service levels. One of the graduates chose a project about health and safety; it was so successful that we are now launching their health and safety charter across the business. It has already made a lasting impact at NWF.”

One of the graduates from the Aspire programme, Chris Naylor, shares his experience: “I joined NWF Fuels in January 2023, joining the marketing team as the marketing analyst. I’ve recently taken on

a new role within the business that will see me more involved in acquisition research, domestic projects, market research, advertising efficiencies and the management of our relationship with BoilerJuice.

“Aspire has given me a broader understanding of how our business operates and of the functions and individuals skilled in those roles. I learned about myself and the business throughout the course and feel more equipped than ever going into my new role.”

Creating opportunity

“We’ve had vacancies arise because people have been promoted internally and this creates opportunities in the business for those that want to progress. From our first cohort of Aspire Programme graduates, 25% have already been promoted into depot manager positions. That’s really good news!

“Our applications have just closed for 2023/24 and we have another cohort incredibly excited to be part of the next programme.

“We are looking at other development initiatives too. In September, we launch the next step on from Aspire. This is The Management Development Programme for depot managers who are looking to take the next step into roles such as regional manager.

“We want to support the growth and development of employees right across the business and have plans for programmes for those delivering support functions such as finance, marketing, HR and IT.”

What about your existing team?

“Initially there was some cautiousness about the new programmes, as staff weren’t sure what to expect. However, as we’ve gone through, there is a real buzz and energy around it with people wanting to know when applications open so they can apply. Our employees appreciate that NWF is investing in them – they have seen that it makes an impact and want to participate.”

Claudia asked if NWF has adapted or changed anything about the Aspire Programme since its inception to which Melissa responded: “We have decided to make the programme more tailored towards the role of the depot manager and have streamlined the content. The initial programme was more wide ranging across the whole of the business.

“We’ll also make sure that there is a longer break from the course over the winter period as that is such a busy time for all those in the business. Otherwise, it will continue as it is as it’s certainly been a huge success for us!”

ZOE PEDLEY: the industry through a new employee’s eyes

On the last few pages, we’ve heard some great examples of how industry employers have addressed the challenges of recruitment and retention. However, an issue focused on this topic wouldn’t be complete without hearing from both sides. With excellent timing, Hampshire-based Rawlings Fuels recently proudly announced their newest employee, Zoe Pedley, and we took the opportunity to see the fuel distribution sector through Zoe’s eyes.

Zoe has joined the sales team at Rawlings Fuels as a sales advisor. Jane Scarlett, business development manager for the company, shared a little more of Zoe’s background prior to coming into the industry.

A passion to succeed

“Zoe came to us from Herts Rental Car after being with them for 5 years,” Jane explains. “Having studied music at college for 3 years Zoe was entered into X factor Basingstoke when she was 18 and she came first!”

Zoe’s success was not entirely surprising to those who knew her well. She has a passion for music and especially loves jazz, soul and indie. Zoe also lived in China for 5 years and sang with the local school band and, aged just 6, was the youngest person in the choir at Salsbury.

It’s clear that Zoe’s passion doesn’t stop with music, as Jane explains: “Zoe has never worked in the fuel industry before, but her enthusiasm and passion to learn has shone through – not only with us but also our customers.

“Having joined our sales team as a sales advisor taking orders by phone or email our customers already tell us how impressed they are with their interactions with Zoe. She has quickly become a highly valued member of our team at Rawlings.”

As one of the industry’s newest recruits we asked Zoe to share her thoughts about it so far.

How long have you worked in the industry?

“I have worked in the industry since September 2022, and since the day I started I have loved every minute; the team; the customers; the



fast-paced environment.

What do you enjoy most about operating in fuel distribution?

“The thing I love the most is the feeling that you have made a difference and helped somebody.

“We often have customers ring up who have run out of fuel, and we are always there at the end of the phone to offer a warm and comforting solution.

“There is no problem so big that we cannot solve it. Rawlings is the real meaning of helping the community.”

