Fuel Oil News

SEPTEMBER 2022

THE ISSUE OF LOW CARBON LIQUID FUELS

DEVELOPMENTS FOR A GREENER SECTOR

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If you don't like something – change it

I thought summer was a quieter time for our sector? If my phone, inbox, news and social media feeds are anything to go by, this one has been far from it.

The challenges we face, as businesses and individuals, are both abundant and abundantly clear. Unrelenting high temperatures, declared droughts, inflation, the energy crisis, transport strikes and the upward cost of living are all clamouring for answers at a time when our government appears to exist only in name.

As temperatures reach new record highs, we are reminded not to confuse climate with weather and to focus our concerns over our impact on the planet on 'climate change' rather than 'global warming'. Still, nothing focuses the collective mind on a need to act and act now, as relentless heat, sleepless nights, lack of precipitation and drying reservoirs, with the UK hitting 40 ° C for the first time on record.

It is no surprise then, that the pace of change in energy production and distribution is accelerating faster than Lewis Hamilton from 16th on the grid with a podium place in his sights.

I will be forever indebted to my mother for is a truth she instilled in me from my earliest days (before, even, the drought of '76): 'If you don't like something, do all you can to change it. If you can't change it, you have a choice to either live with it, or walk away from it. The one thing you can't do is stay around then moan about it'.

Those in our sector for whom the demands of change are too high will 'walk away' having served their communities well for a very long time. One thing you won't hear is anyone moaning. For a great many, the excitement of being part of the solution and effecting vital change is a stimulus for the most inspiring innovation.

These pages are, again, filled with those already implementing the seismic shifts that will hail the dawn of the truly low carbon age, as well as those finding the equally vital solutions to make the difference here and now. As always, it is our pleasure to share it all with you.

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Fuel Oil News

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On the cover

A dramatic image of one of the largest objects ever to travel a UK road shows the hydrogen furnace journeying from Liverpool to Stanlow on the M53. This UK refinery first features on page 4 with a full Essar update on pages 12 & 13.

In this issue

We look at products that are contributing to a greener sector on pages 22 & 23, as well as hearing about developments in software solutions in conversations with Mabanaft, on page 15, and Touchstar on pages 17 to 19.

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Two hydrogen milestones reached on Essar's journey to low carbon

After an incredible journey by sea and road that caught the eye of the world's media, Essar Oil UK has taken delivery of the first-ever hydrogen-powered furnace at a refinery anywhere in the UK at its Stanlow site in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

The furnace is capable of running on a 100% hydrogen source and will replace three existing furnaces at Stanlow. Hydrogen used by the new furnace, from 2026, will be produced by Vertex Hydrogen, a joint venture launched in January between Essar and Progressive Energy, located on site at Stanlow and part of the HyNet North West low carbon cluster.

In a major logistical feat, which involved closing the M53 on a Saturday night in the middle of August, the furnace arrived at its final destination on the following Sunday evening. The complex operation took several hours and involved multiple agencies including National Highways and Cheshire Police, with the machinery being moved at a walking pace of less than four mph. It travelled along the M53 motorway, exiting at junction 10, before completing the final leg of its journey along the A5117 road to Stanlow.

The furnace is one of the largest objects ever moved on a UK road. The principal component of the furnace – twice the length of a road-going oil tanker and standing almost five times the height of a double decker bus at 18.5 metres tall, 26.5 metres long and 14.2 metres wide – completely filled both northbound and southbound carriages of the motorway. Mounted on two wheeled platforms – one on each carriageway – it was described as 'looking a bit like the bridge of a container ship gliding down the motorway'.

The furnace's 6,000-mile journey began in May this year in Thailand, where it was manufactured and fabricated. After weeks at sea, the furnace arrived at Liverpool Port in June, before being transported by barge down the Manchester Ship Canal.

Committed to decarbonising

Essar is committed to playing a key role in the decarbonisation of the UK economy, with ambitious plans to build a green energy industrial cluster in the North West of England. The furnace forms a central part of Essar's long-term strategy for Stanlow to become the UK's first low-carbon refinery, helping lead the country's low carbon transformation, and will pave the way to decarbonising Essar's operations and cutting emissions at Stanlow – one of the country's most critical refining and manufacturing sites.

Once fully operational, in 2023, it will improve energy efficiency at Stanlow compared to existing furnaces, helping to reduce CO2 emissions by more than 240,000 tonnes each year from 2026, while simultaneously reducing maintenance costs.

In addition to the new furnace, Essar is investing in a range of energy efficiency, low-carbon energy, and carbon capture and storage initiatives. Read all about these in our conversation with Essar on pages 12 &13.

Deepak Maheshwari, chief executive officer at Essar Oil UK, commented: "After years of planning and months of transportation, we are delighted to take delivery of our new, state-of-the-art hydrogen furnace. We are grateful to the many organisations, including National Highways and Cheshire Police, who helped ensure the safe arrival of such a large and complex item.

"The new furnace is the first of its kind at any refinery in the UK and demonstrates clearly Essar's long-term commitment towards decarbonising our operations and helping lead the UK's low carbon transition."

Another new milestone reached

Alongside the arrival of its new furnace, Essar reached another significant milestone in its transition to low carbon operations with the

Government's decision to shortlist Stanlow hydrogen and carbon capture projects.

The announcement by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) confirmed that projects to construct a new hydrogen plant and install carbon capture technology at the site in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, have been selected as part of the UK Government's Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) Cluster Sequencing programme.

Developing a low carbon economy

The new hydrogen plant will help Essar deliver its goal of producing 3.8GW of low carbon hydrogen by the end of the decade – almost 40% of the Government's recently extended target of achieving 10GW by 2030. Part of HyNet, the plant is being built by Vertex Hydrogen and will significantly reduce CO2 emissions every year. The project will also create thousands of new jobs in the North West and North Wales.

The installation of industrial carbon capture technology at the Stanlow refinery, which will enable the direct capture of more than 800,000 tonnes of CO2 per year, is also shortlisted.

These two projects, along with the installation of the hydrogen furnace, form part of the company's £1 billion investment in a range of energy efficiency, low carbon energy and carbon storage initiatives, designed to decarbonise its production processes and put Essar at the forefront of the UK's shift to low carbon energy. The company has plans underway to reduce its emissions by 90% before the end of the decade.

Deepak Maheshwari, commented: "Essar Oil UK continues to deliver on its promise of leading the UK's low carbon transition. Our programme of major investment is decarbonising our own operations and supporting the development of low carbon economy across the North West and North Wales, creating thousands of jobs and securing the long-term future of this crucial facility."

More on Essar's journey on pages 12 & 13

Nationwide HVO refuelling roll-out sees Certas claim HGV first

Certas Energy has launched a nationwide HVO delivery service enabling businesses to power their commercial operations with the drop-in renewable fuel and cut up to 90% of their greenhouse gas emissions.

As well as fuelling its own fleet with the low carbon diesel alternative, the fuel distributor has launched HVO delivery to businesses across the UK. The drop-in renewable fuel is also available at selected Certas Energy refuelling sites, including its Thurrock HGV refuelling site – with Certas Energy claiming to be the first in the UK to offer HVO fuel to HGV fuel card users at the pump.

The company has plans to roll out supply across more of its nationwide network of HGV refuelling sites over the coming months.

DCC plc launched its new 'Leading with Energy' strategy in May 2022, and the roll-out of HVO across Certas Energy's extensive network underpins the company's commitment to supporting UK businesses on their transition journey to net zero

Immediate carbon emission reduction

Niki Holt, head of Commercial at Certas Energy, said: "Our nationwide HVO offering marks a major milestone for our company and, more importantly, our customers. The renewable diesel alternative provides an immediate and simple carbon reduction benefit for businesses working towards cleaner operations – it's simply drop in and go.

"This seamless fuel change means diesel-dependent industries can make a smooth, frictionless, transition and realise significant sustainability benefits, without delay or disruption. We are proud to be leading with energy by offering a viable route for businesses looking to lower their carbon footprint, today."

Commitment to net zero

Certas Energy is not just delivering on its promise to bring HVO to customers. The company is also adopting the fuel across its own delivery fleet. Following a successful trial at two depots, which saw almost 1,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions cut from operations in just one year, Certas Energy is already well on the way to rolling out HVO across its 900-strong fleet.

With industry forecasts predicting significant future demand for renewable diesel, Certas Energy has already committed significant investment to expand its offer.

Making time for community connections

A company that is well known for its commitment to the fight against climate change, Crown Oil is also passionate about involvement with the local community.

The Bury-based supplier of fuels, alternative fuels and lubricants has introduced Volunteering Days for its staff, giving them the chance to build connections with their local communities and give back to society, while working on issues they feel passionate about.

Enthusiastically received by the team, the Volunteering Days have already seen staff members litter picking and removing Himalayan balsam in Queen's Park as well as heading down to the Crown Oil Arena with green fingers and paint brushes to do some sprucing up around the arena before the season starts again.

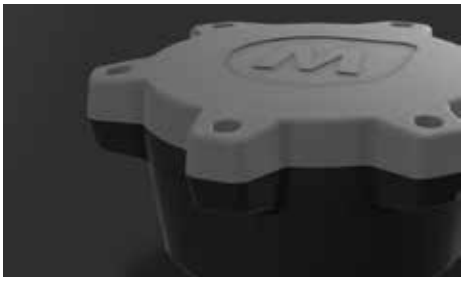
Monitor launch futureproofs connectivity

Extending its range of tank level monitors, MAGNUS Monitors launches the MAGNUS OMNi Radar Monitor this month. Another wireless, radar technology-based, liquid level monitor, the OMNi can be installed on tanks without the need for any holes or alterations, and now comes with 3 modes of mobile connectivity all in the one unit.

