

Fuel Oil News

February 2025



THE TANKER & DRIVER ISSUE

ANNOUNCED: TANKER OF THE YEAR WINNER

UPDATED: THE TOP UK DISTRIBUTORS

FOCUS ON FUEL STORAGE



FUEL STARTS TO OXIDISE (AGE) FROM THE MOMENT IT IS REFINED.

FUEL CHANGES

- Gums
- Discolouration
- Varnishes
- Tank sludge

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED

- Blocked lines
- Poor ignition quality
- Blocked filters
- Customer complaints

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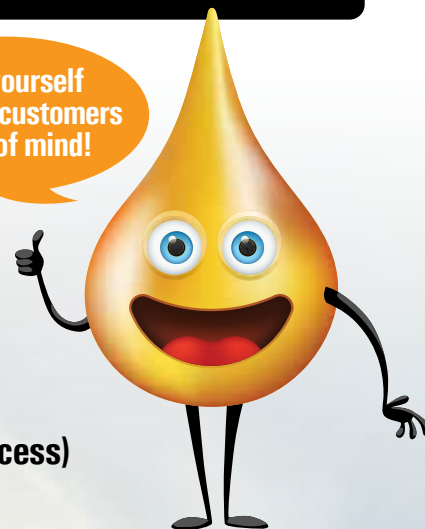
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Let's get a little smarter...

Welcome to the February issue! I'm hoping I'm not alone in finding myself, in late January, having already kissed my ambitious New Year's resolutions goodbye. Whether you had serious intentions to hit the gym every day, eat kale smoothies for breakfast, or get through that pile of books you never seem to find the time to read, don't worry if you've fallen at the first hurdle – you are not alone! These well-intended promises often fail because they're more like dreams or wishful thinking than realistic goals.

So, what's the solution? Remember those SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timed? Unlike our fleeting resolutions, these are realistic, structured goals that stick. In this business of liquid fuel delivery, where efficiency, safety, and reliability are non-negotiable, defined objectives are essential.

Recent discussions around the potential expansion of UK airports highlight a clear contradiction between growth ambitions and the government's decarbonisation

objectives. While increased airport capacity might promise economic benefits, it undermines climate targets and exacerbates carbon emissions.

Conversely, the continuing industry campaign to facilitate an HVO blend for liquid-fuelled domestic heating is a perfect example of SMART thinking – aligning this industry's actions with the government's ambitious long-term sustainability goals is not only critical for success, but also demonstrates clear forward-thinking and a relevant and achievable strategy.

Through this year we'll be diving into smart industry ideas to boost business, streamline operations, and achieve goals. Whether it's optimising delivery routes, enhancing customer service, or reducing your carbon footprint, a defined plan can turn good intentions into measurable results.

Grab a cup of tea and settle in for the latest thoughts from across the sector.

Here's to a smarter February!



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Fuel Oil News

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

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On the cover

Highlighting the breadth of sectors that rely on fuel distributors as it delivers to the PS Waverley, the last ocean-going paddle steamer in the world, is Estuary Oils' latest fleet addition. See how this tanker fares in TOTY on pages 9 to 13.



In this issue

Tankers feature widely, with fleet numbers updated on page 15 and entries to our annual TOTY competition highlighted on pages 9 to 13. Find out all about a brilliant distributor initiative on pages 22 & 23 and acquisition strategy on pages 17 to 19.

Stanlow refinery legacy celebrated with unique employee memento

Celebrating its centenary in 2024, Essar Energy Transition (EET) marked the end of the milestone year by gifting employees a special memento – a unique, commemorative coin, crafted and packaged with pride at the EET’s Stanlow refinery.

Scott Smith, Colleague Engagement Manager, explained: “Celebrating a centenary milestone with colleagues is a rare and special occasion. Stanlow is an extraordinary place to work, and the memento



for this milestone had to be equally distinct and memorable.

“Many colleagues from across EET Fuels contributed to creating these unique coins. Each coin was cut, engraved, polished, and packaged in our central workshop. By combining the expertise of our people with the latest machinery technology, we’ve crafted a keepsake like no other, made at Stanlow, for all employees.”

More than a keepsake

Scott continued: “Each coin is uniquely numbered, a mark of individuality that mirrors the contribution of every employee, and serves as a reminder of the personal stories and efforts that have built Stanlow’s legacy.

“Every coin carries a personal touch, with each package including an insert individually hand-signed by our CEO Deepak Maheshwari and embossed by colleagues from across the business.

“We’ve also sent these coins to every



employee who retired in 2024, to recognise their own contribution at Stanlow.

“This coin is more than a keepsake. It’s a reminder of 100 years of innovation, resilience, and community.”



FON Fantasy Football League – all to play for!

Competition for the Premier League title is arguably the fiercest it has been in years, and it is no different in the FON Community League.

There are 71 signed up, and as we roll into the second half of the season, positions at the top are changing on a weekly basis. Following the completion of Gameweek 22 at time of going to press, the Top 10 is as below:

If you have a Fantasy Football team, you can still join the FON mini league for a chance to show your management skills and win some fabulous monthly and seasonal prizes thanks to our sponsor, ESL Fuels.

Monthly winners to date:

August – Andy Walkden of ESL won the first month of the season thanks to a strategic

Haaland Triple Captain but, as league sponsors, waived his prize which, instead, went to second placed Mark Clouter, UK General Manager from Wessex Petroleum (WP Group).

September – Lee Carrack, National Account Manager at Tate Oils.

October – Ruben Lancaster of Blend took the award with some great returns across his team.

November – Adrian Major of Fuel Oil News who also waived his prize.

December – Tammi Ayre of Tate Oils

Our sponsor

ESL Fuels was our inaugural sponsor for the 2023 / 24 season, and has continued this season. A family business that designs, blends, processes and supplies a range of fuels for the road, heating and marine markets, ESL Fuels also produces innovative and environmentally sustainable liquid fuels,

With FON’s Adrian Major hot on the heels of current leader Conor MacMahon of Mackin Talent and Barton’s Morgan Webb in hot pursuit along with Blend’s Ruben Lancaster, it’s very much a game of two halves. We look forward to seeing what the second half season brings!

To request the entry code, drop a email to margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk and visit www.fueloilnews.co.uk for regular updates.

Position	Name	Team Name	Total Points
1.	Conor MacMahon, Mackin Talent	How I Met Your Mata	1393
2.	Adrian Major, Fuel Oil News	Turkish De Ligt	1387
3.	Morgan Webb, Barton Petroleum	Kinder Mbeumo	1384
4.	Ruben Lancaster, Blend	McGinn and Tonic	1380
5.	Andy Walkden, ESL Fuels Ltd	Amor-impressive Team	1372
6.	Adam Woodward, Wolfe Power	Diet Pepe	1371
7.	Margaret Major, Fuel Oil News	I’m Szo Boszing It!	1368
8.	Claudia Weeks, Fuel Oil News	Neville Wears Prada	1366
9.	Mike Ferris, ESL Fuels Ltd	Blue Origin	1361
10.	Nick Clewley, Northern Oil	Wonky Wanderers	1354

Latest acquisition further strengthens Rix Petroleum

Family-owned Rix Petroleum completed a deal towards the end of 2024, that sees the Hull-headquartered distributor acquire Grantham-based EFuels Ltd for an undisclosed sum.

The move brings the number of fuel depots Rix Petroleum owns and operates in the county to four, with others in Immingham, Gainsborough, and Spalding. The Grantham depot will remain branded as EFuels for the time being, headed up by existing Depot Manager Matthew Keightley, who moves to Rix under the deal.



A Rix Petroleum tanker with an EFuels Ltd tanker at the EFuels depot in Grantham.

Enhancing service

Duncan Lambert, Managing Director of Rix Petroleum, said the move would enable the business to provide a better service across south Lincolnshire.

“We’re delighted to complete this deal,” Duncan commented. “Lincolnshire is a famously agricultural county and acquiring this depot will enable us to support local farmers, businesses, and rural communities across the south of the county more efficiently and effectively.

“As a sixth-generation family business, we pride ourselves on our values of fairness, great customer relations and service, and supporting

communities, and it is precisely these values we will bring to our newly acquired Grantham depot.”

Delighted

Depot Manager Matthew Keightley, said he was delighted with the deal, commenting: “Rix Petroleum is well known in the industry as a long-established family business that customers can rely on.

“I know that our customers in and around Grantham will be very well looked after by myself and the wider Rix team, so I feel this is a fantastic opportunity to take the business forward.”

OBE for Firefly CEO

James Hygate, CEO of Firefly Green Fuels and Green Fuels Ltd. has been awarded the prestigious Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of low carbon fuels

The prestigious honour, announced as part of the New Year’s Honours List, reflects a 22-year-long career of tireless work and leadership in advancing sustainable fuel technologies.

Innovation and sustainability

The OBE awarded to James recognises his exceptional efforts as a veteran leader within his industry, as well as his leadership as a public advocate for sustainability innovation and action.

His dedication to innovation and sustainability is best exemplified by his most recent venture – Firefly Green Fuels, which is fast becoming a leader in the low-carbon fuel space through its development of a brand-new



sewage-derived SAF (sustainable aviation fuel) pathway.

“I am deeply humbled and honoured to receive this recognition,” said James. “This award is a testament not just to my work, but to the incredible

teams at Firefly Green Fuels and Green Fuels Ltd. who have all contributed to the progress we’ve made in advancing the transition to low carbon fuels. Together, we are working toward a more sustainable future, and I look forward to continuing this journey.”

James’ OBE underscores the importance of innovation in the global effort to achieve net-zero carbon emissions. Firefly is currently working towards opening a world-first facility in Harwich, UK which plans to start turning sewage into a range of sustainable fuels by 2029.