Who inspires you in the industry?

“My biggest inspiration is the amazing team I work with. Every single one of them is filled with such knowledge and wisdom, and I have learned so much from them in the 9 months I have worked in the industry.

“Their kindness and dedication are such an inspiration and if I’m half the person they are in the future I know I have done right.”

“TAKE THE LEAP AND YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT.”

What advice do you have for somebody new to, or considering, the industry?

“The best bit of advice I can give would be – take the leap, and you will not regret it.

“Every person you meet is a potential door to a new opportunity so build good bridges because you never know how they’ll weave into the larger picture of your life.

“By joining an oil distributor, not only will you be helping to provide energy for the world, but you will also learn how to use the best equipment a facility can offer and meet amazing people at the same time.”

What do you hope the future will bring?

“I’m excited for whatever the future has in store. And I will forever be grateful to Rawlings for giving me this amazing opportunity.”

Zoe clearly applies her passion to do well to everything she undertakes, and we have no doubt we will be hearing more from her on her journey through the industry. Good luck Zoe!



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The fully integrated
fuel management software
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New ePOD
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Back to the future

How Hytek is looking to its past to thrive in the future

AFFECTED BY THE RECENT SUPPLY ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUFFERED BY MANY IN THE SECTOR, INDUSTRY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER HYTEK FEELS THAT ITS RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES AND SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER. IN THIS OPEN LETTER TO THE INDUSTRY THE COMPANY SERVES, HYTEK'S MANAGING DIRECTOR, **JACQUIE DAVIES**, SHARES HER THOUGHTS ON THE RECENT PAST AND HER HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

Firstly, if you have seen our advert, I want to make it clear that we are not in the habit of fuelling DeLorean's. If you haven't seen the advert yet, you'll be wondering what on earth I am talking about. Hopefully all will become clear. Bear with me.

I've been the managing director of Hytek for almost a year now, having spent a good proportion of my career before that as someone on the other side of the fence; a customer of Hytek. I joined our industry in 2000, working in the commercial tank manufacturing sector. For some 14 years, I relied on Hytek; a key supplier for 90% of the tank equipment and ancillary products used to adorn our tanks. Quality fuelling equipment and reliable monitoring solutions. A brand you could unequivocally trust.

For so long, Hytek was rightly seen as the market leader in the field, unquestionably a preferred supplier. Known for quality products, first class service, product availability, next day collection and delivery, no-quibble warranties, exemplary field support, and perfectly-pitched levels of communications. Across everything Hytek did, there was a clear commitment to always deliver for customers.

Business values

Yet, over the last 18 months, some of these standards have slipped. That may seem like a mildly odd thing for me to admit but, above everything else, we are a business that values honesty and so we are prepared to admit our mistakes and issues. We launched a new software system, and there were (putting it mildly) teething issues. Like many businesses, we also suffered from supply issues, but we tried to just ride it out and remain optimistic that everything would be fine. But optimism is not a way to run a business. That was wrong.

We know that delays, or a lack of communication on deliveries of vital equipment can cost thousands, with field engineers coming to a standstill which has an inevitable knock-on effect on our customers' reputations with their customers. That's simply not good enough. It has been a frustrating time for us and, more importantly, for you.



We are prepared to acknowledge this, because we are now confident, confident we are getting back to what we've always done best. Our high-quality products are on the shelves, and communication with you, the people we are privileged to call customers, is an unwavering priority. I'm confident you'll see and experience that when you work with us.

People first

One thing that has never changed in the business is the commitment to valuing good people. Be those our clients, our partners, or our employees.

In fact, the people of Hytek have always been such a key part in making it the organisation it is. I remember my first encounter well; with Hytek's own Emmett Brown (I thought I had better get another tenuous BTTF reference in here), Ian Taylor.