The OMNi will connect via NB-IoT & LTE-CAT-M1 with 2G GPRS data as a fallback. Enabled to run on 2G everywhere if other IoT communication modes are not available, it will automatically switch over in the future when they become available in the given geographic area, thus future proofing the monitor against the planned sunsetting of of 2G & 3G mobile access networks.

It also offers the option to be configured with a GPS comms module for monitoring mobile storage tanks such as IBC tank applications. The battery will continue to deliver an expected operational service life of 5 years on 2G mobile mode but, if it runs on either NB-IoT & LTE-CAT-M1 access networks, the anticpated lifespan increases to 8+ years.

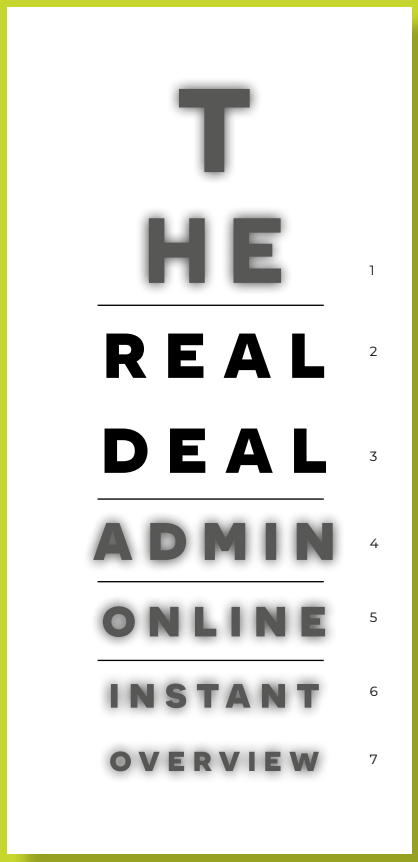
Chief operating officer, Xavier Slevin commented: "Since launching the world's first wireless Radar Tank Level Monitoring solution in 2020, MAGNUS has had considerable success within the fuel oil distribution sector, especially in the AdBlue market, with our monitor having zero contact with the product. No invasive access (no drilling) is required so the integrity of the tank remains intact, protecting the quality of the AdBlue and yet our radar-based monitor's accuracy is maintained, as it is not impacted by AdBlue crystallising effect nor is the monitor device exposed to corrosion effects.



Tracking location as well as volume

"We have been working with companies across both the UK and Ireland wanting to monitor the fuel in their mobile tank / generator sets and we have developed a smart adaptor that will fit one of the many entry points on their steel tank, thus allowing the MAGNUS monitor to sit in it and still fit under the security lid. The addition of GPS availability on the OMNi unit will ensure that these companies have visibility, not only of the level in the tank, but also the location."

"We are excited to have developed an even more versatile radar-based monitoring solution that we are confident surpasses the capability of existing solutions in the marketplace but at a highly cost-effective price point thus ensuring an optimal return on the investment."



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- Instant overview of your account
- Transparency throughout deal lifecycle
- Easy to use and saves time

MABANAFT

Essar proud to sponsor Tranmere Rovers for another year

Essar Oil UK Ltd is delighted to announce that it will continue its partnership with Tranmere Rovers for the forthcoming football season.

Essar owns and operates the storage tankers at Tranmere and the refinery in Ellesmere Port which has been part of the local community for over 60 years.

Tranmere Chairman, Mark Palios said: "I am delighted that Essar will again be our principal sponsor because, over recent years, we have established a great partnership which goes far beyond simple advertising. Essar has embraced many of the community projects we have launched, often with very little fanfare - at their request. This included funding the provision of food parcels at the height of the covid lockdown, and supporting the Super White Christmas appeal, ensuring that local children from financially struggling backgrounds get to enjoy the kind of Christmas that many of us take for granted.

"I would like to thank them for their magnificent support over a number of years, and particularly during the difficult covid period, and I look forward to continuing to work with them for the coming season."

A mutually beneficial partnership

Deepak Maheshwari, CEO of Essar Oil UK, said:

"We're proud to be supporting Tranmere Rovers again this year. Our partnership provides us with the opportunity to work closely with the Club and to partner with them on their wide range of projects that really deliver for the local community.

"We're also grateful to the Club for the special opportunities they provide for our colleagues to take part in events at Prenton Park.

"We wish the team all the best for the 2022/23 season."

Latest sector review highlights significant financial losses and growth in low carbon fuel projects

UKPIA has published its 2022 Statistical Review of the latest available data from the fuel supply sector, with information included from members, government departments, and a range of other sources.

Significant financial investment

The review highlights the continuing efforts of the sector to overcome both known and unexpected challenges to achieve net zero, with companies investing in projects to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions despite the significant financial losses experienced by the sector in 2020.

The refining sector alone has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 24% since 2000 and, in 2020, as was the case in 2019, the UK's overall GHG emissions basket was below both the Kyoto Protocol and Third Carbon Budget targets.

Elizabeth de Jong, chief executive officer at UKPIA, commented: "We are now emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic but have lived through extraordinary years for the world as governments took action to protect public health by locking down economies. With working from home restrictions in place to prevent the spread of the virus, demand for refinery products fell as did production across the sector.

"Despite the challenge of Covid-19, the downstream sector has continued to invest heavily in projects to help the UK achieve net zero, with Fulcrum BioEnergy and Essar announcing plans for a waste-to-fuel plant in the North West of England and Shell signing an agreement with Uniper to produce blue hydrogen in the East of England being just two of many recent announcements in the past year.

"Another cause for optimism has come with large annual increases to the Government's RTFO that are helping to reduce emissions from the transport sector and have supported the development of the UK low carbon fuels industry."

"Since the 1st of September 2021, standard (or 'premium') grade petrol, known as E10, has contained a higher ethanol content in Great Britain with the change expected to reduce transport carbon dioxide emissions by the equivalent of taking up to 350,000 cars off our roads."

Challenges emphasise importance of collaboration

"Of course, 2021 and 2022 have also come with other challenges. A spike in demand last autumn, extended protest activities targeting fuel supply chains and the repercussions of the war in Ukraine have all provided unique challenges for fuel suppliers but have also shown the importance of close working between governments and industry stakeholders that UKPIA is so passionate to promote."

Headlines from the 2022 review

- Due to Covid restrictions, demand for nearly all downstream oil sector products in 2020 decreased substantially and members saw net losses of £1.8 billion
- The UK has the greatest number of operational downstream oil sector low carbon liquid fuel or technology projects in Europe
- A higher renewable transport fuel blending target supported the deployment in the UK of low carbon fuels which reduced emissions by over 5 million tonnes of carbon

The UKPIA Statistical Review 2022 is available on the UKPIA website or in hard copy on request from the UKPIA Press Office.

OPEC+ agrees increased output but is it too little?

Agreed last month, in a bid to stem rising energy prices, the members of OPEC+ will add 100,000 bpd to output from this month. However, for those who have been involved in intense lobbying for increased production, including US President Joe Biden, the scale of the increase was received with disappointment – being far less than hoped for and slower than the pace of increased output of recent months.

Despite the disappointment, the agreement, combined with an unexpected increase in US commercial crude oil stocks of 4.5 million barrels, had an immediate impact with crude oil trading lower the morning after the announcement.

With crude having traded consistently above $100 since February, driving up the cost of living, Biden had personally travelled to Saudi Arabia in a bid to persuade the country to increase output in order to stem the soaring price rises.

Regarding meetings to have been positive and, with Saudi Arabia the biggest single producer in OPEC+, President Biden left saying he 'expected the supply to increase'.

Saudi representatives made it clear, however, that any decisions on output would be made in consultation with OPEC+. Having previously added 600,000 bpd to the market in July and August the decision following the latest meeting to increase output by just 100,000 bpd was described by some as 'an insult' and 'so little to be almost meaningless'.

Drop in demand

Given the minimal increase, the immediate reaction of the markets

was likely due more to the additional impact of the increased US stockholding. The petroleum status report of the US EIA, released at the start of August, showed an increase in US commercial crude oil inventories of 4.5 million barrels from the previous week.

At the same time the report indicated a decline in supply with the previous four-weeks averaging 19.9 million barrels a day, down by 3 per cent from the same period last year.

It's not that easy

With market analysts seeing the output uplift as a setback, OPEC+ was quick to defend its stance, suggesting that 'turning the taps on full' may not be that easy with several members having struggled to meet their production targets for some time.

Noting that the severely limited availability of excess capacity necessitates utilising it with great caution in response to supply disruptions, it also noted that chronic underinvestment in the oil sector has reduced excess capacities along the value chain.

OPEC+ is also keen to maintain good relations with Russia, as one of the biggest partners in the alliance. Diverting its shipments to China and India, Russia needs the income to offset the impact of Western sanctions and continue funding the war so has no desire to see the oil price drop.

OPEC's desire to work with Russia is a large factor in the decision to maintain last year's agreed stance of increasing supplies very gradually from September despite the calls to ramp up output.

Demand uncertainty

The rise in US stock holdings is indicative of another consideration that may be making the cartel unwilling to add another dramatic production increase at this time.

The energy demand outlook over the coming months is far from certain, with the recessions predicted in many countries in the West, rising interest rates and the ongoing war in Ukraine all expected to impact heavily in reducing demand.

With so many unknowns, producers will want to use spare capacity wisely, adding to OPEC's cautious approach.

Future outlook

Last month saw the oil price back below $100/bbl for the first time since February, but it is not anticipated to remain there long.

Oil demand estimates from the IEA and the EIA anticipate continued strong growth despite the factors detailed above. This will leave producers once again needing to increase output to balance supply and demand.

Given the lack of global investment in downstream, refining and production capacity coupled with the end of the US release of 1 million bpd from its strategic reserve coming to an end in October we could, once again, see supplies becoming tight and prices rising.

Adler and Allan support in major incident exercise with HOYER

Last month Adler and Allan was commissioned by HOYER Gas & Petroleum Logistics Ltd to support in an emergency response exercise.