Sarah Morgan has moved to the role of Commercial Manager for **Navigator Terminals** Formerly Commercial Account Manager, **Emily**

Smith has been promoted to Business Development Team Manager at **New Era Energy**



Scott Mace has moved to a new position as Sales Manager at **Fuel Additive Science Technologies Limited**

Chris Donaldson VR is starting a new position as Driver Trainer at **Oilfast**



George Brinkworth has started a new position as HVO Product Development Manager at **Ford Fuels**

Ben Rutherford is the latest addition to the **Johnston Oils team**, joining the fuelcard department and bringing with him many years of experience in the fuel industry.

Shaun Galvin has started a new position as Senior Director - Sales at **Watson Fuels**

Emily Taylor-Smith has joined **Xpress Fuel** as Customer Relationship Manager **Ben Duckworth**, Commercial Director



for Greenarc, has taken up the role of CEO for **Heat Engineer Software Ltd** commenting: “While still very much supporting Greenarc, I will be focussing more of my direct

time on growing our Heat Engineer Software business which helps heating surveyors, designers and installers accurately size new systems.”

James Stairmand has become Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) at **ShipVet Services Ltd** following a management buy-in.

THE LATEST UPDATES FROM OUR DISTRIBUTOR COMMUNITY

Send your latest news to claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk

New Era Energy: Sponsoring Lauren Parker



New Era Energy, the Essex-based fuel distributor, is proud to be sponsoring up-and-coming boxing star, Lauren Parker.

Melissa Lancaster, Brand Manager at New Era, explained: "We're so proud to be supporting Lauren on her incredible journey to pursue her dream to compete at the highest level in female boxing. Her story came to us through Sharon, our receptionist and Lauren's friend."

Grit, determination and passion

"It didn't take long for us to see that Lauren's grit, determination and passion are truly inspiring. Every time we meet her, it's clear she's not only a talented athlete but also someone who embodies New Era values.

"Our CEO, James, is deeply committed to equality in all areas, which is why he already sponsors professional boxer Sam Gilley. When he learned about Lauren's ambitions, it was a natural decision to support her too. It's this inclusive mindset that defines who we are at New Era.

"I've been fortunate enough to watch Lauren in action in the ring and I can honestly say she's an impressive athlete and a true fighter in every sense. We are proud to be part of her story and can't wait to see where her talent and hard work take her!"

Crucial sponsorship



Lauren explained why the support from New Era has been so important to her career: "Sponsorship plays a crucial role in professional sports. New Era has been instrumental in my journey, allowing me to focus on my career without financial distractions.

"Their support has helped cover medical fees, travel expenses, and equipment costs, and they contributed significantly to the £20,000 needed

to compete for my European Title in December 2023. I am incredibly grateful for their backing; without New Era, I might not have reached the achievements I have today.

"Women's boxing has garnered tremendous interest and continues to grow. It's inspiring to see more young girls in gyms aspiring to excel in the sport! Boxing is unique in the way it instils qualities and disciplines that can transform lives, both financially and physically, which is truly heartwarming.

"A determined and skilled female boxer can deliver an incredible performance for viewers, and I believe that with increased attention on women in boxing, the sport will continue to thrive as it rightly deserves."

Back in December, Lauren took part in a big fight at York Hall. She gave Fuel Oil News the lowdown on how the fight went: "The fight in December was fantastic, showcasing my skill set and aggressive fighting style, which led to a TKO in the third round.

"My opponent had previously faced well-known fighters who all went the distance with her, so achieving this outcome was truly exhilarating and has boosted my confidence as I look ahead to my next challenge."

Fuel Oil News looks forward to following Lauren's journey. If you are sponsoring the next sports star then please do let us know – claudia@andpublishing.co.uk

Centre Tank Services Ltd: Adrian Taylor celebrates 25 years with the business

Last month, **CTS** celebrated Adrian Taylor, Operations Manager, who has been with the business for 25 years.

An integral part of CTS, Adrian was instrumental in their move to larger premises, oversaw the addition of a second warehouse unit, and always ensures the stores run like clockwork.

"I've always said I enjoy working here, and the reason why I enjoy it so much is because of the staff!" Adrian reflected.

Sharing his appreciation and thanks for the team, Adrian continued: "It's all about the people that you work with, and it's been great working with the team old and new over the years."

An exceptional contribution

Matthew Terry, Managing Director, said: "Celebrating Adrian's 25th work anniversary is a testament to his dedication and exceptional contributions to CTS. Over the 25 years, I have had the privilege of working closely with Adrian, witnessing firsthand his support to the business across all departments. His loyalty and commitment have been invaluable to our success. We are extremely fortunate to have Adrian as part of the CTS Group."

Congratulations Adrian from the Fuel Oil News team!



Ben Firth, MechTronic: proud to be supporting the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust

Ben Firth, Sales Engineer at **MechTronic Ltd**, the Leeds-based metering and gauging fuel delivery system experts, is continuing to support and raise funds for the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT). The charity has supported and helped Ben's family directly as his son is currently dealing with



Retinoblastoma and has undertaken 6 rounds of chemotherapy.

In January, Ben and his sons were invited to hand over a cheque to the charity, in recognition of the vital fundraising Ben has completed over the last few years.

Ben explained more: "Last week I was honoured to be invited by the Matthew22 Fund to hand over a cheque to Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT). Me and my boys are proud to play a small part in supporting the amazing work CHECT does for children and families affected by retinoblastoma.

"Thank you to everyone for supporting me last year, 2025 is shaping up to be another great year with fundraising events already planned, so keep an eye open for what I get up to!"

Fuel Oil News will let you know about Ben's next fundraising challenge!



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WINNER! Estuary Oils wins the 22nd Fuel Oil News Tanker of the Year Award!

Becoming something of an online celebrity to truck aficionados, the 2024 winning tanker, CF24 ATV, edged fierce competition by being a wonderful ambassador for all that is important in fuel distribution.

Safe, efficient, optimally equipped and fuelled by renewable diesel, CF24 ATV delivers an outstanding service to domestic, industrial, agricultural, retail and marine customers, as well as to driver Dave Mould and fuel distributor and tanker owner, Estuary Oils.

Estuary Oils is proud to operate a strict 3-year vehicle replacement program that ensures the distributor's eye-catching fleet is always at the pinnacle of safety, efficiency, technology, and branding.

The company's Business Strategy Manager, Kevin Harford, tells us a little more about this "one of a kind" tanker.

"Lovingly driven by our very own Dave Mould, CF24 ATV will deliver approx. 130 million litres in the 3 years that she is in service with us."

"Safety is at the forefront of everything that we do, and this build of the DAF XD 410 is the 'next generation' in vehicle and pedestrian safety", Kevin shares proudly.

Safety features

- DAF Digital All Round Vision – cameras mounted in the foldable arms to give full all-round visibility
- Corner View Cameras – kerb and front view mirrors
- Vision Dashboard – drops away steeply to give the driver a better view of the front of the tanker
- Low belt lines and larger windscreen – giving better all-round visibility and peripheral vision
- Maximum 5-star rating in the London Direct Vision Standard
- Smart Auto Forward collision warning – alerting the driver with a visual and sound warning, urging them to take action to prevent a collision

"We have included all the systems we can to keep the driver, and other road users, as safe as possible," Kevin explains. "We have an excellent safety record, and we want to keep it that way!"

Efficiency

The CF24 ATV build includes many innovations that deliver unequalled efficiency – a key consideration in a market where margins are increasingly squeezed.

- The PACCAR MX-11 engine delivers up to 150 Nm more torque in top gear downspeeding, with maximum torque available from just 900 rpm. Operating the engine at lower rpm, while maintaining high levels of torque and performance, improves fuel efficiency, reduces



emissions, and minimises engine wear.

- It delivers up to 20% more braking power and at lower revs – resulting in a braking torque curve that's flat from 1,100 to 2,100 rpm.
- It enjoys the lowest possible fuel consumption, thanks to the unique exhaust-over-chassis construction. This helps minimise heat loss from engine exhaust gasses on their way to the Engine Aftertreatment System (EAS) where high exhaust gas temperatures guarantee optimal efficiency.
- It has third-generation Predictive Cruise Control along with new EcoRoll functionalities that allow up to 93 km/h at the end of a descent. Optimised EcoRoll prevents unnecessary braking and resulting energy losses.

"In line with our company Carbon Reduction Policy, CF24 ATV is 100% fuelled with renewable diesel; reducing its operational CO2 emissions by up to 90%, particulates by up to 85% and NOx by up to 30%."

The build

CF24 ATV was made by Road Tankers Northern and has a 5 pot, bottom loaded, 20,000 litre barrel with Gardner Denver metering fitted. The pot configuration is 5000, 2500, 5000, 2500, 5000.

CF24 ATV is a DAF XD 410 6X2w chassis; 410 BHP, rear Steer 12 speed automatic gear box with Alcoa super bright alloy wheels, super singles front and back with leather seats and steering wheel.

"Importantly, she is fitted with the latest onboard truck computing hardware, supplied and managed by Dreamtec," Kevin notes. "This offers full CODAS integration and accountability, security and traceability for our customers."

Not just a highly specified tanker, CF24 ATV is also one of a kind as Kevin explains: "Extras fitted to our specific build include an integrated fridge, air horns, blue under glow lighting and a top lighting bar."

Quite the head turner, this year's winning entry has even featured on the DAF Trucks website and social media platform.

COULD YOU TAKE THE TITLE OF TANKER OF THE YEAR 2025?

Congratulations to all those involved with the 2024 winner of our Tanker of the Year award – the CF24 ATD, built by Road Tankers Northern for Estuary Oils. Fuel Oil News now looks forward to receiving your entries for the 2025 Tanker of the Year award.

Entries are already open, and will be accepted until 31st December 2025, giving you plenty of opportunity to enter a new tanker which you believe offers a standout extra to your business, customers or community.

Please send details of the tanker – the manufacturer, specification and the way in which it adds value to your fleet, business and customers – along with a photograph to claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk, and we could be adding your company's name to the 23 winners below.