Introduced to me by Terry Barker, he was an incredibly positive personality, oozing the Hytek ethos of putting people first. I'd go so far as to say he has created a legacy – we are still



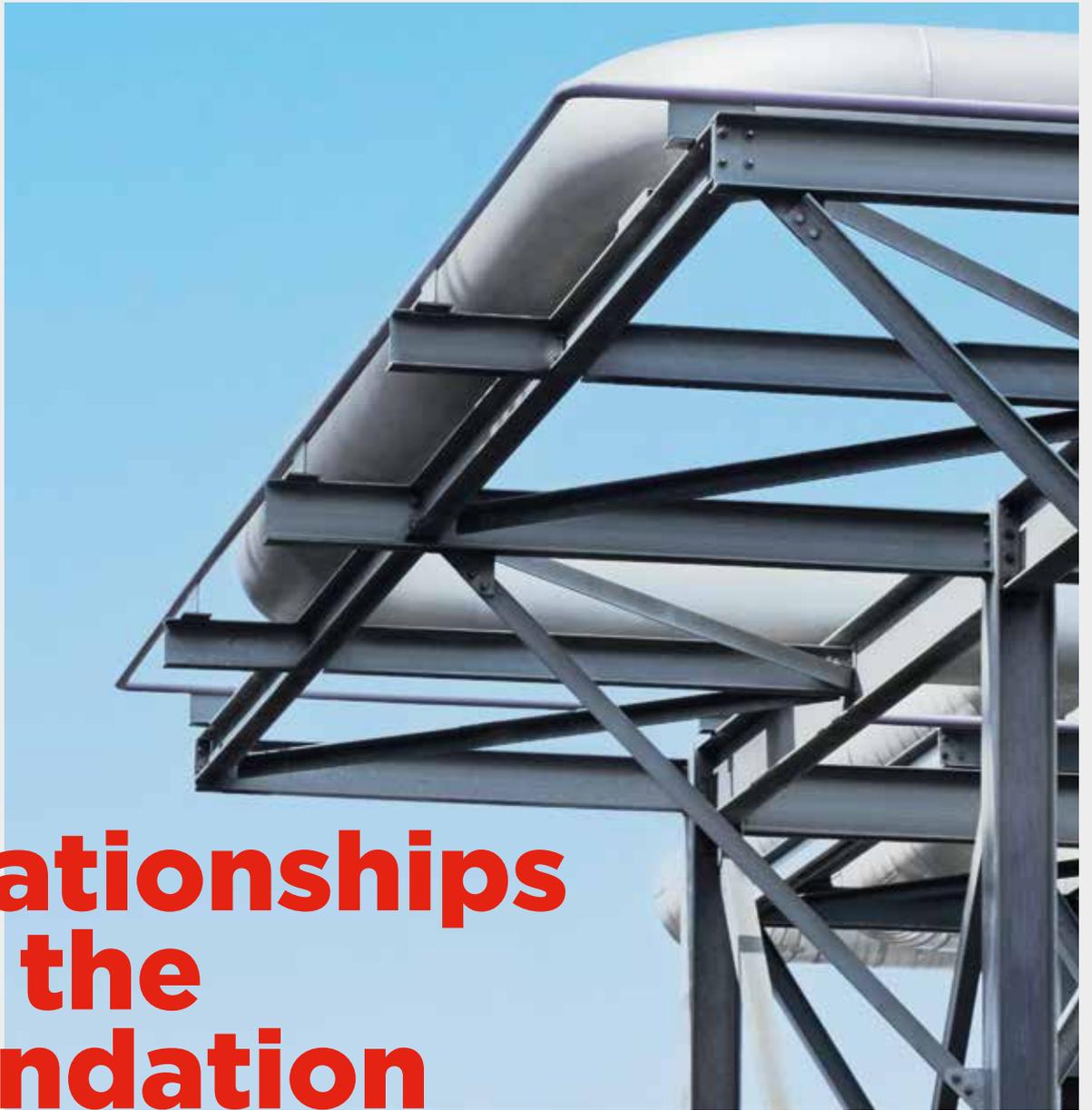
a business packed with the very best people.