The exercise was carried out in conjunction with the Cheshire Fire & Rescue College, North West Ambulance Services, Highways England, Cheshire Constabulary, D&G Assist and Adler & Allan.

The scenario is designed to exercise the HOYER Emergency Response procedures, the mobilisation of HOYER Major Incident Control Centre (MICC). It is also designed to test the competency levels of the HOYER Incident Management team (Incident Controllers) and the procedures / cooperation between HOYER, Adler and Allan, D&G Assist and other external parties that may be involved in dealing with a major incident resulting in injuries, a rollover, oil spill incident, vehicle uplift, recovery and clean-up operation.

Response capability

As part of the services required at the scene HOYER mobilised Adler and Allan as its approved supplier for Oil Spill Management (OMT).

Adler and Allan demonstrated addressing the issues involving the containment and removal of the fuel/oil (water) and remaining product transfer to a relief tanker as well as dealing with environmentally sensitive areas including water courses, storm drains and hazardous risks including overhead lane markings, lighting lamp post, traffic and road users near the incident.

Once the tanker used in the exercise had been uplifted and recovered Adler and Allan carried out a thorough clean-up of the area including demonstrating use of a gully sucker to empty the drains of product and fire foam.

PEOPLE MOVES

DCC Energy has announced the appointment of **Dr. Fabian Ziegler** as Chief Executive Officer with Fabian set to commence the role on 1 November 2022.

A spokesperson for DCC commented: "Fabian is an excellent addition to our senior management team in DCC. He is ideal to lead DCC Energy because of his track record of success, significant experience leading large organisations and expertise in the energy industry and energy transition. We have a clear strategy to accelerate the net zero journey of our customers by leading the sales, marketing, and distribution of low carbon energy solutions.

"We look forward to welcoming Fabian to DCC and working with him to deliver this exciting strategy in the years ahead."

With continued expansion at LCM Environmental, **Richard Wallace** moves from his position as Managing Director to become Chief Executive Officer with **Paul Rava** moving from his role as Operations Director to take the position of Managing Director. More in the article below.

Simon Weiss was, this year, appointed Head of Aviation at Mabanaft. From his base in Hamburg, Simon works with his team to ensure the delivery of a safe and reliable supply of aviation fuel to customers in the UK and Europe.

Simon commented: "A key reason for me deciding to work for Mabanaft was their willingness to invest in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). In my previous role as a buyer, I would look at purchasing SAF but the economics were prohibitive. Now, my team at Mabanaft is changing this by finding new ways of bringing SAF to the market."

Joe Seifert was appointed CEO of Vertex Hydrogen, a new company that's leading the charge to develop low-carbon hydrogen.

Commenting on the appointment in May, a spokesperson said: "We are thrilled and delighted to announce the appointment of Joe Seifert as Vertex Hydrogen's first Chief Executive Officer. As we gear up to deliver on our mission of designing and developing the UK's first low-carbon hydrogen hub, Joe joins us at a pivotal time.

Joe also commented: "It's extremely exciting to join Vertex. The organisation is at the forefront of the UK's energy transition, delivering the UK's first large scale, low carbon hydrogen facility. Vertex will have a real and near-term impact on national carbon reduction targets as well as helping to secure and grow industry and jobs in the North West."

Returning to the industry in March this year, after a short career break to welcome his first child, **Peter Croll** has taken up a position as Business Development Manager at OilMaxx, part of Oilfast Group and is: "Providing complete fuel solutions to a large and varied customer base, supporting on the net zero transition and supply of alternative fuels."

In another Oilfast appointment **Christine McKay** has taken up the role of Depot Supervisor for Oilfast Insch depot.

Alex Azadegan has taken up the role of Operations Manager at Green Biofuels UK Ltd following a move from ExxonMobil

Craig Rollingson has been appointed Head of Logistics at Watson Fuels – a World Fuel Services company.

Alex Wolfe has taken up the role of Commercial Director Roadside Services at Certas Energy

Phil Roe took up the role of President of Logistics UK in April 2022 after 5 years as a non-executive Director. Prior to joining he was a board Director at DHL Supply Chain and he is also a non-executive Director and trustee at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

Multidisciplinary engineering firm adi Group, a leading engineering and construction business continues to expand both its service offering and its team in the form of a new senior appointment with

Mo Ahmed joining the firm as a business development manager for the oil and gas sector, forming a new subdivision of adi Projects.

Square Robot, the world leader in robotic tank inspection, has added tank storage industry leader **Earl Crochet** to its Board of Directors, bringing with him 34+ years of experience in pipelines and terminals.

LCM Environmental Services Limited, fuel, energy, tank and pipe infrastructure specialists, has recently undergone a structural change.

In preparation for significant growth and expansion, the company has restructured its senior leadership team. **Richard Wallace**, the businesses Group Managing Director, has been appointed as the new LCM Environmental CEO and will focus on the company's growth and expansion.

Overseeing the day-to-day operations and guiding LCM along its new path, **Paul Rava** has taken the company's Managing Director position. As the business's former Commercial Director and, prior to that, the Operations Director, Paul brings to LCM Environmental over 30 years of experience in the fuel industry after starting as a petroleum pipe fitter in 1991. Since then, Paul has progressed his career, becoming a Divisional Manager and then Director of a national fuel systems and environmental business before joining the LCM team nearly four years ago as the Operations Director.

Paul's wealth of technical knowledge, skills in problem-solving and critical thinking will be invaluable to his position in driving LCM Environmental's future forward and ensuring their projects are effective and efficiently delivered.

Richard and Paul's new appointments are only the beginning of the exciting changes for LCM Environmental in the coming year.

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Tim Croughwell

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 **TIM CROUGHWELL**, DEPOT MANAGER AT BARTON PETROLEUM, WINNER OF THE UKIFDA DEPOT OF THE YEAR AWARD AND LEGENDARY TEA DRINKER, TO DISCOVER HOW TIM SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.

The family dogs Olly and Charlie'

MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

4.20am

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Reset the alarm for another 10 minutes, followed by my first tea of the day! Then it's out for a 3 mile walk with my two dogs, then off to work at 6.30am.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Preparation for the day ahead always starts the night before. I attempt to have loads from the previous day all confirmed and prelisted, especially if work colleagues are on holiday. This allows me to get into the office and, if necessary, deal with any issues early in the day.

MY TYPICAL DAY...

A typical day would be to arrive at the depot around 7am. Hopefully, most of the tankers have already left and those remaining are loading. I deal with any problems, such as breakdowns, punctures, or sickness. The last is rare as I work with a fantastic group of people who are more likely to be on death's door rather than call in ill!

This is followed by my second cup of tea and then checking figures from the previous day's sales, I then liaise with our depot supervisor and decide how much fuel we need to order. Once this is completed, the phone will be ringing with customers ordering or wanting quotes, deliveries arriving at the depot, drivers calling in for help to find locations or returning for their second loads and more tea! (I probably manage more than 15 mugs a day!)

I attempt to leave the office at lunch for exercise, either a run or cycle. This helps me to be more focused later in the day. My aim each day is for the depot to operate smoothly.

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

After delivering 2300 litres of kerosene into a 600-gallon steel tank on

plinths, the tank sprung a leak underneath. Initially, I started to fill the customers wheelie bin, followed by the new tank the customer had taken delivery of but had yet to be installed. For the next 5 hours, I and my late health and safety manager used two 15 litre buckets to catch the fuel and ferry it into the new tank.

To make matters worse, the customer initially refused to pay the invoice as he was attempting to claim off his insurance!

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

Having to tell domestic customers the price of fuel and knowing many of them will not be able to afford it, especially the elderly.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

If we are busy in the winter, sneaking out myself in a tanker on a Saturday, making a few deliveries and meeting customers. (But don't tell my bosses!)

It also reminds me of how hard our drivers work and the issues they must deal with.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

Time with my family, whether it is watching my son play rugby on a Sunday morning, listening to my daughter's day if she has completed a day in the Special Constabulary or at Uni, or talking to Clare, my wife.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS

My evening meal. If I manage to exercise, I am normally starving!

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

Kiss my family goodnight as I am the first one to go to bed.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

As early as possible! Generally, 21.30–22.00 as long as I'm not engrossed in something on the television!

Essar Oil UK Ltd: from manufacturing complex to energy park

ESSAR IS ONE OF THE LEADING DOWNSTREAM ENERGY COMPANIES IN THE UK, WITH A CLEAR FOCUS ON PROVIDING AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE TODAY AS WELL AS INVESTING IN A LOW CARBON FUTURE. MARGARET MAJOR, MANAGING EDITOR OF FUEL OIL NEWS AND CLAUDIA WEEKS, CONTENT EDITOR, MET WITH **CARLOS ROJAS**, HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AT ESSAR, AND **MICHELLE LEWIS**, CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, TO REFLECT ON WHAT HAS BEEN A CHALLENGING YEAR FOR THE INDUSTRY AND TO HEAR THEIR EXCITING PROGRESS TO SUPPORT THE ENERGY TRANSITION.

A story of growth and change

"I think that we have a fascinating story about growth. We all acknowledge and recognise that we are in the middle of energy transition. We embrace the challenge and see the opportunities in that," Carlos Rojas shares. Speaking confidently on the direction of Essar Oil UK, Carlos is clear about what he believes the future holds: "It's all about developing the future low carbon, integrated energy solutions whilst meeting current energy needs.

"This is all about a transition. We play a critical role in ensuring energy supply security in this country and we take that seriously."

Essar is one of the leading downstream energy companies and operates in different sectors as Carlos explained: "We have our direct business on the retail side, we also deal directly with the aviation industry and a big portion of our commercial business is B2B & wholesale which is, largely, the Fuel Oil News community. We have a solid relationship with these resellers. The Essar brand is trusted; we know that our customers value the security of supply and quality of fuels that we offer."