All our winners from 2003-2024

Tincknell Fuels (Magyar)
 Heltor (Tasca Tankers)
 Cambria (Road Tankers Northern)
 Kelly Fuels (Central Welding)
 Cooke Fuels (Road Tankers Northern)
 EMO Oils (Central Welding)
 Consols Oils (Maidment)
 WCF Fuels (Road Tankers Northern)
 BWOC (Feldbinder)
 Stevenage Oils (Lakeland)
 Craggs Energy (Tasca Tankers)
 Howells Fuel Oil (Road Tankers Northern)
 Inver Energy (Williams Tanker Services)
 Wilton Transport Mini Tankers (Tasca Tankers)
 Donegal Oil (Road Tankers Armagh)
 Silvey Fuels (Tasca Tankers)
 Hylands Fuels (Road Tankers Armagh)
 Crown Oil (Road Tankers Northern)
 Kettlewell Fuels (COBO)
 WCF Chandlers (Road Tankers Northern)
 Certa Ireland (Road Tankers Armagh) / New Era Fuels (Cobo)
 Estuary Oils (Road Tankers Northern)



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Tanker of the Year 2024 – Special Recognition

HERE WE HIGHLIGHT THREE VERY SPECIAL ENTRIES TO OUR TANKER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2024.

A perfect fusion of modern engineering and traditional values – meet the new DAF tanker from Gleaner.

This noteworthy entry proudly sports the number plate “1954 GL” in tribute to Gleaner’s founding year and the company’s remarkable 70-year legacy in the Scottish fuel distribution industry.

The tanker is a perfect fusion of modern engineering and traditional values, in celebration of Gleaner’s business milestone.

The Gleaner entry explained how “each detail, from the tanker’s sleek design – provided by Road Tankers Northern Group (RTN), a company with a reputation for quality and service – to its eco-friendly emissions profile – Euro 6 – underscores Gleaner’s dedication to meeting the evolving needs of our customers while respecting our responsibility to the environment.”

The innovative Trident pumping equipment is described as having “extraordinary efficiency, remarkable automation and extensive safety.” Being fitted with this latest fuel management and environmental safety technology allows this vehicle to deliver on its commitment to sustainability while ensuring the highest standards of service and efficiency.

“This tanker represents not just a new addition to our fleet, but a celebration of our deep-rooted commitment to serving Scottish communities since 1954. From our humble beginnings as a small family business, Gleaner has grown to become a trusted name in the fuel distribution sector, embodying reliability, service excellence, and forward-thinking innovation.”

What a wonderful acknowledgement of Gleaner’s past and heritage, as well as the company’s future planning.



A tanker that is delivering where others won’t go by accessing remote community areas. Meet this fantastic mini tanker from Carrs Billington.

The fuel supplier’s first entry to TOTY, the DAF LF 18T chassis has a 4-compartment Tasca tank with Alpeco TEX pumping gear – newly installed across the entire fleet – and Fuelstar in-cab technology.

Philip Sharman, Director for Carrs Billington, commented: “We pride ourselves on our service level to the remote areas of our farming and rural community in particular.

“We operate across the Lake District, South West Scotland, Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire Dales and are challenged on a daily basis to deliver where other sometimes won’t go!

We run a fleet of 12t, 18t, 26t and artic fuel vehicles and have, over the years, acquired a number of businesses and subsequently inherited multiple branded HGVs. In late 2022, Carr’s Billington Agriculture was fully acquired from Carrs Group PLC by The Billington Group and is now 100% owned by the Billington family – a fifth generation UK owned Food/ Agri business. Carr’s Billington is a well-recognised and long respected brand across the northern areas of UK and the decision was to invest in the brand for the future.

We are well on our way to completing our transition to our ‘new fresher look’ which not only promotes our growing fuel supply business but our support of agriculture and the rural community across the North of England and SW Scotland for the future.

A wonderful problem-solving tanker that makes its way over hill and dale, even through fords, to get fuel where it is needed.

Offering increased flexibility to reduce movements, mileage, and ultimately, carbon footprint. Meet this eye-catching prime mover and trailer from Watson Fuels.

Supplied by Just Tankers and built by Magyar, the truck’s innovative safety features, driver aids and built-in efficiency measures have resulted in an extremely safe and versatile fuel tanker, and one which helps support Watson’s sustainability goals.

A spokesperson commented: “Throughout our long history of fuelling homes, farms and businesses across the UK, Watson Fuels has been redefining and continuously developing the specifications of our new trucks, with safety and sustainability in mind. Our latest fleet addition is an outstanding example of this, designed and built for maximum efficiency.

Specified with a short 3.8m wheelbase to allow improved manoeuvrability, it is also able to go places a standard 18t truck can’t go.

The latest Gardner Denver DATA Plus Hose and Bulk Electronic Metering System enables fast metered bulk deliveries, reducing customer delivery times and improving driver efficiency.

It has the latest Paccar MX 13 fuel-efficient engine, fitted with a fully automated transmission, full air suspension and double-drive, with hub reduction for maximum stability and fuel economy. The truck is fitted with brushed Alcoa alloy wheels, reducing chassis weight and improving payload.

A Handsfree camera & DVS system allow for remote monitoring to react quicker to incidents while on the road and all Just Tankers supplied trucks come fitted with Kuda Mirror guards to reduce the impact of collisions while in service.

The Prime mover and Trailer allows the use of both as a 6-wheel rigid while also offering the ability to fulfil larger commercial customer orders, which would typically otherwise be fulfilled with an artic tanker.

A fantastic contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of fuel deliveries.



Tanker of the Year 2024

COMPANY	MAKE/MODEL OF TANKER	DETAIL
AA Oils (RTA) 	Vessel – 20000 litre x 5 compartment aluminium Equipment – Mechtronic Optimate 800 bulk electronic metering system Chassis – New generation DAF XD410 6 x 2 Wheelbase 3.8m, so a short 6-wheeler	Simon from AA Oils said: “The above build was a full package purchase from RTA. Doing this took away all the hassle of ordering a chassis, making sure the wheelbase and all the other finer technical information was correct. It also meant that when the new tanker arrived in my yard, it was fully tested, decaled, registered and ready to deliver oil, saving us a lot of downtime.”
Craggs Energy (Magyar) 	2023 Magyar 42,000L 38T Triaxle 6 compartment Semi Tanker Trailer	The artic is out 24 hours a day, utilising a day and a night driver delivering to our customers and also bridging in stock loads for our depots. It features a beautiful eye-catching wrap that embraces our Lancashire and Yorkshire scenes, with a different image on each side.
Connon Brothers (RTA) 	Vessel – 20000 litre x 5 compartment aluminium Equipment – New Alpeco TEX800 bulk electronic metering system Chassis – New generation DAF XD410 6 x 2	Richard Connon from Connon Brothers said: “Working with RTA and Norscot DAF – this was the first time that I was kept informed of my new build on every step of the process. “It was a complete pleasure dealing with RTA. “When the tanker arrived with me it was tested, calibrated and ready for the road, a full 5-star experience.”
Klass Oil (RTA) 	Vessel – 20000 litre x 5 compartment aluminium Equipment – Emco Data+ 800 bulk electronic metering system Chassis – Scania P320 6 x 2	John Hughes from Klass Oil has dealt with RTA for quite some time and always knows that the finished product is second to none, right down to the finer details. “I have always chosen Emco as my metering system as the drivers find it so easy to use and from my point of view it certainly is the system to fit and forget in terms of problems, there is nothing that Tom Cunningham doesn’t know about metering system, so having this peace of mind in the background is vital to Klass oils choice of metering system.”
Highland Fuels (RTA) 	Vessel – 20000 litre x 5 compartment aluminium Equipment – Alfons Haar PreciMA 800 bulk electronic metering system (the only customer to fit this equipment) Chassis – Scania P360 6 x 2	This build was a full package purchase from RTA. Doing it this way took away all the hassle of ordering a chassis making sure the wheelbase and all the other finer technical information was correct. It also meant that when the new tanker arrived in my yard it was fully tested, decaled, chassis PDI, registered and ready to deliver oil, not something that Highland Fuels has experienced in the past.

MANY THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED SO MANY FANTASTIC ENTRIES TO OUR FUEL OIL NEWS TANKER OF THE YEAR 2024 COMPETITION. THE EXTREMELY HIGH STANDARD OF ENTRIES ACROSS THE BOARD MADE PICKING A WINNER EXTREMELY CHALLENGING, BUT YOU CAN FIND THIS YEAR'S WINNER ON PAGE 9, WITH THREE ENTRIES HIGHLIGHTED FOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION ON PAGE 11.

WITH SUCH NARROW MARGINS, ALL NOTEWORTHY ENTRIES CAN BE FOUND IN THE SHOWCASE BELOW, WITH MORE DETAIL ON OUR WEBSITE AT FUELOILNEWS.CO.UK