The word count does not permit me to mention them all by name, but there are a couple of people I'd like to highlight. Andy Seal, or as we affectionately call him, 'The Oracle', wows me daily with his encyclopaedic knowledge of our business, our products and the commercial fuel sector at large. To say he goes above and beyond for customers would be an understatement of significant proportions.

Andrew Olive, who joined our business when we acquired Pumptronics, remains at the forefront of product innovation. He has developed many great products including the Zeon and C Series and is also responsible for the ongoing research and development of our Fuel Management Systems, ensuring we remain at the cutting edge of product innovation. He's particularly excited about accurate live fuel management data right now but, again, I don't have the word count to go into that here. Be sure to ask him about it if you speak to him.

Personally, I look forward to meeting many more of our customers soon. I wanted to end this article with perhaps the greatest quote from Back to the Future; "where we're going, we don't need roads". But given what we do, that would be just plain wrong to say the very least.

So, I'll leave you with this. We are back. We very much look forward to proving that to you soon.



Relationships are the foundation of our business.

Our strong network exists because of powerful relationships. And those powerful relationships are only possible because of our strong network.



**PROVIDING ENERGY.
IMPROVING LIVES.**



PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

JUNE
IN VIEW

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO UNDERMINE THE RUSSIAN WAR MACHINE

We've hit the half-way point in the year, so a good time to review what has happened in the oil markets in the first half of 2023. In comparison to the extreme market disruption witnessed in the same period of 2022, this year has been refreshingly dull. This is despite the broadly agreed sentiment back in January, that 2023 demand would hit a historic high as the full extent of the post lock-down 'bounce back' was felt. At the same time, faltering global supply alongside western sanctions on Russian oil, would ensure that the chaotic market conditions of 2022 would surely continue?

Not so! The first 6 months of 2023 turned out quite differently, with demand sluggish and prices coming down. Crude has fallen from \$84 per barrel in January to \$74 per barrel at the time of writing this report (June), whilst diesel has fallen by around 15 pence per litre in the same period. The drop in the diesel price particularly took markets by surprise, where predictions of Q1 price carnage had reigned as a result of the complete European ban on Russian refined products from February 1st. The impact of the latest round of sanctions was, in fact, muted to say the least and Russian oil exports now actually surpass levels last seen before the invasion of Ukraine. China and India continue to underpin demand for almost all of Russia's crude, whilst Russian diesel has found new homes outside of Europe – predominantly in Africa and Latin America.

“COULD THE GLOBAL MARKET SUCCEED, WHERE WESTERN SANCTIONS HAVE FAILED?”

On the surface this would seem a tremendous victory for President Putin, although there may be a perverse twist to this triumph that could still undermine the Russian economy. Product has indeed continued to flow, but by doing so, global markets have ended up being over-supplied and this has sent prices down. Arguably, a significant drop in the



oil price has more potential to damage the Russian economy than the country selling less oil (through sanctions) at a higher price. We will call this the Russian conundrum, whereby the oil must absolutely keep flowing, but by doing so, the risk of trashing total oil revenues becomes greater. Could the global market succeed, where western sanctions have failed?

Over-supply issues in the first half of the year were so clear and obvious that OPEC announced two consecutive rounds of production cuts. President Biden immediately called these actions irresponsible, fearing that they would lead to an immediate hike in prices. But such is the current flaky nature of global oil demand that prices continued to fall. Soaring inflation and rising interest rates have created a 'double whammy' effect whereby disposable income and consumer spending continue to be choked. Industrial output is down and jitters around the banking network (again...yawn!) have tightened credit lines, which is another significant contributor to stifled growth. Fundamentally, it is still not clear whether Europe and the US will avoid recession and the result is a bearish market and falling oil prices.