Security of supply is paramount

Given the recent supply challenges experienced, Carlos wanted to reassure distributors that Essar places the utmost importance on security of supply for contracted customers and provides regular updates on operations and supply as he explained: "We are always very upfront with our customers; we pride ourselves on our relationships with them and actively manage the demand to make sure that we have enough supply for everyone. We are very pro-active in our communication to our customer base when planned events occur. However, there will always be unplanned events that we cannot predict, so we have robust contingency plans. We can use alternative terminals, alternative modes of delivery, either by ship, road, pipeline, etc. We have resilience."

Margaret was keen to hear Essar's thoughts on the importance of distributors being contracted for supply, especially in such challenging market conditions. Industry experts recommend at least 60% of a distributor's supply requirements should be contracted and Carlos confirms that he also supports this view: "We place a lot of value on our contracted customer relationships, and they are, of course, always our priority.

"We have full respect for the deep understanding of the distributor community. They know that the price fluctuates, and I fully appreciate their frustrations with recent situations but, if you buy 100% spot, then that is likely to cause challenges in a very volatile market.

"As everyone says, pricing is important, but it's more important to ensure that the customer has a usable product. Security of supply is paramount."

Pricing

There has been much discussion within the industry and the wider press around the subject of the oil industry potentially profiteering in the current market. Carlos was keen to clarify Essar's position: "Refineries are not the price setters. We buy crude, and we sell products based on international price benchmarks. The market is influenced by macro-economic forces over which we have no influence. The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, as a result of the

current conflict, is an example of this.

"It's a very cyclical business. Through covid, refineries were loss-making. Our business, in particular, had a difficult 18 months as was well reported in the press. We are grateful for the support we received support from the government, and this has all now been repaid.

"The other key point to highlight is that the UK market is extremely competitive. There are six refineries and several importers, and this ensures that the customer always has competitive options."

The importance of infrastructure

Surveying Stanlow from the Essar office rooftop, Margaret and Claudia got a great perspective on the vastness of the site, with an incredible amount of infrastructure in place to support the supply of energy to the country.

Carlos elaborated: "Our footprint is the refinery, but we also have a state-of-the-art terminal here that is capable of loading 26 million litres of oil per day – it's a massive terminal! We have pipeline connectivity to Manchester airport, to Carrington (a site in Manchester where we can put our chemical products) and to our terminals in the midlands. We have three terminals, Northampton, Kingsbury and Stanlow.

"We have the pipeline connectivity that helps us to reach the market with the distribution network underpinning everything here. There is also Tranmere Terminal, which is a deep-water terminal where some of the biggest vessels in the world can dock."

Recognising the importance of shared infrastructure, collaboration and support between businesses, Michelle explained the transition of the Stanlow site: "We are now seeing the transition from a manufacturing complex to energy park. There are three businesses all based here (at Stanlow) that are really focussed on transforming for tomorrow and committed to decarbonisation with exciting synergies.

"Alongside Essar Oil UK are Vertex Hydrogen and Stanlow Terminals. Vertex is building a hydrogen production plant and some of that will be supplied to Essar to help us with decarbonising our processes as well as supporting other neighbouring companies with decarbonisation.

"We also have Stanlow Terminals who are superb at storing, blending, and distributing fuels and chemicals. Previously a vital part of Essar Oil UK, it became clear that they can provide that service for others too. It's very outward looking. We aren't looking inwards; this is very much about using the infrastructure that has served this refinery so well – that could serve others well too."

Neatly summarising the opportunity Michelle explained: "The best location for providing the future of fuels is where you've always done it, using the people, the infrastructure and the knowledge that is there. Transitioning towards a greener future is then totally achievable."

The three-step plan to net zero

Michelle was keen to explain further the company plans to achieve net zero.

"We have a very ambitious plan in place to decarbonise the refinery. We plan to achieve net zero fully by 2040 but now believe we may be able to eliminate about 90% of emissions by 2030. That's 2 million tonnes of carbon a year.

"We have a clear three-step strategy for this. The first step is energy efficiency, the second is using hydrogen in our production processes and the third step is carbon capture.

"The carbon that can't be removed by energy efficiency or replaced by using hydrogen, can be captured using the infrastructure being developed by HyNet."

Carlos continued: "Essar is investing heavily in new, alternative fuels with hydrogen being our main focus. We are part of HyNet, the government-supported project that will see the decarbonisation of our operations and the surrounding businesses in the area. We also have organic investments in decarbonising our own site.

"We have just taken delivery of our new hydrogen furnace. This will run 100% on hydrogen when it is operational next year, and will reduce our emissions by 200,000 tonnes of carbon a year."

Margaret and Claudia at Essar

Transitioning towards decarbonisation

Michelle explained how the strategy is viewed by consumers and the local community: "Consumers understand that there must be an energy transition, actively buying EVs for example, and they are keen to adapt to new processes. There is an energy revolution happening.

"As part of the transition, we may need to blend different fuels, such is the case with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)."

This is a fuel in which Essar sees a big opportunity as Carlos added: "We are already working on SAF and Fulcrum Northpoint plans to build a facility at Stanlow that will reuse household waste and transform that into SAF. Airlines are keen for it and the demand is very much there. This is a very promising future fuel.

"The local community around Stanlow is extremely supportive and very well informed and we've also got a highly skilled workforce. We celebrate the contribution that we've made in the past, but we are now extremely excited and focussed on our future."

This future also presents an opportunity for the next generation of energy producers as Carlos enthuses: "We've just sent out acceptance letters to 21 apprentices, and we

are also recruiting 10 graduates – that's 30 young people coming into the business this year. They are the people who will learn and explore the best ways to continue a successful energy transition.

"We are proud of the history of Stanlow Manufacturing Complex and the role it has played in successfully fuelling the country for so long, but now we are looking forward to another 60 great years – fuelling it in a very different way."

With a clear strategy for growth on its path to net zero, Essar has already made significant progress towards decarbonisation. We will continue to follow their journey with interest.

In our next issue we will find out more about the reason for the emergence of Stanlow Terminals and the benefits it will offer across the whole fuel distribution sector.

Mabalive: the real deal for deal administration

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE OF FUEL OIL NEWS, WE WILL BE CONSIDERING VARIOUS SOFTWARE INNOVATIONS THAT BENEFIT THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION SECTOR. HERE WE TAKE AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ONE PARTICULAR PLATFORM THAT HAS CONTINUALLY EVOLVED SINCE LAUNCH TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF EFFICIENT DEAL ADMINISTRATION.

The administration associated with commercial fuel purchasing can be complex and time consuming. Mabalive, Mabanaft's secure online platform, has been specifically developed to help make deal administration easier, more accurate and more efficient.

Originally created to give customers access to live pricing and instant online ordering, the system has evolved over time to allow deals to be tracked, with regularly updated reporting, from lifting at the terminal right through to final invoicing. We take a look at what it offers and how it is regarded by those using it.

At-a-glance overview and detailed reporting

The Mabalive dashboard gives a valuable overview of the user's account including recent orders, credit utilisation, moved product, invoices and releases. Easy access to more detailed reports on purchased orders, daily movements, remaining balances to lift, terminal release expiry dates etc., that can be viewed by day, month or year as well as filtered, makes it easy to find any required information.

Simple, efficient, and empowering

Having this level of information available in one place at the touch of a button, greatly simplifies account administration and reduces the need for calls or emails. The in-depth reporting also supports informed decision making and better financial planning and the ability to view term deal lifting enables live performance management, while keeping track of terminal release and expiry dates can ensure critical deadlines are met.

Mabanaft's head of sales and marketing, Clare Charlton, commented: "Customers tell us they find Mabalive easy to use and say it provides unprecedented visibility of their account. Our experienced sales team still maintain regular contact with them and are always available to offer support and guidance whenever required, but Mabalive is a perfect complement to this, enhancing our high standards of customer service."

Constantly evolving

The team that designed Mabalive have a deep understanding of deal administration making it a unique platform. It is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the sector with ongoing development informed by customer feedback.

Key features and benefits

- Secure online system: Convenient, easy to use and available to view anytime from any internet-enabled device.
- At-a-glance dashboard: Immediate account overview showing orders, credit utilisation, moved product, invoices and releases.
- Detailed reporting: Monitor and manage transactions with regularly updated reporting of recent orders, daily movements and remaining balances to lift. Performance insight through term deal lifting and efficient critical deadline planning through visibility of terminal releases and expiry dates.
- Account administration: Invoice history with due dates and online audit trail facilitates accurate account reconciliation.
- Having visibility of your account reduces the need to call or email for information and saves time.

What people say about Mabalive

Mabanaft has always placed the customer front and centre of all it does. An annual customer satisfaction survey does more than simply allow the fuel wholesaler to review past performance delivering, as it does, valuable insight into evolving customer needs and guiding future developments of the Mabalive platform.

In an industry that can, at times, present challenges and demands 24/7, the ability to access the platform anywhere at any time, from any internet-enabled device, is invaluable. With this high level of functionality and ease of access it is not surprising, that it has received glowing reviews from users – even been described as 'the most advanced system provided by any wholesaler in the UK'.

"I think Mabalive is the best system I've seen. In terms of the new functionality, it's great having visibility of my account details such as order balances, remaining orders and credit utilisation."

"It really does save time, if I am missing an invoice, I don't have to pick up the phone and try and get hold of the right person, I can simply view and print off a copy, which is a big advantage."

"I've always liked the convenience of being able to quickly see prices and place orders online on Mabalive. Now, having all this information to hand makes it even better. It definitely makes my life easier and saves time".

"As a stock accountant I find Mabalive really helpful as it gives me instant access to the accurate, detailed information that I need."

"I use Mabalive to check order balances and lifting reports and make sure these match. I can also look back at previous invoices (which I can search by invoice number or by deal number which is very helpful), and print copies off if I need to. It is very straightforward to use and it's easy to find what I need. All in all, it makes it easier and quicker to do my job."