COMPANY	MAKE/MODEL OF TANKER	DETAIL
Greenergy Flexigrid (Williams) 	Fuel tanker details: Williams LAG aluminium semi-trailer 42000 litres nett – 6 compartments E2480 x1670	Committed to reduce emissions from its own operations, Flexigrid has adopted higher biodiesel blends (such as B20) extensively across the fleets in the Southeast and the Midlands, with plans to further expand this across the fleet throughout 2025. Compared to standard B7 diesel fuel, B20 reduces GHG emissions by 13% on average. In 2024, Flexigrid introduced a new livery, and this fuel tanker was the first on the road in the new design. The new livery which was designed to highlight the steps Flexigrid is taking to decarbonise, demonstrating the real word adoption of higher biodiesel blends.
Green for Wales and MechTronic (Sayers Road Tankers) 	A Volvo FE 6x2 chassis, and includes a 16,000 litre, one compartment tanker. Featuring a 3" stainless steel turbine meter, 2" stainless steel cargo pump and a stainless steel overflow prevention and shut off valve. The tanker also includes a 1.5" hydraulic hose reel, 65" x 1.5" delivery hose and remote control with start / stop functionality.	Green 4 Wales is the only company in Wales that manufactures its own AdBlue®. To efficiently serve agricultural, commercial, and retail customers, they can deliver anything from 10 litres to 1000s of litres. Without a specialised vehicle for this range of deliveries, they faced higher logistics costs and a greater carbon footprint – this tanker has solved the problem!
Green for Wales (RTN) 	The Tridam chassis and the 23,500 litre tank	The Tridam chassis and the 23,500-litre tank give Green 4 Wales increased volume which, in turn, means less vehicle movements on the roads with increased accessibility. The increased flexibility is due to the three steering axles which gives Green 4 Wales more flexibility in their delivery service, reducing their carbon footprint.
Morrow Tanker Services / Will's Bros' 	A bespoke MAN TGM.18.290 , 18,000kg 4x4 tanker, exceeding Will's Bros' expectations with a 10,000-litre fuel capacity and a 1,000-litre AdBlue capacity	Will's Bros required a robust tanker capable of delivering both diesel and AdBlue to a variety of vehicles and equipment in remote locations, including construction sites, depots, and individual machines. The tanker needed to be capable of navigating challenging terrain and harsh weather conditions, while providing efficient and accurate fuel dispensing. A minimum capacity of 8,000 litres was essential to meet their operational demands.
WP Group (Just Tankers) 	The tanks are each 13,000 litre, 4-compartment tanks produced by Kobit in the Czech Republic. The chassis is a DAF LF320 Euro 6 running at 18,000 kgs.	A spokesperson from WP Group said: "One of four new bespoke vehicles introduced into to our Airport Energy (a WP Group company) operations. These vehicles will operate 365 days a year. "The tankers were "hand built" by Just Tankers in Belfast and are supported by Just Tankers near Petersfield."

The Trident metering system



The Trident metering system is a groundbreaking design that offers a simple and effective delivery system incorporating a fully proportional control system.

A unique British-manufactured system, Trident includes in-cab complete compatibility GPS/GPRS and sim card with cloud-based software. The new Trident Bottom Socket sits within stainless steel weather-resistant housing, and quick and easy-to-use driver controls with anti-contamination software ensure safe and clean fuel deliveries. Automation also allows quicker and more efficient deliveries saving both time and money.

The unique design also means that the system is smaller and lighter, with less parts used.

For further details of this new system contact Shaun Harte on 07799463636 or shaunharte@aol.com www.tridenttechnics.com 0113 2467244



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TOP 20

FUEL OIL DISTRIBUTORS

UK MAINLAND

2025	2024	COMPANY	NUMBER OF TANKERS	CHANGE
1	1	Certas Energy	800+	-100
2	2	Watson Fuels	293	=
3	3	NWF Fuels	160	=
4	4	Your NRG	128	9
5	7	Johnston Oils	113	16
6	6	Goff Petroleum	111	=
7	8	Crown Oil	100	6
7	5	Rix Petroleum	100	-15
9	11	New Era Fuels	83	19
10	9	WCF Fuels	78	1
11	10	Ford Fuel Oils	72	=
12	12	Oilfast	63	=
13	15	Mitchell & Webber	50	1
14	14	Highland Fuels	49	=
15	16	WP Group	48	-2
16	13	Barton Petroleum	46	-3
17	17	Craggs Energy Group	45	=
17	18	Oil4Wales	45	=
19	19	Heltor	44	=
20	20	Gleaner Oils	43	2

Distributors are ranked by number of tankers as supplied to Fuel Oil News in January 2025

If you feel you should be included in the above list, which is also published on fueloilnews.co.uk please contact margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk with your latest tanker fleet number.

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In Conversation with Martyn Lyons, TR3 Consulting

MARTYN LYONS IS A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE IN THE TANK STORAGE INDUSTRY, BE IT FOR HIS PREVIOUS ROLES AS CEO OF INTER TERMINALS, MANAGING 23 TERMINALS ACROSS EUROPE, OR AS CHAIRMAN OF THE TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION, INFLUENCING INDUSTRY REGULATION AND LEGISLATION. WITH 35 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTOR, MARTYN ESTABLISHED TR3 CONSULTING IN 2021, DRAWING ON HIS WEALTH OF INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE TO GUIDE THOSE INVOLVED IN BULK LIQUID STORAGE.

MARTYN SHARED HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE ACQUISITIVE BULK LIQUID STORAGE SECTOR WITH MARGARET MAJOR, FON PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, HIGHLIGHTING THE VITAL ROLE OF POST-MERGER INTEGRATION IN DELIVERING A SUCCESSFUL ACQUISITION STRATEGY.



Take us back to where it all began

Although it's an awfully long time ago now, I enjoyed my time as an engineering officer in the Merchant Navy, from the late 70s to the late 80s.

At that time, container ships were only just becoming fashionable, whereas now they are everywhere. With cargo in containers, a ship can be loaded and unloaded extremely quickly delivering to a rapid turnaround. In older ships, bulk cargo was lifted in and out by cranes on board the ship or on the quayside which is a much longer process.

For somebody like me, working on the older ships, that meant plenty of time to enjoy where you were. Those were great times, when I got to see a lot of the world!

You clearly enjoyed your time with the Merchant Navy, how did that lead into your career in bulk liquid storage?

I was working for a Hong Kong-based company, and the trips were getting longer. Although I was relatively young and ambitious and enjoying working my way up the ladder, you get so far, and you think "Is this really what I want to do for the rest of my life?" It was time for a change, so I came home.

This was the late 80s, before the proliferation of the internet and mobile phones. Sitting, reading the paper, I saw an advert for a Trainee Manager for Simon Storage (as it was back then) at the Seals Sands Terminal on Teesside. I applied for the job, went to two interviews, was offered the role and the rest is history.

A good fit

The company was ambitious to grow, and to be better than the competition. With the industry expanding and becoming more competitive, the operations director had found the merchant navy to be a good source of highly qualified

people with a skill set and level of discipline that suited the unique challenges of the bulk liquid storage industry.

Over my years in the sector, I have found that, more often than not, you have to develop your own people, so getting the best people in and growing them is essential. For me, it was the beginning of a good long history in the industry. Interestingly, 35 years later, not much has changed – it is still very hard to get good people into this unique sector.

What are the challenges that make it difficult?

Aside from the unique complexities of the sector, there are more challenges these days because of energy transition. Young people coming out of education don't have a desire to get into what might be termed heavy or oil-related industry. Many have strong views on both climate change and its causes.

This makes it hard to get them interested in an industry that is still very heavily involved with, and dependent on, fossil fuels.

That is, in itself, a huge challenge. But it is also true that if you go into any educational establishment, you'll be hard pressed to find someone who has heard of bulk liquid storage let alone considered a career in it!

But for those who are in the know, there is never a dull day, and that is what has kept me in the industry for 35 years.

Did you enjoy it from the outset?

Not from day one, if I'm honest, because it was worlds apart from what I had been doing. But, after the first few months, I found I was really enjoying it.

The acquisition trail

The company I joined, Simon Storage, which became Inter Terminals in 2015, was growing by acquisition, and I was part of the acquisition

team which I found hugely enjoyable.

The growth was into different European countries and the terminals were mostly multi-purpose storing a variety of products and with a wide variety of contracts and customers.

Whilst the challenges of recruitment in bulk liquid storage have remained over the years, a lot has changed, especially with technology and processes.

Following the shocking Buncefield incident in 2005, a joint regulator / industry task group was formed to develop enhanced minimum standards of good practice for storage terminals. I was heavily involved with this task group, on behalf of the Tank Storage Association, as well as with the more permanent Process Safety Leadership Group that followed, to ensure sustained progress through strategic sector leadership.

With a clear objective to ensure an incident of that nature would never happen again, the Process Safety Leadership Group published recommendations and guidance that led to significant changes in bulk liquid terminals as well as in the loading of road tankers, but also changed the relationship, hopefully forever, between industry and regulators.

Why was it so pivotal?

Prior to this time, the style of regulators was a policing one. However, in the working groups, we were literally working shoulder to shoulder, and this shifted the dynamic from working on opposite sides of the table, to working together to comply with the law.

From a regulator perspective it meant that they got to know not just the assets and infrastructure but also developed an understanding of the people as well.

Were you glad of your involvement?

I was, it was an extremely important time for the sector. I've always been very active within

the Tank Storage Association – I was chairman or president for around 10 years and I'm still a director – so when the HSE and competent authority were looking to form an industry and regulator working group, it was natural for me to put my hand up.

And this was alongside your ongoing role at Simon Storage?

Yes. I was Operations Director at the time, becoming Managing Director in 2006, and there was a lot changing there as well. In 2003, Simon Storage had been sold by the British owners, Simon Group PLC, to two private equity companies who then sold the company to Inter Pipeline, a Canadian company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

That's when things really started happening from my perspective, because this was the first overseas acquisition for the new Canadian owners, who wanted to put themselves on the map in Europe.

We were already working on an acquisition when they bought the business in October 2005, and we announced the acquisition of the German business in Mannheim on the River Rhine soon after, in January 2006.

We waited a few years for the next acquisition successes – a tank storage business in Denmark in 2012, and another one in Sweden in 2015.

Then the next was the biggest deal I've ever done, acquiring the UK and European terminals of NuStar Energy in 2018.

Through these acquisitions we'd gone from the pre-2005 version of Simon Storage – a 1,000,000 cubic metre UK-centric business with a small business in Foynes, in the south of Ireland – to being a pan-European company operating in six different countries with 23 terminals and 6,000,000 cubic metres.

One of the things I highlighted in my 'In Profile' feature (FON November), is the necessity to attract the best people and retain them.

To achieve the scale of successful growth detailed above, you need a really good team around you. If you recognise you have a good team, you've also got to work hard to make sure that you retain them.

This is fundamentally important to every business, not just liquid storage.

What was your involvement in the acquisition process?

I was part of the team negotiating with the other side. Carrying out due diligence, looking to see what we liked or didn't, negotiating price and the conditions and, importantly, assuming



we were going to get the deal over the line, how exactly are we going to run it when we do?