How long will this situation continue and what happens if the West avoids a full-blown recession? The International Energy Agency (IEA) is sticking to its original prediction that overall oil demand in 2023 will still be up versus 2022. Asian volumes, in particular, are expected to grow in the second half of the

year, with Chinese consumption increasing by more than 1m barrels per day. Some of this growth can be absorbed by high global stock levels, which have been deliberately built up by stock agencies (e.g., US Strategic Reserve) as a resilience play in the face of the ongoing Ukrainian conflict. But an increase in demand of between 1-2m barrels per day by the end of the year would soon eat up those stockpiles and could easily send prices northbound once again. Once again, it would seem that the market is on a knife-edge...

“THE MARKET IS ON A KNIFE-EDGE”

The expectation that sanctions would keep Russian oil 'off the table' and thus push prices upwards in 2023 has simply not materialised in the first half of this year. Ditto the predicted diesel price spike that would follow the strictest ever EU embargoes on refined products. Instead, Russia has continued to lubricate the Indian and Chinese refining industries with copious amounts of crude whilst, at the same time, successfully finding new diesel export destinations. Nonetheless, with global prices currently falling back and, just as importantly, Russian products still being sold at heavy discounts to global benchmark prices (around \$10 to \$15 below Brent), the failure of sanctions does not necessarily mean success for Russia's war machine. The world economy could do without a renewed increase in energy prices, but Russia increasingly needs one...

For more pricing information, see page 34

Portland
www.stabilityfromvolatility.co.uk

The chemical supply chain: addressing the sector's skills gap

THE CHEMICAL SUPPLY CHAIN REQUIRES A WORKFORCE WITH VARYING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST TO OPERATE, BUT TO INNOVATE AND GROW. IN SOME SECTORS, IT IS BECOMING EVER CHALLENGING TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE RIGHT TALENT. **TIM DOGGETT**, CEO OF THE CHEMICAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (CBA), LOOKS AT WHAT IS BEING DONE TO SHOWCASE THE CHEMICAL SUPPLY CHAIN AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE, SHARING VALUABLE INSIGHTS THAT MAY BENEFIT OTHER SIMILARLY CHALLENGING SECTORS.

Future sustainability

The chemical industry is one of the most important and diverse industries in the world and it is a vital thread that runs through society and economy alike. It relies on a large and complex chemical supply chain, requiring a wide range of skills, job functions and ancillary industries to be in place for its effective operation. It is important, therefore, that we take action now to ensure sustainable future generations of appropriately skilled people and talent are developed and nurtured for the chemical supply chain.

There are three main reasons that action must be taken now to prevent a shortage of talent in the sector: the imminent retirement of experienced employees, a perceived skills shortage among the generation that will replace retirees, a lack of awareness of the opportunities that exist due to negative perceptions.

Shifting perceptions

To attract sustainable and diverse talent, the negative view of chemical supply chain industry careers must be addressed. This can only be achieved once companies start combating stereotypes by advocating for their organisations, by informing the public of the chemical supply chain's overarching value, and by showcasing the range of inclusive opportunities available in the chemical supply chain. Trade associations have a major role to play in these efforts, particularly if this is by way of collaboration, as it will reach a much wider audience and facilitate the recruitment drive.

However, recruitment is just one step in the process. Retention is equally important, and companies must view and value their current employees as one of their most critical assets. Employee mentoring, training and development are crucial elements to bridging the skills gap, and companies in the chemical supply chain must commit to prioritising skills development, either by offering vocational training and skills programmes or by supporting opportunities for continuous learning.



The chemical supply chain has a huge range of career opportunities to offer people from all walks of life, and the CBA continues to lead and facilitate collaboration to use the experiences of recent years as catalysts for positive change and, in turn, to build and maintain momentum.

As part of this drive to support the industry, the CBA has partnered with Cogent Skills, the skills lead for the science and technology sector, to provide its members with exclusive access to a practical range of skills services, including policy support, apprenticeship provision and careers outreach training. The CBA itself also offers a comprehensive training programme across a range of regulatory and compliance matters, including Chemistry for the non-Chemist, COMAH, Spill Response, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), and the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), as well as 'Online Clinics' and 'Best Practice Workshops' on a wide variety of subjects.