"Mabalive is a market leading system. It is simple to use and saves so much time. With regards to physical deliveries into our network, our operations team can see all confirmed deliveries and volumes at the touch of a button, which is really useful. I'm more interested in seeing a snapshot of activity, and the dashboard gives me just that. It gets a big 'Thumbs Up' from us."

The fuel distribution sector, where margins are narrow and any time or money saved can make a significant difference to the bottom line, is one that has long been at the forefront of software innovation.

Our October issue will look at software products that are delivering value to the sector. Let us know if your business uses one that you value highly: margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk

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Touchstar Technologies: planning for world domination

LIZ BOARDMAN CHATS TO **GORDON HYLAND**, SALES DIRECTOR AT TOUCHSTAR TECHNOLOGIES, ABOUT SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS, WORLD DOMINATION AND WHY THE FUEL DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY IS SUCH A GREAT PLACE TO WORK.

Which technologies are being most widely adopted by fuel oil distributor customers?
Digitalisation in general, with mobile working as a key factor, is widespread throughout the industry. An 'early adopter of digital technologies', the fuel sector is very much at the forefront of digitalisation and has been using technology for business gain for decades.

Back-office systems, specifically designed for fuel distribution companies to facilitate order receipt, stock allocation, trip planning, reconciliation and invoicing, are proving popular. Often companies will have developed paper-based systems for this, but over many years, we're finding that the majority of fuel distributors are using some kind of driver application and ruggedised tablet device. This is always a significant investment, but it clearly offers good pay back from an efficiency, accuracy and safety perspective. Some companies with larger fleets also use a dedicated route optimisation tool like Ortec to help ensure minimum distances are driven while the fleet is out delivering.

Why do you think this is?
Fleet size/cost is one of the most expensive elements of fuel oil distribution, so anything that can be done to enforce standards and add efficiencies, creates savings. Since most operators now have systems like this, it's seen as necessary to keep up with the competition, particularly where end-customers have a choice of provider. Also, the enhanced safety aspects contribute to brand protection, which is hugely important in this industry.

Are there any technologies that are being requested by customers? What do they desire?
From our perspective, we're returning a lot of real-time data to our customers' back-office systems, but we also hold this data separately. This means we can create real-time dashboards, so that planning managers can see exactly where their fleets are working, how they are performing against the plan for the day and crucially, what stock is available on each truck. The result is that users have the ability to react quickly to emergency orders and other requirements. We have more capability to develop on this yet and are consulting with our customers to add new features all the time.

A lot of customers are also asking for What3Words (a proprietary geocode system designed to identify any location with a resolution of three metres). It works well in the fuel industry, especially for those delivering to the farming community, where the delivery post code may represent a huge area. By using the app, the driver can capture the exact location of the tank and navigate to exactly the right spot.

It's not our technology, but I know several customers that are very interested in integrating it into our solution and also into their back-office solution. Tanks are not usually located directly beside a building and can often be difficult to find. Also, customers may have more than one tank so it's extremely useful to be able to pinpoint the right tank so that the driver can deliver the correct product.

Can you tell us if/how Covid-19 and the energy transition have affected the demand from customers?
We have two generic types of customers – the first being fuel oil and LPG distributors – and they were both very busy throughout the pandemic. With so many people continuing to work from home, they have seen a huge uplift in delivery requirements.

Our other customers deliver fuel to petrol forecourts. They saw a massive drop in demand during the pandemic since no-one was driving

anywhere but, equally, things have now picked up again to pre-pandemic levels. Many of our fuel oil customers are now offering alternative, greener fuels and they seem to be gaining some good traction with this. Crucially, they are selling new fuels that are complementary to their existing infrastructure.

We've been ballistically busy with projects for the first half of the year. As companies have emerged from the covid crisis, they've decided they're now ready to look at the things they put on the shelf. As a result, we've been signing up new customers such as BATA, Par Petroleum and Alan Stobart (part of WCF group), and Rix has also committed to a big upgrade project with us.

How do you gather feedback from customers?

We hold regular review meetings and occasionally put in requests for marketing case studies. We also attend exhibitions and do one-to-one 'speed dating' conferences, which are really effective.

Can you tell us more about any current projects in the fuel logistics industry?

We're working with Par Petroleum on a project that has just kicked off. They've got eight commercial trucks that they're moving from a paper-based solution – that involved a lot of manual data entry and reliance on old technology – to a new state-of-the-art, in-cab solution, that will automatically populate their back office with real-time information.

We're also just kicking off a project with Alan Stobart in Carlisle. All WCF depots/fleets now use Touchstar devices and this is the last depot to be done. Again, they wanted to move away from a paper-based system to an in-cab device. They already have a truck tracking solution but want to take it out because our system now does that too via our mapping console (a new product that we've been building for the last two years).

What are the key areas of focus for TouchStar at present?

There are two big areas at the moment. The first is completing android migrations for our current customers, and this is moving at pace. The second is expanding our customer base to Europe, the States and South Africa. We already have market saturation in the UK, so we're taking our solutions further afield.

Can you tell us more about TouchStar's recent strategic partnership with HMK Bilkon? How did it come about and what are you hoping to achieve together?

Danish meter manufacturer and tank builder, HMK Bilkon came up with a new meter that went into the Danish DCC Energi fleet (also a customer of ours) and we subsequently integrated with it.

As a result, Peter Jensby, the company's MD, came over to see us to talk about how we could try and develop a strategic partnership. They're interested in selling meters in the UK and we're interested in selling FuelStar across Scandinavia.

We also have another burgeoning partnership with Leighton O'Brien, a wet stock management company, which is based in Australia but also covers the whole of the Asia Pacific region and the States. They're very excited about what we do as all their retail customers in the States use paper-based systems with very little visibility, mostly via third party logistics companies.

Partnerships (with companies like meter manufacturers and other software providers) are the way we're going to get into these other geographies. Ortec, for example, has introduced us to a company in Eastern Europe, while Adapt IT has put us on to a company in South Africa.

Over the next few years, what do you see as the major challenges to the fuel industry and what are the opportunities?

The major challenges are the migration away from fossil fuels, coping with the introduction of alternatives and, also, getting the Government to recognise that the current infrastructure is the best tool to deliver this change.

Basing national strategies on inappropriate solutions is simply not going to create the necessary impact and would be a tone-deaf response. Government needs to listen to our industry experts, who will tell you that all the fleets, terminals, depots, workforce, technologies and other elements of the current supply chain, can readily be adapted to handle many of the new fossil free alternatives. This is most certainly the path of least resistance in terms of keeping costs down and utilising what is already in place, rather than creating costly new channels for energy delivery.

Opportunities are the other side of the same coin. Distributors who can get ahead of the curve with resourcing and distributing HVO and hydrogen etc. will be well placed as the migration really gets going in earnest. But, also, organisations which have robust processes and can put available technologies to good use to create incremental value, will be the ones which adapt best and end up leading the way to a greener future.

What do you enjoy most about working in this industry?

The people. I've been selling mobile computing solutions for over 25 years, but the last three years, where I've been in the fuels industry, I've noticed that everywhere you go, you meet lovely people. I wish I'd discovered this 20 years ago because, in a lot of other industries, the people are miserable, but everyone here just seems substantially happy with what they're doing; they're enjoying it and making the most of it.

We work with lots of smaller companies, where we're often talking to owner managers and it's personal; I love that personal connection. They might be spending tens of thousands of pounds with us and it's a personal

commitment. Although we're a PLC, we're a family at this end, and our values reflect this, and I think that's part of the reason why we've been so successful. We'll always be flexible, we'll always try and do our best, and people will always appreciate that. It's hard to describe really, but they genuinely want to help us help them – it's a real partnership scenario.

What's in the pipeline for you, in terms of new products or services?

We're in the process of migrating our customers from our legacy platforms (Windows CE) to our new Android systems and we're developing our dashboard and reporting capabilities too.

We're also developing a new module to make the whole truck WiFi-enabled. At the moment, we rely on cables to connect everything in our old solution, or Bluetooth in our current solution, but we're going to have a new module soon that will enable WiFi connectivity. Although Bluetooth is really good these days, WiFi is always going to be that bit stronger.

How was the UKIFDA EXPO for you?

Absolutely fantastic. The best exhibition we've been to in 25 years! Our feet didn't touch the floor. We had four people on the stand and every time we turned around there was someone new to talk to, whether that was a customer or a prospect…and deals have moved along significantly as a result of it.

With the ever-increasing rate of technological advance, we will be looking at a broad range of software innovations that are benefiting the fuel distribution sector in our October issue. If you believe your product or service merits a mention in that please get in touch: liz@fueloilnews.co.uk

PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

AUGUST IN VIEW

REPORTS OF THE DEATH OF COAL HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED

As recently as last year, several commentators in the energy sector were confidently predicting the death of coal. A combination of cheap gas and shiny new renewable energy projects would surely push the dirty old man of the energy industry finally out of existence. Sadly, in the light of this year's events, it would seem fairly clear that such predictions were wrong. In a world of searing summer temperatures in Europe and biblical floods in Australia and America, the return of coal is an unwelcome reminder of our inability to match environmental rhetoric with actual action. But this report deals with reality and, as countries across the world look to dust down previously 'dormant' coal-fired power stations, the reality is that coal is back…

"COAL-GENERATED ENERGY WILL SOON BE A DISTANT MEMORY."

In the run-up to the pandemic, there was good reason, and ample evidence, to suggest that coal was indeed on its way out. The percentage of US electricity from coal-fired generation was around 20% – down from 50% only 15 years earlier in 2005. Several European countries were regularly posting coal-free energy days and the UK, in particular, was running for prolonged coal-free periods. In 2019, Britain went for over 3,000 hours without coal-fired electricity (about 35% of the time) leading one Government spokesman (from the Department of Energy) to publicly declare that "coal-generated energy will soon be a distant memory on our path to becoming a net zero emissions economy".