The bigger the acquisition, the bigger the integration challenge. We've got it – great news! Now what? It's vital to have a clear plan and a strategy for the future.

It really is a huge amount of work, but the excitement and the buzz are terrific.

Integration is key to successful acquisition.

In acquiring an established company, you may find there are things they are doing better than you are.

Find out how they're running: What's going well, what's not going well? What would you like to change if you see some good ideas? Why not adopt those good ideas?

A service provider

As the bulk liquid storage sector has evolved over the years, technology and digitalisation have paid an increasing part. It is becoming more technically complex, but the fundamental task of filling and emptying tanks isn't difficult.

The majority of bulk liquid storage companies don't own the products. It is about renting space in tanks to customers so it's a service industry. And being a service provider means delivering good service to your customers, showing them you're competent and good at what you do.

In light of that, an acquisition is not just buying something that actually exists, as you are also buying the level of service that's provided by the people in that company.

It is crucially important to recognise that.

Did you run with existing teams and structure?

We did until NuStar. When we bought Germany, Denmark and Sweden, they were overseas business units that ran largely autonomously with some centralised resources and direction from head office.

The game changer for us was the Nu Star acquisition in 2018, because despite being a US-owned company based in Texas, they also

had their own UK HQ.

The integration was far more complex

Was that the end of the acquisition trail?

Simon Storage had been rebranded, in 2015, as Inter Terminals, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canadian company Inter Pipeline. When you're owned by a big company, like Inter Pipeline, you become focussed on keeping your part of the business as a meaningful slice of the pie.

Despite being one of the leading tank storage companies in Europe, we were about 12% of parent company Inter Pipeline, a company that was also very acquisitive.

Their announcement, in 2019, of plans to build a polypropylene manufacturing plant, the first of its kind in Canada, would make us a much smaller slice of the pie.

Nothing lasts forever, and the inevitable came as I was asked to lead the team to move the storage business on. We sold the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Germany business to CLH, now known as Exolum, in 2020, which then became the biggest deal I've ever done.

The period of Canadian ownership was 15 years, and it was a very enjoyable period for me.

Did you complete the handover to CLH then step away?

I stayed on for a few months, to dot the i's and cross the t's, and then I stepped away in February 2021.

I took a bit of time off and did all sorts, including going on a cruise, and I learned a lot in that time. I learned that life on the other side is a lot less stressful. But I also realised that I wasn't quite done yet.

So, I set up TR3 Consulting to offer my services directly to tank storage companies looking for my advice both in the UK, and across Europe as well.

Is there a specialism you offer, and how you can help?

One of the most significant areas is the energy transition – helping companies convert parts of their terminals to cope with new energy transition products – which I very much enjoy.

On another level, but also associated with energy transition, is helping companies prepare for the future by formulating a strategic plan.

A lot of tank storage companies are owned by financial companies who are extremely professional and understand the finance world, what they want to buy, and that they want to make a return on their investment.

But when it comes to the detail of the business itself, they need advisors to guide

them and the senior management teams.

Strategic plans vary enormously from one company to another, even in the same industry. They vary because of their outlook on life, which is usually driven from the top down. Private equity companies, for example, may only be looking to hold the business for three to five years so are less focussed on long term vision and more likely to look at opportunities that are here and now.

The transition casts a light on products like HVO and methanol, which are being used widely now, as well as products for the future, like hydrogen and ammonia, that are complicated and expensive. For these it takes a long time to get necessary permissions and even longer to build the storage.

Does this result in a lack of appetite for investment in a future possibility, because of the impact on short term profitability?

It can do. But offsetting that is the strong influence of ESG – environmental, social and governance. It affects us all, and so it should, but also impacts strategic decisions.

Tank storage company owners who need to secure financing to either buy a company or for capital investment in converting facilities to handle the energy transition will go to the financial institutions where they get the same questions on ESG: What is it you're going to do and how is this going to make the world a better place?

Without the right answers, they might not be successful in securing the finance.

A short-term view is fine but is exactly that – short-term.

Are terminals creating new storage for new fuels or repurposing?

The job of multipurpose terminals has always been to cater for product churn, and they are repurposing all the time which gives them an advantage.

To repurpose to handle HVO is relatively straightforward because the competency is already in place, and there is inbuilt infrastructure flexibility with multiple tanks, multiple pipelines, multiple pumps.

Most dedicated product terminals are oil terminals with a good example being the terminals on the Thames which are all oil terminals, all storing petrol, diesel, aviation fuel etc. because of the demand in London and the South East of England.

These dedicated terminals, whilst handling huge volumes, are only handling a small number of products. This results in limited flexibility in both infrastructure and assets.



The Hawk Arrow - the final ship of Martyn's merchant navy career

To repurpose to store HVO alongside fossil-based diesel, requires tank separation. It might involve another pipeline from the jetty to upload the ship and will probably mean new loading infrastructure for road tankers.

Can it be done? How much will it cost? Will you get a return on investment and what contracts are you going to get to support it?

It's a very different challenge.

What will be the biggest challenges to the bulk liquid storage sector over the next three to five years?

The energy transition undoubtedly. But I believe that those are good challenges that present opportunities. However, they need identifying and embracing, which is why you need to have a fit-for-purpose, up-to-date strategic plan.

Is that a large element of the work of your consultancy?

We enjoy helping businesses address the challenges of the journey towards net zero and we also enjoy helping growing businesses address the challenge we discussed earlier – that of successful integration.

Through the Inter Terminals sales process, I came across a business called Global PMI Partners (GPMIP). GPMIP is an independent company that specialises in post-merger integration.

In my earlier acquisition experiences, we handled integration internally. Appointing an integration manager from within, we relied on them to manage all the integration activities like harmonising IT, finance and accounting systems, as well as people and processes.

Then I discovered this bespoke solutions provider, GPMIP, full of people like me, with 20 or 30 years of experience.

A few months after the sale of Inter, Global PMI reconnected with me, and I've been enjoying being part of their team too, working with and supporting global energy clients.

With an increasing number of acquisitions in the distributor community, surely integration services have a role to play here too?

Some distributors have already been making use of the services of Global PMI, valuing the bespoke, specialised advice on post-merger integration.

The other valuable aspect of the service, especially for those looking to multiple acquisitions, is that, when we go into a company, we transfer the skills and the knowledge so the company we've been working with is then equipped to do it themselves.

That said, if a company finds it needs additional help, we always will. It's not a case of never coming through the door again but, if we transfer the skills, it leaves a company better equipped to handle the next one themselves.

You spoke with great enthusiasm of that long period of your career with Simon Storage and it's clear that 'floated your boat' (to return to the Merchant Navy analogy!) Now that you can choose to work with others doing similar things, how are you finding your new world?

There is a lot of fun to be had in talking to lots of different people, different sectors, different parts of the world, and because I'm my own boss now, I can choose to do what interests me.

I enjoy the work I do through my consultancy, as well as continuing my association with the Tank Storage Association which has changed significantly over the last few years, particularly with the broadening of its membership and addition of associate members, to include some of the port companies, refineries and also supplier members.

Trade bodies are a great place to exchange knowledge, understanding and insight. And it is hugely valuable to bring the whole sector together in this way.

Now you are your own boss, what keeps you awake at night?

Nothing!

I'm quite active in my sailing club and I'm part of the management team of that too. So, just like when I was in full-time work, I find myself a bit thinly spread at times. But I'm not somebody to sit in a chair reading a newspaper and watching the world go by.

I have had an enormously enjoyable career, and I'm still very much enjoying being part of the industry now.

It's an exciting time to be in bulk liquid storage!



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<p>75% of the space is already sold!</p>	<p>60 exhibitors are expected at SHOW 2025</p>	<p>Content posted throughout the event day via</p> <p>Whova App</p>	<p>Dedicated Exhibitor Centre in the</p> <p>Whova App</p>	<p>Exhibitor website views via the</p> <p>Whova App Average* 2,712</p>
		<p>Nearly 2,000 messages are relayed via the</p> <p>Whova App</p>		

Innovative evening event for 2025

UKIFDA HAS UNVEILED AN EXCITING NEW FORMAT FOR THIS YEAR'S EVENING GATHERING.

Featuring a lively compere with multiple surprises and prizes throughout the night, the fresh approach and more relaxed atmosphere promises to be a dynamic and engaging networking experience.

Attendees can look forward to a drinks' reception followed by a casual dining experience, with a selection of delicious bowl food. The evening will also offer casino tables, available until midnight, with the venue open for socialising until 2 am.

Ken Cronin, CEO of UKIFDA, commented: "This new evening format is all about creating a vibrant and interactive experience for our attendees. We believe that fostering connections in a relaxed environment

will encourage meaningful conversations and collaboration within the industry."

As the industry looks towards the future of liquid fuel distribution, the show presents a vital platform for launching new products, showcasing service solutions, and engaging in face-to-face discussions with industry peers.

Industry stakeholders are encouraged to secure their spots for this innovative evening gathering and be part of the solution shaping the sector's future.

For further details and ticket bookings, contact Dawn Shakespeare, UKIFDA's membership and events manager, at ds@ukifda.org.

Driving safety forward: inside the NWF Fuels Safety Cup

SAFETY IS AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT IN FUEL DISTRIBUTION. BUT HOW DO YOU TAKE SOMETHING AS CRITICAL AS SAFE DRIVING AND MAKE IT ENGAGING, MOTIVATIONAL, AND EVEN FUN? NWF FUELS MAY HAVE CRACKED THIS CHALLENGE WITH THEIR NEW SAFETY CUP INITIATIVE, LAUNCHED AS PART OF THE COMPANY'S ONGOING CULTURE CAMPAIGN, IT COMBINES SAFETY INCENTIVES WITH AN EXCITING RACING-THEMED COMPETITION. MARGARET MAJOR SPOKE WITH THE TEAM BEHIND THIS INNOVATIVE SAFETY AND RECOGNITION PROJECT, TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT HOW IT WORKS, AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR DRIVERS, CUSTOMERS AND THE COMPANY.