Industry initiatives

A major challenge facing chemical companies is that the sector is not widely regarded as an attractive career choice. As such, the range of opportunities that exist are often overlooked. To this end, industry has launched various initiatives aimed at challenging perceptions and promoting the opportunities that exist not only to get the younger generation interested and involved, but also to attract talent and make the

chemical supply chain an employer of choice.

In 2022, the CBA established a Future Council, comprising young people with a diverse variety of skills and roles from its member companies. In addition to promoting the chemical supply chain, encouraging future industry talent, and promoting STEM education, the Future Council's objective is to help young people enhance their understanding of the chemical industry, beyond their own jobs, and enable them to contribute meaningfully to industry policies. It is further aimed at engaging with Millennials and Gen Z by showcasing the diverse career opportunities within the sector and informing youngsters and educators about the important contribution science and the chemical supply chain make to the economy.

CBA also joined forces with the Department for Transport (DFT) and other membership organisations, including the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) and Logistics UK as official partners of Generation Logistics, an industry-led campaign aimed at bringing industry together, shifting perceptions, and encouraging the next generation to optimise opportunities in the logistics industry.

Additionally, the CBA and its members have supported 'Chemistry with Cabbage', a programme set up by Lorelly Wilson MBE, with the aim of engaging primary school students in practical chemistry, for many years. It is also actively involved in several other initiatives aimed at young people and future STEM leaders.

Equality, inclusivity, diversity and sustainability

Equality, inclusivity, and diversity are essential aspects of a thriving workplace, especially when it comes to attracting and retaining talent. In recent years, the chemicals sector has become a leader in promoting diversity, equality and inclusion, with businesses across the chemical supply chain ensuring that policies and legislation are continuously revised, that training and development opportunities are accessible,

and that best practices for creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments are in place.

Of course, the growing global focus on sustainability – both within the chemical industry and by external stakeholders – has become a crucial competitive factor for many businesses and potential employers’ environmental impact has become a major career consideration for many young professionals. Unfortunately, lingering misconceptions about the industry have hampered the ability of chemical companies to attract top talent.

Contrary to belief, companies across the chemical supply chain have been developing sustainable strategies and strengthening net zero commitments for years. Many, including the CBA, are actively involved with the Responsible Care (RC) programme, a global, voluntary initiative which provides an ethical framework for the safe and sustainable use and handling of chemical products.

Furthermore, as the chemical industry has a key and leading role to play in decarbonisation – both as a consumer of energy and in developing sustainable solutions for the future – understanding carbon and other greenhouse

gases and their role in climate change has become increasingly critical for the sector. With several of its staff having been certified Carbon Literate, the CBA offers Carbon Literacy training to its members. The certified training, which provides insight to help individuals and companies make informed choices to reduce their carbon impact, enables members to roll out Carbon Literacy to their organisations.

A vital sector

The chemical industry provides essential components, materials and technologies which are used as inputs in more than 97% of manufactured goods globally. The CBA’s distributor and logistics members alone employ over 10,000 people and make 2.25 million deliveries a year, contributing more than £4 billion to the UK economy annually.

The chemical industry in the UK is one of the longest established in the world. To make sure that there is a sustainable pipeline of skilled employees that will allow it to continue to innovate and grow, it must be showcased and understood to be an attractive, dynamic and promising industry in which to build a successful and rewarding career. To achieve this, every industry stakeholder must play their part.

TIM DOGGETT has a wealth of experience in supply chain and logistics and has held senior leadership positions in both the UK and overseas for over 30 years.

Now leading the CBA, he has regular engagement throughout government and is an influential member of various key groups.

In addition to his UK activities, Tim works with international bodies such as the Group of 7 (G7) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), as well with other international Governments, National Authorities, Trade Associations, and other organisations promoting trade and cooperation.

As an inspirational and persuasive leader, he is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) and a Fellow of the ‘Society of Leadership Fellows’ at St George’s House, Windsor Castle. He is an Ambassador for Generation Logistics and holds a number of professional qualifications such as ‘Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser’ (DGSA).