Sadly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has upended such sentiment and Europe, in particular, is now fervently stock-piling coal in advance of a much-feared 2022-23 'winter of discontent'. The major coal-producing nations of South Africa, Australia and Colombia have all seen their exports to the EU increase by between 40-50% – an increase of over 40m tonnes. Initially, this volume was to replace boycotted Russian coal that was no longer arriving on European shores (a full European ban on Russian coal kicked in on Aug 10th) but, as power generators clamoured for extra stock, underlying demand was also soon rising. By the mid-point of the year, overall European coal consumption was up by almost 10%. For the producers, of course, this is a bonanza of extra volume and (inevitably) higher prices. In 2021, the price of thermal (power generating) coal in Europe was $130 per tonne. By June 2022, that price had risen to over $400…

Even before the current energy crunch however, there were convincing signs that coal – whilst in decline – was still a long way from dying. Firstly, there is the fundamental problem of a continually growing global population and its corresponding increased energy needs. The optimistic interpretation of this situation is that new renewable energy sources can solve this problem. A more cynical (and operationally easier) approach might be to let existing energies take the strain. This means that the likes of coal will continue to play a role in the overall energy solution and a first-hand example of this can be seen in China, the world's largest investor in renewable energies. Pre-pandemic, in 2019, China's renewable energy use grew by 25%, but this was still not enough to meet rocketing energy demand. Which is why the Chinese Government is still in the process of building 150 (yes, you read that correctly) coal-fired power plants to add to the 600 already in existence. This sounds less like decarbonisation and more like carbon-renewable cohabitation.

If we look ahead, there are also some major potential bumps in the road when it comes to reducing coal usage. Although there is now a fairly clear consensus on the impending electrification of the global car fleet, there is still much disagreement on, and lack of understanding of, the consequences of mass transport electrification. It goes without saying that electric cars can be fully powered by renewable energy (wind, solar etc), but it is looking increasingly likely that electric vehicles will arrive en-masse, far quicker than the renewable energy sources to power them. Automotive analysts point to 2025 as a tipping point in e-mobility, whereas energy analysts are more likely to give 2030 as the milestone for renewable power provision. And, even if we accelerate renewable energy projects, historical experience tells us that the exact matching of energy supply and demand is extremely difficult. Thus, to roll out automotive electrification at a rate that directly correlates with the commissioning of new wind and solar farms will be impossible. The resulting peaks and troughs in energy demand will need to be met by stop-start power sources, of which coal is an old and trusty favourite…

"LESS LIKE DECARBONISATION AND MORE LIKE CARBON-RENEWABLE COHABITATION."

A combination of short-term crisis requirements, long-term energy growth and the practical implications of the energy transition, all seem to point to a continued and robust use of coal. In the same way that the Saudis are banking on being the last man standing for oil, the Australian, South African and South American coal producers are increasingly taking the same position when it comes to 'Old King Coal'. Yes, the market is shrinking, and is nothing like what it was 50 years ago, but it is still huge and, as the experiences of 2022 have demonstrated, extremely lucrative.

For more pricing information, see page 26

Portland
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Case study: Tuffa HVO tank offers EGGER a sustainable alternative to red diesel

The EGGER Group is an international multi-billion-euro company with 20 plants, in 10 countries, manufacturing all types of wood-based materials. The company's Barony plant, in Ayrshire, Scotland, produces approximately 400,000m3 of raw chipboard per annum, for customers across the UK and Europe, involving the use of HGVs, excavators, sawmills, generators and various mobile plant machinery.

Manufacturing with raw natural resources at such a vast scale, the Group is very conscious of its environmental impact and takes corporate sustainability very seriously. The company seeks to minimise the carbon footprint in all its processes through actions such as selectively sourcing wood from reputable suppliers and investing in a wood processing recycling plant and biomass energy plant powered by the waste wood within the Barony plant.

Red diesel ban sees EGGER looking for a sustainable liquid fuel solution

The changes to rebated diesel eligibility meant EGGER needed to use their existing red diesel stocks and find an alternative fuel before the deadline. This presented an opportunity to switch from fossil fuels to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).

Graeme Barrass, engineering manager for EGGER's Barony plant, explained that they use around 1,000 litres of diesel each day at the plant. With HVO's excellent low-carbon properties, the fuel switch means a huge reduction in CO2 emissions from 3.6 tonnes to as little as 195kg. Machinery can also benefit, as HVO's clean-burning properties reduce particulate production by up to 84% resulting in cleaner engines, SCR systems (where fitted) and prolonged engine oil lifetimes.

To avoid contaminating the biofuel with any red dye or diesel bug residing in the existing vertical cylindrical tank, EGGER decided to start afresh and invest in a new HVO fuel tank. This left the old tank free for kerosene heating oil storage, reducing dependence on mains gas.

EGGER selects Tuffa

Researching HVO-compatible fuel tanks, Graeme initially considered second hand but was concerned about lack of warranty and uncertainty about structural integrity. With the work put out to tender, up against some of the UK's leading steel tank manufacturers, Tuffa was selected. Graeme explained that, whilst Tuffa's prices weren't the most competitive, the company was chosen due to the 'superior design and construction of their steel tanks'.

Tuffa's 35,000L steel bunded HVO fuel tank

Andrew Dobson of Tuffa explains the difference: "A thicker than average steel plate, additional steel bracing and a fully independent bund even at the tank's base (rather than a 'common bottom' where the base of the tank isn't bunded) make Tuffa's steel tanks stronger and more hardwearing than many other manufacturers and EGGER was willing to pay a little more for these benefits."

Graeme opted for a HVO storage tank with a custom footprint to achieve the highest possible capacity for the available space as Andrew explains: "We manufactured a bunded fuel tank painted in Goosewing Grey (as requested) with a high-security cabinet complete with a roller shutter door safely housing the outlet and C2020 contents gauge with bund alarm.

"A telemetry device was added later to send an alert to the fuel suppliers making resupplying the tank an automatic process. With 30,000L deliveries at a time, the EGGER Group was also guaranteed the best incremental discounts for bulk buying their HVO."

The installation

The large steel tank was ordered in January 2021 with installation arranged for just after the April 1st deadline to switch from red diesel, so EGGER decided a temporary fuel storage tank would give additional time to prepare for the changes. The Barony site has a masonry open bund, so the most economical option was to purchase Tuffa's 20,000L plastic single-skin tank with a Watchman Sonic to detect fuel levels.

Quick lead times on plastic tanks meant it was delivered around one week after ordering, and was swiftly installed ready to store the first HVO order.

The 35,000L steel, bunded HVO storage tank arrived on site late March and was crane-lifted into position. Installation was simple, requiring a concrete base and final 230V connection. EGGER Barony could then arrange construction of a new dispensing bay ready to fuel the site's vehicle fleet.

A satisfied customer

Graeme confirmed how happy he was with both the work and service: "Everything has been perfect from the initial enquiry with Dee through to arranging transport with Amy, and the delivery driver was super-helpful and a credit to his company. The new HVO tank ticks all the boxes for the environment and further reduces our reliance on fossil fuels."

Looking ahead, Tuffa believes that HVO usage can only increase, and marketing manager Charlie Goring explains why: "While EV technology is advancing rapidly, battery limitations mean it's not necessarily a viable solution for heavy vehicles and there is a long way to go before hydrogen-powered vehicles and the required infrastructure will be ready for the mass market.

"Comparatively, HVO is a drop-in alternative to diesel, offering immediate and substantial reductions in carbon helping us to meet emissions targets today. We're seeing increasing interest in HVO, and are proud to help decarbonise the fuel industry as the number of our HVO tanks in the field escalates. With UKIFDA and OFTEC leading the charge to get HVO approved and incentivised as a low-carbon kerosene alternative, uptake will only increase and companies like EGGER can further reduce their carbon footprint."

The team at Tuffa are proud to have been involved in the project at EGGER's Barony plant which could prevent thousands of tonnes of CO2 being released into the atmosphere. Exhorting the sector Andrew concludes: "We challenge transport and machinery operators throughout the UK to switch to renewable liquid fuels and we offer our storage and dispensing expertise to help this happen."

Decarbonising fossil fuel in transport: have we been asking the wrong question?

While we wait for the wider roll-out of future fuels such as hydrogen, biodiesel and electricity we regularly address the challenge to decarbonise transport now. In previous articles we have considered the role of additives in improving fossil fuel efficiency and reducing the emissions associated with its use, but now we hear from Rungreen, an environmentally friendly organisation looking to transform vehicle emissions by asking a very different question.

John Fenton, CEO of Rungreen, talks with Margaret Major, group managing editor, about the organisation's product, 'X-Carbon' which is the result of over 20 years of detailed research and development by a team of scientists and fuel experts.

Unlike the additives that we have considered previously, X-Carbon delivers results through physics rather than chemistry. Against a backdrop of chemists seeking to enhance fuel performance through the development of the ultimate additive, Rungreen asked a different question – not what could be added, but what could be taken away.

Time to air the problem

The story begins almost a hundred years ago when, in 1926, Dr Oscar Bridgeman, Bureau of Standards for the Society of Automotive Engineers, stated that both petrol and diesel absorbed air. The significance of this on the ability of the engine to efficiently convert the chemical energy in fuel into kinetic energy to drive the vehicle was not fully appreciated by engineers at the time.

As John explains: 'Fuel contains between 3-10% air on average, the majority of which is due to agitation from the vibration and motion of the engine and filling up with new fuel. The second biggest cause is air vapour produced during filtration and exacerbated by dirty fuel filters restricting flow through the engine.

"The absorbed air causes cavitation in the fuel which increases fuel consumption, decreases engine performance, increases emissions, and increases engine wear.

"At Rungreen we felt there must be a way to address this, and X-Carbon is the result of years of work to develop a solution to these problems."