Q: How did the idea for the Safety Cup come about?

Luke Armitage, Operations Director:

We wanted to strengthen our health and safety culture while recognising our drivers for great performance and the idea of a "Driver of the Year" competition stood out in which we celebrate our best performing drivers over a 12-month period. Rewarding them with an exciting racetrack experience, followed by an evening meal with drinks and overnight stay, they will have the opportunity to spend time with some of our key supply partners. We also record improvements monthly with prizes presented to recognise excellence and keep the momentum going.

Andy Dobson, Marketing and Communications Executive:

Alan Greenhalgh, our Fleet Manager, and I were tasked with creating a competition that celebrates and incentivises safe driving. The poetic irony of drivers who spend their working days striving to be as cautious as possible being given the chance to put restraint to one side and speed around a racetrack appealed greatly. It also allowed us to have fun with the marketing elements, creating videos and leaderboard-style "pole position" updates – just like you see in motorsports.

Alan developed metrics from thousands of delivery routes to generate scores for each driver, which are updated and shared monthly. These scores became integral to our drivers' "Toolbox Talks," where they can monitor progress and discuss improvements.

FON readers will know how much we love a powerful acronym at NWF, and we created 'FOCUS' to ensure safety remained central amidst the excitement of the competition.

- F** Follow best practice for our safety and culture
- O** Outline incidents promptly and accurately
- C** Care for customers' property like it's your own home
- U** Use your mirrors and be cautious when

reversing

- S** Slow-moving, blame-worthy collisions are our most common (and usually avoidable) incidents

Q: How does the competition work?

Alan Greenhalgh, Fleet Manager:

It's built on clear data, tracking monthly safety metrics to highlight improvements and commitment to safety. This transparency ensures drivers see how their actions directly affect their scores. Each month, we run the safety metrics to identify top performers – those showing the most improvement by taking positive steps to address safety issues and leading the commitment to change – as well as leading the competition!

Andy:

We designed it to stay motivational for all drivers, not just those in the top rankings, so we also celebrate the 'best overtakes' – those who see the greatest increase in their monthly rank – with interim rewards. While this ensures everyone has a reason to stay engaged, the competition is actually surprisingly close, with very little separating drivers in pole positions from those at the back of the pack.

Q: What are you hoping to achieve with this initiative?

Luke:

The primary goal is to embed safety into our company culture, while also boosting driver engagement. The competition to be the best drives great conversations around the continued commitment to safety.

Alan:

For me it's ultimately about safety and about doing the right thing. With support from our business, drivers, and suppliers, we want to instil the belief that nothing is so urgent it can't be done safely.

Andy:

Aside from promoting a strong safety culture across the business, this initiative encourages

connection and teamwork among drivers. With dozens of depots across England and Wales, drivers often work independently, but the Safety Cup provides an opportunity to break barriers (metaphorically of course!) and engage with one another.

As a dedicated drivers' competition, it fosters camaraderie, friendly competition, and a sense of unity between regions and depots – strengthening the bond across our team.

Q: How is the rollout progressing?

Luke:

It's fully rolled out, and drivers were eager to see the first updates, published on November 20th. I'm excited to start recognising their achievements.

Andy:

The leaderboard has been shared, and the competition is tight! Each quarter, updates are printed and posted at depots, highlighting team and depot leaders.

Q: What role do your sponsors play?

Andy:

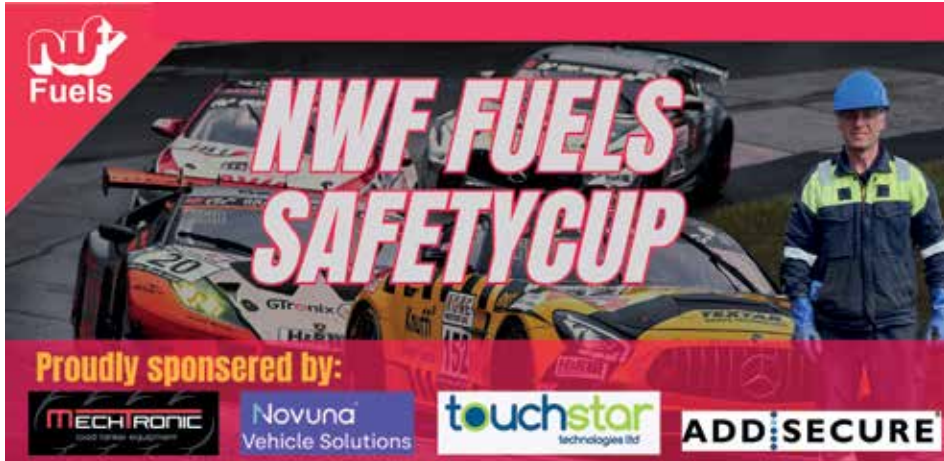
We're fortunate to have amazing supplier partners like Novuna Vehicle Solutions, TouchStar Technologies, MechTronic Ltd, and AddSecure Smart Transport. Alan reached out to them to gauge interest, and their enthusiasm was fantastic. They supply hardware and software for our trucks and are now part of the competition, enjoying the racing experience and providing a little extra 'motor-ation'.

Gordon Hyland is the Sales Director for one of the competition sponsors, TouchStar Technologies and commented:

The Safety Cup is a great initiative to celebrate the best drivers in the NWF Fuel Fleet. As long-standing partners, we're delighted to support this effort and look forward to the track day – let's see if we can give them a run for their money!

Another sponsor is MechTronic, and Managing Director Brad Wilkie, said:

Recognising employees for going above



The opportunity to take this a step further in a full-size vehicle is a huge incentive to drive good behaviours in the workplace.

Not only will it be brilliant to bring our driver team from around the business together for a shared experience, but having our key suppliers involved is also an outstanding opportunity to build relationships for feedback and future collaboration.

Pete Rich, a tanker driver from Darch Oil's Yeovil depot who organised the team's karting event also welcomed the Safety Cup: "The competition is a fantastic idea. It gives us something to aim for and has me paying extra attention to manoeuvring and overall safety."

This focus on even small marginal gains is clearly having an impact with Pete currently one of the drivers in a top position.

The NWF Fuels Safety Cup is a great example of businesses turning critical initiatives into engaging opportunities. By blending safety culture with creativity and collaboration, NWF Fuels is incentivising excellence while fostering camaraderie.

In an industry where it is paramount, putting safety at the heart of the competition, means that everyone is a winner!

and beyond, even without being asked or expected to do so, is a value we share with NWF Fuels. It's exciting to partner with them on this excellent initiative and to support their commitment to safety and performance.

Q: We have to give the last word to those at the heart of the initiative. What's been the response from the drivers and the wider company?

William Everington, Regional Transport Manager (South West) is hugely enthusiastic about the competition: "This



is a fantastic opportunity for the business to reward our drivers and celebrate safe behaviours.

The collaboration and work to put this competition together has been tremendous, providing an extraordinary opportunity for our drivers to be recognised for their positive impact on the health and safety culture throughout the business.

The idea of a race car experience is perfect for the driver team at Darch Oil – only recently they thoroughly enjoyed a Saturday afternoon of highly competitive go karting.



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A DAY IN THE LIFE...

David Wells OBE and
Jemma James

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 TWO MEMBERS OF LOGISTICS UK – **DAVID WELLS OBE**, WHO IS THE BUSINESS GROUP'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AND **JEMMA JAMES**, DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, TO DISCOVER HOW THEY EACH SPEND THEIR TYPICAL DAY.

MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

David: It doesn't – I don't set one. I normally and naturally wake at five, and get up at six. That hour has been important over the years to have my best thoughts on our challenges and changes needed.

Jemma: 6am most days. I am a morning person (but always coffee-fuelled).

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

David: Read the paper. I will generally read the sports section first, focussing on any Spurs news. Thereafter, I systematically read from front to back.

Jemma: Make a coffee and then let the guinea pigs out, as they have free reign of our garden. After my second coffee, I tentatively wake my 10-year-old twins up and find out what mood they are in!

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

David: Walking the dog on the South Downs, remembering how lucky we are to live in this part of the country.

Jemma: Exercise. I always go for a fast 20-minute walk (I can't really call it a run) or do a quick HIT session. Anything to get my body moving.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

David: My mobile. I use it for everything – Email, train tickets, payments, banking, weather forecasts, news feeds on the industry, oh and for calls!

Jemma: Lipstick, usually red. I don't think colleagues or members would recognise me without it.

MY TYPICAL DAY –

David: It's a cliché but no two days are the same. In general, I spend two days a week in London, based at our Victoria Street Office, one day in our HQ in Tunbridge Wells, one day working from home, and one day



anywhere visiting members or colleagues.

The year has a set structure: four Board meetings, twelve Executive Team Meetings, three pension Trustee Meetings, three Audit Committees, three Remuneration Committees, and then monthly 1-2-1s with my Executives.

I receive briefings for Ministerial meetings that I read on the train, and then deliver our message to Ministers. In the Autumn I speak at our Transport Manager Seminar Series around the country, and attend events including the Welsh members lunch, the Northern Irish members lunch, our party conference fringe meetings and in December, our Awards Night in Central London. I oversee the delivery of our strategic plan and manage, day to day, a £35m, profitable business. It keeps me busy!

Jemma: I don't really have a typical day, but I enjoy variety. A usual day can look like this... I log on at 7.30am to check my diary and travel plans for the day, as well as dealing with a couple of quick emails. I ensure the twins are on the school bus for 8.30am and then back on the laptop for two quick Teams video calls with colleagues and a couple of emails.

9.30am involves a 15-minute drive to the train station as my train for London leaves at 10am. Hmm... First hitch of the day: road under the bridge to the train station and car park is flooded and unpassable. I quickly divert and park on a side road. Then must walk alongside the A5 to reach the platform on the other side. I'm now damp from the rain, but make the platform with three minutes to spare, only to find my train is 11 minutes delayed.