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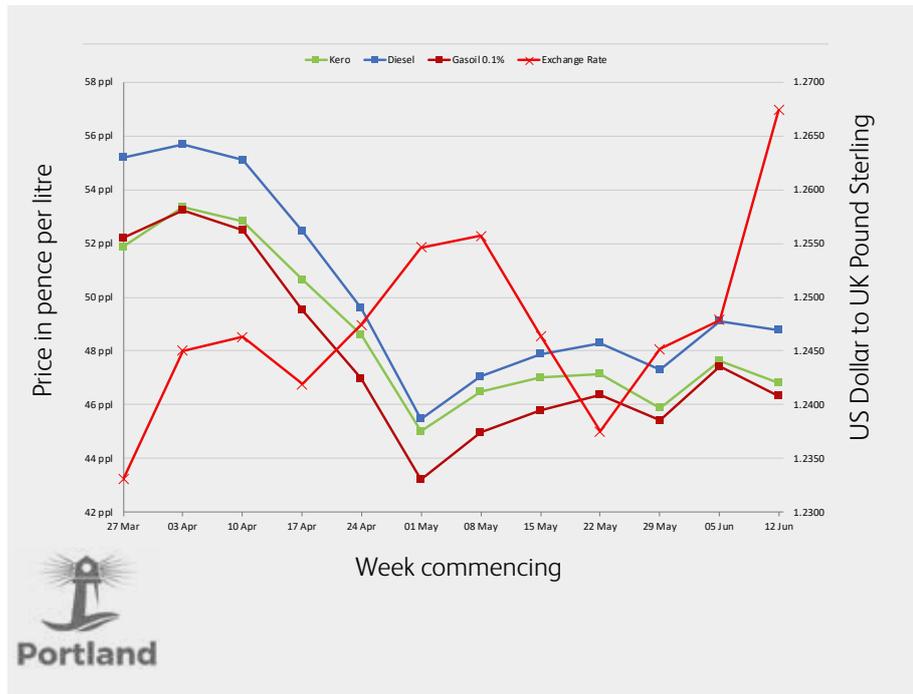
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Wholesale Price Movements: 19th May 2023 – 18th June 2023

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	46.93	48.41	46.41
Average daily change	0.78	0.84	0.84
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	46.93	101.36	56.59

All prices in pence per litre

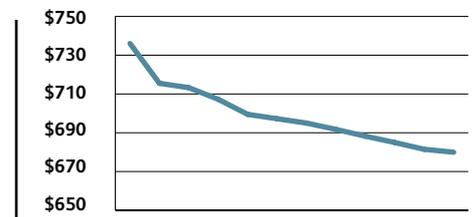


Highest price 48.60 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23	Biggest up day +1.56 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23
Kerosene	
Lowest price 45.13 ppl Wed 31 May 23	Biggest down day -1.75 ppl Tue 30 May 23

Highest price 51.10 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23	Biggest up day +1.94 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23
Diesel	
Lowest price 46.46 ppl Wed 31 May 23	Biggest down day -1.64 ppl Tue 30 May 23

Highest price 48.09 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23	Biggest up day +1.52 ppl Fri 16 Jun 23
Gasoil 0.1%	
Lowest price 44.62 ppl Wed 31 May 23	Biggest down day -1.90 ppl Mon 12 Jun 23

Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



July 2023 – June 2024

The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	50.59	61.21	105.68	57.67	65.40	109.82
North East	49.54	59.84	104.76	59.39	63.74	107.80
North West	51.11	62.44	107.15	57.92	66.09	109.87
Midlands	49.61	60.37	105.22	56.27	64.22	108.52
South East	49.71	60.33	105.20	63.44	67.03	108.06
South West	50.06	60.17	105.04	58.92	64.01	107.66
Northern Ireland	50.17	61.54	n/a	56.71	66.25	n/a
Republic of Ireland	63.93	66.97	106.62	69.88	70.93	110.00
Portland	47.92	57.89	101.91			

The price totem figures are indicative figures compiled from the Portland base rate using calculated regional variances.