Unlike additives that are designed to

chemically alter the fuel, X-Carbon is just a tiny shot of the same petrochemicals that are already in the tank. The important difference is the proprietary physical process it undergoes which means the molecular clusters in X-Carbon don't clump together, but rearrange into tiny micro-clusters. As soon as X-Carbon makes contact with the fuel in the tank it triggers a chain reaction of the same cluster-size reduction, releasing trillions of micro-bubbles of air and increasing the energy density of the fuel.

"The results speak for themselves," John continues. "Without the air, engines simply run better. Combustion improves, performance increases and emissions decline."

A purely petrochemical product, the fuel treatment has been rigorously tested and certified by Bureau Veritas (ASTM D-975 certification) and Intertek (EN590 certification) and the use of X-Carbon does not affect warranties, insurances, or vehicle value.

Independent tests across a wide range of all types of engines world-wide and with different fuels have shown similar encouraging results as John confirms: "The effect applies to petrochemical engines of all sizes and ages simply by delivering the best version of the fuel to the vehicles engine."

How is the treatment added to the fuel?

"It's as simple as pouring X-Carbon into your fuel tank," John answers. "The same way you add the fuel. We recommend 10ml of X-Carbon for every 50 litres of fuel – a 1:5000 ml ratio."

And Rungreen is so confident in the immediate benefits of X-Carbon that it offers new customers the opportunity to try it for themselves with a 20ml trial bottle.

"Nothing beats first-hand experience," John explains. "If anyone signs up, we deliver a trial bottle with sufficient for 100 litres of fuel with no recurring fee and no automatic renewal or subscription."

How much will users save?

"It's impossible to give 100% accurate figures," John replies. "Because it depends on your car engine size, age, urban/motorway use, driving style and more. However, there is an estimator on our website, and we can also provide you a calculation tool in Excel which will give more accurate figures.

"What we can say for certain is that this is about reducing both the cost of fuel and the cost to the environment. Users will save far more in fuel than the cost of the X-Carbon used as well as prolonging vehicle life and reducing environmental impact."

A simple case Study

The test car was a Porsche Cayenne V6 3 litre diesel which usually achieves 30 mpg as per the on-board computer. At time of testing the RAC fuel watch gave the cost of diesel at £1.96 per litre. With the cost of treatment decreasing with increased volume and commitment the treatment used in this example was the most expensive option: a 20ml trial bottle added to 100l fuel.

After this simple test, the on-board computer showed the mpg to have improved by 20% to over 36 mpg. At a pump price of £1.96, the 20% increase in miles obtained gives an effective cost of £1.57 per litre.

Taking into account the cost of the fuel treatment at £0.28 per litre the total cost was £1.85 per litre – a saving of 14p per litre of fuel used.

Given current fuel prices, a product that claims a significant reduction in running costs with better fuel economy, less wear and tear and a reduced environment cost is an attractive consideration.

Having been sent a trial bottle to test it for herself, FON editor, Margaret, will report the results of her own experience with X-Carbon in a future issue of Fuel Oil News.

Sustainable low carbon liquid fuels: perspectives and prospects

The need for clear policy direction

On the 7th February, the Government, via the DfT, issued a paper entitled 'Low Carbon Fuels Strategy – Call for ideas', to which responses were requested to be received by 3rd April. These will be taken into account in the drafting of the final strategy which is expected to be published towards the end of the year.

This initiative marks an implicit recognition of the key role that these fuels have to play in facilitating the energy transition to net zero by 2050. The particular areas of concern and attention will be ground transport, especially the HGV sector, aviation and shipping.

One of the most pressing challenges for the oil distribution sector – which is being actively pursued by both UKIFDA and OFTEC – is to make the case for a sustainable low carbon liquid fuel in the domestic heating sector as a legitimate policy option that can support the transition, on the basis that it is a tried and tested technological solution.

With the foregoing in mind, we will now consider, in detail, three liquid fuels that are seen to have an important role to play. These are:

- Renewable diesel (HVO)
- Sustainable aviation fuel
- Synthetic or E fuels.

Apart from their contribution to GHG emissions reduction, these products share a common and highly beneficial feature. That is that they are classified as 'drop-in' fuels, so can be readily delivered through existing logistics infrastructures. As such, this feature greatly facilitates their quick and easy adoption with minimal additional capital outlay and disturbance.

Future Fuels

We will now look at the three future fuels in turn.

Renewable diesel / hydrotreated vegetable oil

This product is made by hydrogenation and hydrocracking of vegetable oils and animal fats using hydrogen and catalysts at high temperatures and pressures. In this hydrotreating process, oxygen is removed from the feedstocks, comprising triglycerides and/or fatty acids. The resulting products consist of straight-chained paraffins with varying properties and molecular size, depending on the feedstock characteristics and process conditions. The conversion usually takes place in two stages: hydrotreatment followed by hydrocracking/isomerization. The hydrotreatment typically takes place between 300 – 390°C. This is the most commonly used process for making HVO and is known as HEFA – hydro-processed esters and fatty acids.

This process closely resembles that for petroleum diesel and, as a result:

1. Because it's hydrogenated, it doesn't contain oxygen and therefore it does not present the issues of FAME biodiesel relating to freezing temperature (CFPP @ -40°C) and storage stability (due to oxidation).
2. The hydrogenation process results in it burning cleaner than FAME biodiesel (Cetane No. @ 70+ vs. 51-65).
3. Because it has the same chemical structure as petroleum diesel, it can be used in engines that are designed to run on petroleum diesel — with no blending required.

Data (from Statista) indicated global HVO capacity at just over 7 mln mt at the beginning of 2021, of which half is located in Europe. Neste of Finland, with two plants in Finland and one each in Rotterdam and Singapore, is by far the largest producer, at circa 3.3 mln mt, with plans to expand production to 6.8 mln mt by the end of 2026.

An analysis by French biodiesel broker, Greenea, projects global HVO capacity expanding to just under 30mln mt by 2025, with material growth occurring in both Europe (from 3.5 mln mt to 11.3 mln mt) and North America (from 1.9 mln mt to 12.6 mln mt).

There are three principal categories of production facility:

- Bespoke / standalone 'greenfield' plants which are established and dedicated to HVO production
- Former oil refineries converted into bio-refineries. Total has converted two former petroleum facilities in France to bio-refining facilities, as has ENI in Italy and Phillips 66 in California.
- Co-processing at existing oil refineries, where renewable fuels are processed through an existing HDS unit, with the only additional infrastructure required being that to accommodate feedstocks, such as UCO. In the UK, the Phillips 66 Humber refinery started co-processing in 2017, at 50,000mt/ year, subsequently expanded to 150,000 mt/year, with further expansion to 250,000mt/year in 2024.

The diagram top right of the next page is a greatly simplified/pared back schema of co-processing.

As it is the quickest and most cost-effective way of establishing a presence in the renewable fuels sector, there are likely to be several more oil refineries, in both Europe and North America, which will opt for the co-processing route, such as Total in France (with excess petroleum refining capacity) and Nerefco (BP) in Rotterdam.

Typically, HVO has been found to yield GHG savings vs. petroleum

alternatives of somewhere around 80-90% – a material reduction! The biggest conundrums to be addressed are around (a) long-term feedstock and hydrogen availability, (b) how quickly production can be scaled up and (c), as a consequence of (a) and (b), the price of the finished product.

The above GHG savings have been evidenced in trials as a heating fuel, where it could be an ideal drop-in, low carbon liquid replacement for kerosene. The extent of its wider adoption will depend on Government policy direction, which currently strongly favours heat pumps. Hopefully, a measure of clarity will emerge from its 'Low Carbon Fuels Strategy' which is due to be unveiled later in the year.

It also goes without saying that there will be competing demands for HVO both from ground transport and, especially, from aviation.

Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)

SAF is most commonly produced from the HEFA process, already described, with an additional catalyst and cracking to yield a lighter fraction (cf. renewable diesel).

In June, the European Commission proposed a timeline for SAF to constitute a certain amount of all fuel uplifted at European airports:. The percentage was set at 2% by 2025, 6% by 2030, 32% by 2040, and 63% by 2050. This includes sub-targets for e-fuels starting at 0.7% in 2030 and reaching 28% by 2050.

There are also now individual country mandates in place e.g. Spain for 2% in 2025, Norway at 1% since 2020, with the intention to increase to 30% in 2030 and Sweden, which has a domestic flights obligation at 0.8% rising to 27% by 2030.

The UK's net zero strategy for aviation, unveiled in July, commits UK domestic aviation to achieving net zero emissions by 2040, and for all airports in England to be zero emission by the same year. It also includes a plan for the industry to stay below pre-pandemic levels of carbon emissions through measures focused on everything from delivering system efficiencies to new technologies, with progress monitored annually.

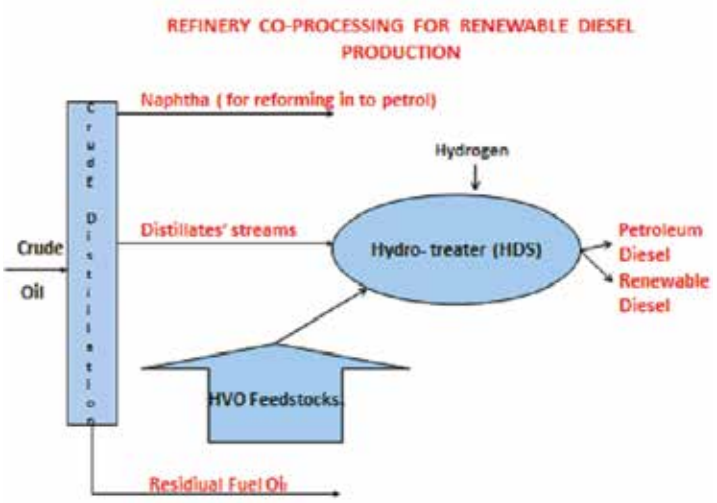
There will also be increasing support for SAF by creating secure and growing demand through a mandate that will require at least 10% of jet fuel to be made from sustainable sources by 2030. To kickstart a domestic SAF industry, support will be provided from a new £165mn Advanced Fuels Fund. Further, the aviation industry will be challenged to deliver the first transatlantic flight running on 100% SAF in 2023.