Board the train and catch up on emails and Teams messages for an hour. Arrive in Euston. My first meeting is at midday at our London Office, normally easy to achieve on the London Underground but today the Circle and District lines are both delayed. I can't squeeze on the first tube but elbow my way onto the second and arrive for the meeting on time. Productive meeting with our Commercial Director and Director of IT and Development discussing the roadmap for our Vision compliance platform.

My next meeting is 2pm at Labour HQ in Shoreditch, but the Underground is now running smoothly. Great meeting discussing a





range of logistics challenges and relevant key policies.

4pm and back to Euston for the train journey home, various emails and calls while on the train to members and colleagues. 5.40pm arrive back at my local station, and collect my car, flooding is still there and road closed but luckily, I'm homeward bound.

Just before 6pm arrive home and am greeted by my twins who are arguing over who has lost the tv remote!

MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

David: Securing the job ten years ago, and a letter from Michael Gove thanking the organisation for all that it had done to deliver a workable Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Jemma: I've only been in this new role for a few months, so it's difficult to say but there have already been many highlights. I particularly enjoyed being a judge at The Motor Transport Awards in my first week, attending the Transport Manager NI event in Belfast, and meeting all my Logistics UK colleagues.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

David: Without doubt, decisions and incidents that adversely affect people's lives and those of their families, including health and safety incidents, redundancies and disciplinarys.

Jemma: Being stuck in traffic or waiting for delayed trains, which I'm sure will resonate with readers. I hate being late and being unproductive; time is precious. I'm keen to meet face-to-face with as many members, Vision users and colleagues as possible. I'm a passionate believer in active listening and building relationships to ensure we design and develop the best possible digital compliance platform but that involves a lot of travel.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

David: A happy, motivated and productive team delivering for our members. Spending the day out of the office with one of our 320 staff delivering our services to members.

Jemma: The people (colleagues and members) and the passion they share for the logistics industry. Technology is fantastic and a key driver for growth and efficiencies within our industry, but it must be relevant, easy to use and backed up by best-in-class support.

That's why I enjoy being at Logistics UK so much because we are unique as a membership body. We have our own in-house development team, designing and developing leading compliance software, all backed up with fantastic support, regulation and policy knowledge.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

David: Watching Spurs beat Man Utd at Old Trafford 3-0, or something similar. I play tennis regularly at David Lloyd.

Jemma: Taking my truck for a drive or planning my next holiday. I

love old American cars and have a 1979 C10 short bed Chevrolet 7.4l big block. I can often be found cleaning it or scrolling through adverts looking at what to buy next. They are addictive.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS (Breakfast, lunch, or evening meal)...

David: An evening meal at an Italian restaurant with family or just with Rachel my wonderful wife.

Jemma: Anything meat or fish based. Sorry to all the vegans, but I do love a steak, a roast dinner or grilled salmon.

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

David: No alarm but books of two types. Political accounts. I'm currently reading Hillbilly Elegy, both for myself and Christian thought leadership. I'm currently rereading Tim Kellers' book – Forgive. A characteristic we're missing in our post-modern culture.

Jemma: A pile of books. I'm normally reading a couple at a time. Currently it's 'The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read' by Phillipa Perry.

THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

David: Turn out the light!

Jemma: Tell my children I love them, and question whether I've put the guinea pigs away for the night.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

David: 10:30pm.

Jemma: 10.30pm.

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Driver risks: the mutual benefits of effective management

IN AN INDUSTRY IN WHICH DRIVERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN BUSINESS SUCCESS, RECRUITING AND RETAINING GOOD DRIVERS IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR ALL DISTRIBUTORS. NO DISTRIBUTOR WANTS TO BE SHORT OF DRIVERS, ESPECIALLY AT KEY TIMES OF THE YEAR WHEN EVERY DELIVERY IS VITAL TO BOTH CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND BUSINESS SUCCESS. BUT, ALONGSIDE RECRUITMENT, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT DRIVER MANAGEMENT IS ALSO CONSIDERED TO AVOID UNINTENDED BUSINESS IMPACTS OF UNHAPPY OR DISENGAGED DRIVERS.

In this issue we hear from Karl Jones of downstream fuel industry insurance specialist OAMPS, sponsors of the annual industry award for Driver of the Year, who considers what effective Driver Risk Management looks like and how it can impact positively on both driver wellbeing and business performance.

OAMPS Hazardous Industries is the long-standing and enormously proud sponsor of the UKIFDA Driver of the Year award. Since 2000, we've supported the success of exceptional delivery drivers who maintain high standards each year.

As specialist insurance advisors, we know that there's more to effective driver risk management than offering £1,000 prize money and a trophy to great drivers!

Various risk management surveys analysing many operators have highlighted areas where positive influence can impact drivers' performance. In turn, driver performance can affect other aspects, for example running costs, including fuel, tyres, brakes, etc. as well as claims costs and consequently insurance premiums.

Some of these factors could seem to be outside the control of the operator; personality being an obvious one. But each operator exercises control over who they choose to employ – careful selection that looks not only at the driver's technical ability, but how they are likely to perform when the driver trainer is not in the cab with them.

Technology, in terms of telematics performance, can be used to help create a competitive atmosphere which has helped some businesses improve running costs while also lowering accident frequency. And cameras can also help with spurious claims and enable quicker decisions on liability, which can lower third party claims costs; typically the biggest claims cost for fleet operators, and therefore a major factor in their insurance premiums. It can also help monitor the use of personal mobile devices while driving, which is an increasing issue for any business operating company vehicles.

Physical and mental health and welfare is obviously a major factor – including eye tests and increasingly, random drug and alcohol testing,

Key Driver Performance Influencers



and spotting the early warning signs around stress, tiredness and anxiety.

Vehicle maintenance, including swift responses to the outcomes of daily defect checks, as well as the age and condition of the equipment can also have a positive impact on driver's attitudes. Attitudes can be impacted with good training and effective planning that sit alongside manageable workloads.

Attracting and keeping good drivers is increasingly about more than just salary. Benefits, such as personal accident or private medical insurance, or access to cash plans that cover trips to the dentist, physiotherapy, etc. are becoming more popular. The better benefit schemes include 24/7 GP access, discounts for day-to-day things such as grocery shopping or gym membership, and discretionary purchases.

Our experience over the past 40 years is that happy and engaged drivers generally are better performers – costing their employers less in terms of fleet running costs, having fewer accidents, which can help enormously with downtime costs, missed deliveries, etc. and ultimately doing their individual bit to help reduce their employers fleet insurance costs.

If you'd like to speak with an OAMPS Hazardous Industries insurance specialist about understanding your business risks, you can find our details at www.oamps.co.uk.

See you at the UKIFDA show awards in May 2025!

Disclaimer

The sole purpose of this article is to provide guidance on the issues covered. This article is not intended to give legal advice, and, accordingly, it should not be relied upon. It should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of the law and/or market practice in this area. We make no claims as to the completeness or accuracy of the information contained herein or in the links which were live at the date of publication. You should not act upon (or should refrain from acting upon) information in this publication without first seeking specific legal and/or specialist advice. OAMPS Hazardous Industries, part of Pen Underwriting Limited accepts no liability for any inaccuracy, omission or mistake in this publication, nor will we be responsible for any loss which may be suffered as a result of any person relying on the information contained herein.

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The 2025 outlook for distribution and logistics:

David Wells OBE, Logistics UK



“A MIXED OUTLOOK IS PREDICTED FOR 2025, BUT LOGISTICS HAS A STRATEGIC ROLE TO PLAY IN KICKSTARTING ECONOMIC GROWTH”

With decarbonisation, Brexit, new technology and other disruptive forces driving change in the way goods move across borders and through the supply chain, logistics has never been more important to UK plc.

UK business group Logistics UK represents logistics businesses, and more than seven million people directly employed in the making, selling and moving of goods.

The outlook for 2025

Here, David Wells OBE, Chief Executive of Logistics UK, highlights the vital importance of the logistics sector to the UK, takes a look at current challenges, and shines a light on the proactive steps the sector is taking this year

Trading conditions continue to be tough and the economic outlook for 2025 looks mixed. While growth is expected to return to the economy at some point this year, it is predicted to be only in the range of one or two percent which will not cause significant change. Rising employment costs, largely from higher employers' national insurance contributions and national minimum wage increases, could have a significant effect on potential investment and business confidence, especially with smaller companies.

Smaller businesses are also expressing concerns over the Employment Rights Bill which is moving through parliament, and while we all want to see exploitative practices eradicated, any new legislation must not remove the helpful and flexible working arrangements that suit both the employee and employer.

In this type of environment, we need to make sure that any change does not provoke unintended consequences, which is why it is essential for the government to work closely with the logistics sector and seize the opportunity to exploit our famous “can do” attitude to get the economy moving, by addressing the following key areas:

Industrial strategy

Nothing moves without logistics, and the prosperity of our sector and the productivity of the economy as a whole are completely intertwined. The government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper identified the highest growth-driving potential sectors and, when the final Industrial Strategy is published in the spring, logistics must be recognised as a foundational sector integral to supporting the expansion of the rest of the economy.

I firmly believe that transport and logistics must be embedded into the Industrial Strategy's objectives, and policies prioritised to support our industry, if growth is to be enabled across the whole economy. As the voice of the sector, Logistics UK is ideally placed to sit on the proposed Industrial Strategy Council, as well as the interim Industrial Strategy Advisory Council, to ensure efficiency and productivity gains across the logistics sector are realised and we are pressing for our voice to be included in the debate.

By establishing the right partnerships, regulations and investment for logistics, the government can deliver productivity gains that will boost the UK economy by up to £8 billion every year by 2030. Considering 1% growth in the UK economy represents roughly £35 billion pa, this is a significant contribution and shows the strategic importance of the sector.

Smooth trade by reducing border friction

2024 was a monumental year for changes to the UK's borders, with new procedures implemented following Brexit, such as the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) and Windsor Framework coming into effect. However, thus far the introduction of the new border controls has been far from smooth, with constant changes to deadlines and lack of clarity over precisely how the new procedures will be implemented.