Buying prices are ex-rack. Selling prices are for 1000 litres of kero, 2500 litres of gas oil and 5000 litres of ULSD (Derv in ROI). Prices in ROI are in €.

Wholesale prices are supplied by Portland Analytics Ltd, dedicated providers of fuel price information from refinery to pump.

For more information and access to prices, visit www.portlandpricing.co.uk

WELCOME TO JULY'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS. THIS MONTH WE CHAT WITH **MATTHEW CROCKETT**, GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR AT CRAGGS ENERGY GROUP.



"IT'S IMPORTANT TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH TALENT."

MATTHEW CROCKETT

Please give your career history in 25 words or fewer.

Great work ethics from my family saw me selling around the world. Worked in this industry for nearly 3 decades, successfully implementing change management and structured growth.

Describe yourself in 3 words.

Dedicated. Delivers. Empathetic.

What were your childhood / early ambitions?

A stunt man which, I suppose, today I am by constantly manoeuvring obstacles and challenges but just in a non-life-threatening way! I aspired to become an architect and, whilst that never materialised, I'm still passionate about designing, creating, and constructing things for myself.

Describe your dream job (if you weren't doing this?)

Own and run a restaurant, my passion for food and seeing people happy eating would certainly be rewarding mentally and emotionally.

What's the best business advice you've ever received?

Put the absolute best of the best people around you to work with, and ensure teams are aligned with the goals.



Share your top tips for business success.

Communication and collaboration. Do not over-complicate the tasks in hand, and see each employee knows the organisation's tone of voice internally, what the aspirations ahead are, and what the immediate goals and expectations are.

What's your most recent business achievement of note?

It's been a privilege to be part of a senior management team that in the last year has relinquished our shares over to the staff such that the company is now owned 100% by the employees.

Tell us your greatest fear.

Snakes...! But, day to day, within personal and work life balance, failure to deliver on behalf of others and the fear of letting family, friends, and work colleagues down.

Which is most important – ambition or talent?

Ambition is the driver and can take you far and underpins success – and I also believe it's important to surround yourself with talent.

What's the best thing about your job?

Working with great energised people, and the ability to work for a company that can make a difference and the chance to ease the world's journey to clean energy.

Which is the quality that you most admire?

Graciousness and humbleness.

What are you most likely to say?

Whistle goes again tomorrow, same again please.

What are you least likely to say?

It's ok not to hit budgets even with the unexpected challenges.

Describe your perfect day.

Get in the garden, chop away, and titivate the garden through the day, stoke up the outdoor kitchen, prep some nice food, welcome family and friends, pop the wine open and enjoy a long, chilled evening outside into the night with amazing food and wine watching the sun go down.

Do you have a favourite sports team?

I'm a rugby fan, and follow Leicester Tigers and, internationally, England.

What's the biggest challenge of our time?

I would say the transition from fossil fuel usage to clean energy alternatives. It's a journey everyone will have to take, and it's important the world, and our industry, embraces this challenge. Which is why we are proud to transition from fossil fuel facilitators into green energy guides.

Cheese or chocolate?

That is not a fair question...both.

Share your greatest personal achievement.

It's great to have been involved in setting up an Employee Ownership

Trust for our colleagues.

It's been mentally rewarding and seeing the engagement on the back of doing this has been very fulfilling.

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?

People's social awareness, and them not being aware of the landscape they are operating within which impacts many around them negatively.

If you were on 'Mastermind' what would your specialist subject be?

Sauvignon Blanc from around the world.

If your 20-year-old self saw you now what would they think?

Phew, still got your hair...and still loads to achieve.

What is number 1 on your bucket list?

Go to the Ice Hotel, with the one-off, bespoke designed rooms.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?

Wine, music and a mirror – double up of course to use to light fires.

Tell us something about you that people would be very surprised by

Getting dirty gardening and growing my own vegetables and herbs.

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?

Jim Ratcliffe.

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