It's no surprise that the Scandinavian refiners, **Neste** and **Preem**, are in the vanguard of SAF production. **Neste** is the market leader and expects to produce 1 million mt this year, rising to 1.5 million mt in 2023. Quantities are already sold to customers in Sweden and France through a partnership with Air BP. In addition, Lufthansa and KLM use the Neste product, blended 50/50 with Jet A-1, on flights departing from Frankfurt and Schiphol Airports. The company has entered into a strategic partnership with Avfuel Corporation in the United States to create an efficient, secure supply of SAF.

Preem will produce renewable aviation fuel for SAS, to replace current Jet A-1 volumes for domestic routes in Scandinavia by 2030. The production unit, at the company's Gothenburg oil refinery, is expected to start up by end 2022, with an annual SAF capacity of circa 250,000 mt.

In the UK, **Phillips 66** has entered into an agreement with BA to supply SAF from its Humber refinery into the Exolum (CLH) pipeline, commencing earlier this year.

Currently, SAF can only be blended to a 50/50 maximum ratio with Jet A-1. That notwithstanding, scaling up will be the biggest challenge, given a total global requirement (pre-pandemic) of circa 350 million mt of Jet A-1, of which circa 60% is for long-haul journeys, for which there is no near-term propulsion alternative to the turbofan engine!



E-Fuels/Synthetic Fuels

E-Fuels are produced with electricity from renewable energy sources and electrolysis (water) to produce hydrogen, which is combined with carbon dioxide that has been extracted from industrial emissions or, from the air. Consequently, they are deemed to be carbon neutral. As they are technically compatible with their fossil fuel counterparts, they can power ICEs, jet engines and ships.

The same applies to all heating systems that use liquid and gaseous fuels. Existing transport, distribution and fuel/gas infrastructures can also continue to be used.

German motor manufacturer, **Porsche**, is a leading light in the promotion of e-fuels and, in collaboration with **Siemens**, plans to establish a plant in Chile with a production target of 55 million litres a year by 2024, and 550 million litres by 2026. Porsche says it's planning to use the fuel in motorsports, at Porsche Experience Centres and in its production cars.

Repsol is planning to develop one of the world's largest e-fuel plants in Spain, using, as feedstocks, CO2 from its Bilbao refinery and green hydrogen from a new plant powered entirely by renewables, to produce a range of e-fuels that can be used in cars, trucks, aviation, etc. The facility is expected to be fully operational sometime in 2024.

It remains to be seen if sufficient scale can be achieved to reduce production costs to a level that competes with conventional fossil fuels. The current gap is assessed to be around 75%, so there's a long way to go! Also, to become mainstream, there needs to be an assured availability of renewable energy (electricity) on a cost-effective tariff.

It remains to be seen how broadly and how rapidly these future fuels are adopted, given that cost will be a key factor. This, in turn, gives rise to the classic 'chicken & egg' scenario – increased scale contributes to reduced cost and reduced cost contributes to increased scale…

Government policy has a critical part to play, in how, or if, they seek to promote the adoption of low carbon liquid fuels and their perceived role in facilitating and expediting the energy transition. Regardless, they surely have an essential role as one of the components in the suite of solutions to support this facilitation.

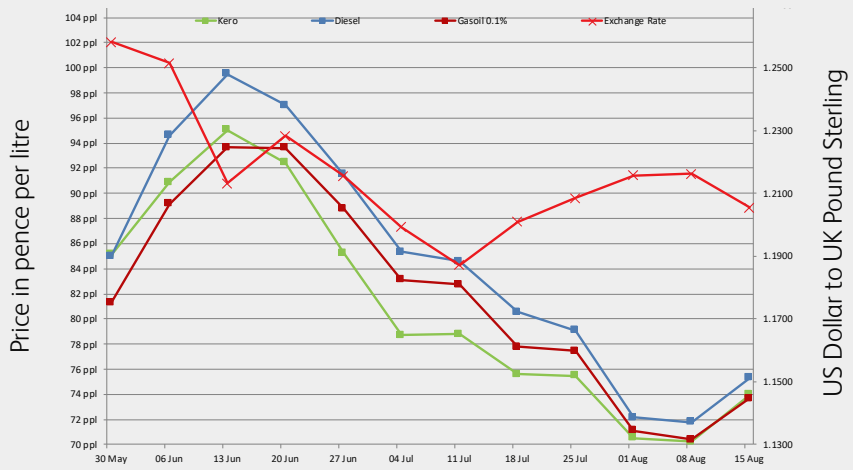
Hopefully, the 'Low Carbon Fuels Strategy' will help to provide direction and clarity. Both are very much needed!

ROD PROWSE, worked for 30 years across the full spectrum of the downstream oil sector, in both the UK and USA, which has included leadership positions in both retail and wholesale fuels businesses. Rod draws on his extensive knowledge of this global industry to bring us 'Industry Insights'.

Wholesale Price Movements: 19th July 2022 – 18th August 2022

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	73.13	75.80	74.10
Average daily change	1.76	1.89	1.85
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	73.13	128.75	84.28

All prices in pence per litre



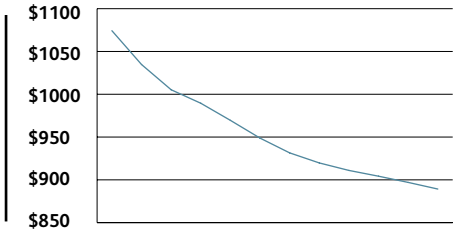
Portland

Kerosene	
Highest price: 76.66 ppl, Thu 18 Aug 22	Biggest up day: +2.75 pplI, Thu 11 Aug 22
Lowest price: 67.05 ppl, Mon 08 Aug 22	Biggest down day: -5.51 ppl, Mon 01 Aug 22

Diesel	
Highest price: 81.04 ppl, Wed 20 Jul 22	Biggest up day: +2.85 ppl, Tue 09 Aug 22
Lowest price: 68.55 ppl, Mon 08 Aug 22	Biggest down day: -6.54 ppl, Mon 01 Aug 22

Gasoil 0.1%	
Highest price: 78.82 ppl, Wed 20 Jul 22	Biggest up day: +2.58 ppl, Thu 11 Aug 22
Lowest price: 67.54 ppl, Mon 08 Aug 22	Biggest down day: -6.53 ppl, Mon 01 Aug 22

Gasoil forward price in US$ per tonne



The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	73.04	84.21	128.63	83.27	89.97	133.67
North East	71.99	82.84	127.71	86.31	88.24	131.42
North West	73.56	85.44	130.10	83.36	90.44	133.40
Midlands	72.06	83.37	128.17	81.73	88.68	132.19
South East	72.16	83.33	128.15	92.10	92.59	131.64
South West	72.51	83.17	127.99	85.34	88.47	131.18
Northern Ireland	72.62	84.54	n/a	82.09	91.01	n/a
Republic of Ireland	86.38	89.97	129.57	94.42	95.29	133.67
Portland	70.37	80.89	124.86			

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 SEPTEMBER'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 **ELIZABETH DE JONG**, CEO UKPIA.

"KEEP SIMPLIFYING UNTIL THE PURPOSE IS ACHIEVED."

ELIZABETH DE JONG

Give your career history in 25 words or fewer
Decision making and delivery: from cost benefit analysis to complex political and stakeholder decision making. Private sector, public sector and at the interface.

Describe yourself in 3 words
Determined, focussed, resilient

What were your childhood / early ambitions?
I wanted to be a paediatrician during my junior school years

Describe your dream job (if you weren't doing this?)
Interim work – making a difference in a short time

What's the best business advice you've ever received?
I am a huge fan of Good to Great by Jim Collins, and everything in it. I keep a copy next to my desk.

Share your top tips for business success
Be very clear what your organisation exists to do and make sure everything your organisation does has purpose. Keep simplifying until this is achieved.

What's your most recent business achievement of note?
My ultimate trade association achievement was when the DfT Future of Freight Plan published this year mirrored the objectives for the future of the industry that my organisation had set out. We had evidence that our work had been directly influential.

Tell us your greatest fear
I am a bit of a coward on the ski slopes

Which is most important – ambition or talent?
Ambition, then employing the right talent.

What's the best thing about your job?
Working out how to facilitate a strong future for a valuable industry and working with interesting people.

Which is the quality that you most admire?
Kindness

What are you most likely to say?
What's the plan?

What are you least likely to say?
Swear words

Describe your perfect day
A good cup of coffee and then a day of skiing with the family. I love skiing holidays as mastering the physical activity is so absorbing that I have no room in my brain for my usual constant analysis.

Do you have a favourite sports team?
I have a Sheffield Wednesday mug from my childhood, but now I tend to cheer on whatever polo team my daughter is playing for.

What's the biggest challenge of our time?
Our response to climate change will affect all our economic and social activity. But restrictions on free speech and real debate are also very concerning.

Cheese or chocolate?
Chocolate – dark please.

Share your greatest personal achievement
Will do so in forty years.

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?
Table manners

If you were on 'Mastermind' what would your specialist subject be?
Table manners (see question above!)

If you were elected to government what would be the first law you'd press for?
I'd been keen to sort out the future of fuel duty pretty quickly. This country and others face a looming budgetary black hole which needs to be addressed in the right way.

If your 20-year-old self saw you now what would they think?
Life is going quite well

What is number 1 on your bucket list?
Keeping up with my immediate family. They live in India, Indonesia, The Netherlands, France and Australia.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?
A comfy bed, a hot shower and a bible.

Tell us something about you that people would be very surprised by
I am one of the few people who enjoy public speaking enough to do it as a hobby.

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?
Andrew Haines, CEO Network Rail. I've worked with him on and off during my career and have always valued his perspective.

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