In 2025, logistics operators need the support of the government to ensure that the UK's borders do not become a barrier to the movement of goods. The government needs to provide the clarity and detail the industry

needs to plan and adapt to meet these new trading requirements, in a timely fashion – as the old adage goes, failing to plan is planning to fail, and as the heart of the UK's trading relationships, I believe logistics deserves to be included from the start of any changes being implemented.

Planning and infrastructure

There were some positive developments at the end of last year in this area, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), announced in December, which recognises the importance of logistics developments to the economy for the first time.

The government's instruction to planners to support the economy, by identifying suitable locations for freight and logistics operations to take place, is a significant step forward for our sector and it is also good news that the updated NPPF calls for local planners to consider the needs of industries of national importance and a role in the national industrial strategy, to support economic growth.

Fair decarbonisation roadmap

The logistics sector is already embracing the challenge of achieving net zero; however, we believe a sustainability and decarbonisation roadmap developed in partnership with the government would enable the UK to become a world leader in logistics sustainability.

The private sector needs confidence to invest in long-term business development and to do so, requires a supportive, stable policy environment that incentivises decarbonisation.

The government must recognise that logistics is comprised of multiple transport modes and infrastructure, meaning a flexible approach will be needed to achieve a fair transition to net zero, while keeping costs down for customers and supply chains resilient.

Skills

The sector is still experiencing ongoing challenges with skills shortages in key roles, such as vehicle technicians, and it is critical that the government works with the sector to attract

new talent into the profession.

The Generation Logistics awareness campaign, led by Logistics UK and CILT (UK) and supported by over 40 businesses from across the sector, started in 2022, and has already had a significant impact on the way young people think about our industry.

In its first two years, the activity had driven more than 1.37 million visits to the campaign's website, generated over 6.9 million social media engagements and created over 1.67 billion opportunities for potential candidates to see messages about careers in logistics.

Most importantly, independent research shows that the campaign has raised awareness of careers in logistics among the target audience by 37% and improved the way people think about the appeal of a career in logistics by 212%.

This is encouraging news, but it is only the start of driving a change in attitudes which needs to see logistics embedded in careers education alongside more familiar roles like healthcare, manufacturing and retail.

Many other areas of the economy are experiencing similar recruitment challenges to our own, so it is vital that Generation Logistics continues to fly the flag for logistics careers so



our industry can continue to attract the very best talent into the vacancies that exist.

We are delighted that so many businesses across the sector have already chosen to support the campaign, but our sponsors are only a small sample of the whole industry. If your business is interested in helping to develop the next generation of talent, please email generationlogistics@logistics.org.uk to find out how you can get involved as a sponsor.

In the future the government needs to ensure appropriate funding for training

providers, including proper funding of courses for vehicle technicians to address the significant problems of a shortage of people trained for this role. It is also essential to broaden the eligibility for roles in the sector to receive support through the National Skills Fund to ensure the sector has the skilled workforce it needs.

For more information about the organisation and its work, please visit logistics.org.uk

The top part of the advertisement features the Impala logo in white on a purple background. Below the logo is a photograph of an industrial facility with several large, white, cylindrical storage tanks. A worker in a high-visibility yellow jacket and a hard hat is walking in the foreground. The sky is clear and bright.

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PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

JANUARY
IN VIEW

PRICES AND PREDICTIONS – WHAT DOES 2025 HAVE IN STORE?

It's the start of another year and, as is now tradition, this report will focus on the last 12 months and how oil markets have progressed in that period. We will also take a look at how accurate our predictions were at this time last year and of course, how our "rivals" (ha-ha) in the banking world fared with their own forecasts for 2024 oil prices.

Our headline prediction in Jan '24 was for oil prices to "trend sideways and stay in the \$70-\$80 per barrel mark". Arguably this was a bold forecast, considering the geo-political "premium" at the time, with both the Ukraine and Gazan wars showing little (if any) sign of abatement. But as last month's report on China highlighted, such was the ongoing weakness of Chinese oil demand, that prices were not under pressure and, in fact, the oil market was increasingly heading towards over-supply.

And so, it came to pass! The price on 2nd Jan 2024 (i.e., the first working day of the year) was \$75.89 per barrel and on the last working day of the year (31st Dec 2024), the price had fallen by only around \$1 to \$74.64! Of course, as 2024 progressed, there was some movement beyond this tiny range, with Q2 hitting a high of \$85.05, but it soon headed south again, with Q3 returning \$78.67 and Q4 down to \$74.01. Overall, the average for the year was \$79.84 per barrel, and most notable of all, was the fact that the trading range of crude oil (i.e. the price high to the price low) stayed within its narrowest band in over 20 years.

Our prediction then, whilst not quite as accurate as we have been in previous years, was nonetheless broadly correct (for the 10th year in a row and the 14th time in the last 15 years). If we don't pat ourselves too strongly on the back (a solid 7 out of 10 maybe?), we can still console ourselves with the fact that as usual, we fared much better than the "experts" in the banking world. 12 months ago, Barclays predicted that oil prices for the first quarter would average \$91 per barrel and would end the year at a Q4 average of \$94 per barrel. Deutsche Bank had the Q4 average at \$88, whilst JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley plumed for \$85. Other than Portland, the only



other forecast, that we know of, which seemed to call things correctly, was from the Australian bank Macquarie, who predicted a year-end price of \$74 and an overall average of \$78.

**“THIS WAS A BOLD
FORECAST, CONSIDERING
THE GEO-POLITICAL
“PREMIUM” AT THE
TIME.”**

Turning our attention to 2025, it's fair to say that the markets have started the year red-hot, going up by \$6 per barrel (to \$81) in the first week of January! In Britain, this has been exacerbated by the tumbling value of the pound, which has resulted in the pence per litre (ppl) price going up by almost 5.50ppl in the same period. Excluding duty, VAT and retail margin, that's not far off a 12% rise in the raw price of diesel in the space of a week! The main reason behind this sudden price rise was the tightening of US sanctions on Russian oil, specifically focussing on the Russian "Dark Fleet" (we reported on this subject back in July 2023). This resulted in the immediate mid-sea anchoring (i.e., stopping before arriving at the port of discharge) of around 65 crude oil tankers around the world, which roughly speaking, equates to a supply interruption of around 10m barrels of oil. This is easily enough to temporarily send prices northwards but is not what you would call a "fundamental factor" (affecting oil prices) and as such, Portland expects this jump in prices to be short-lived.

In both 2023 and 2024, most major financial institutions got their predictions wrong because the narrative of continuous growth (where banks and investors tend to do better) lends itself to bullish markets (i.e., oil prices going up). But the truth in 2023 and 2024, was that a broadly weakening global economy and lower prices were fairly predictable based on the available data. Looking forward into 2025, not too much seems to have changed. With the exception of President Trump supporters, there are few people in the world going into this year with a fulsome confidence in the economy. The main driver of global economic growth is still China, and on the back of a troublesome 2024, the country's economic outlook for 2025 is probably even worse, with the prospect of US tariffs on Chinese goods.

Whether these levies end up helping or hindering the US economy is currently a fierce academic debate, but there seems little doubt that tariffs will be detrimental to international trade. And at the same time that the global economy weakens, the floodgates for US oil and gas production will be opened, further compounding the over-supply situation. On that basis, it seems likely that once again we will have a flatlining or a lowering of the oil price in 2025. A more nuanced view on this would see a "game of two halves", whereby geo-political tensions (Ukraine, Iran, Syria) push prices up in the first half of the year, only to then have economic and supply fundamentals drive prices back down from the summer onwards. Supply and Demand economics tend to play out in "slow time", whereas conflict in oil producing regions, always has the potential to drive prices up in the short-term.

For more pricing
information,
see page 34

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INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Maintaining good mental health: Coping with anxiety

MANDY RUTTER, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TRAINER, PSYCHOLOGIST, AND COUNSELLOR, WAS A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE TSA (TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION) CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN 2023, WHERE SHE DELIVERED AN IMPRESSIVE TALK ABOUT MENTAL WELL-BEING IN THE INDUSTRY.

MANDY SPECIALISES IN IMPROVING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES, MANAGERS, AND SENIOR LEADERS WITHIN ALL AREAS OF THE WORKFORCE. IN THIS INDUSTRY INSIGHT ARTICLE FOR FUEL OIL NEWS, MANDY DISCUSSES HOW TO COPE WITH ANXIETY, GIVING PRACTICAL TIPS AND SUPPORT.

"I've been feeling dread all morning. As I drive onto the site, my stomach churns, my hands get sweaty, my leg starts shaking and I can hardly get the words out to tell the security guard who I am. I've been here hundreds of times before, but the dread gets worse every time and I know I won't recover from this all day, and the reactions will start again whenever I think about the site." Ricardo, fuel tank driver.

Ricardo is one of approximately 40% of people in the UK who experience anxiety. In any given week, 6 in 100 people are diagnosed with generalised anxiety disorder, making anxiety one of the most common mental health disorders in the UK. And yet, over 50% of those experiencing anxiety symptoms do not access help.

Here, I thought it would be useful to explain anxiety in more detail – so that you can be informed, prepared and can offer support to those dealing with anxiety.

What is anxiety and how is it different to worry?

Everyone worries, it is a natural and normal everyday response to specific and realistic concerns. We worry about passing exams or about doing presentations. We worry about our children doing well at school or spending too much time on social media. We worry about achieving our targets or succeeding at an interview.

Worry tends to be problem-focused, short-term, and resolves when the issue has been addressed. Worry can also serve a useful purpose by motivating us to prepare, or problem-solve, or reach out for help.

In fact, worrying is one of the secrets of our success as a species – we are highly proficient at anticipating and therefore preparing for, and avoiding dangers and

threats.

Anxiety, however, is a much more intense, excessive and constant state of worry. The intense symptoms of anxiety do not diminish when the problem or issue is over (just as Ricardo described above). An anxiety disorder is described as 'persistent and intense feelings of anxiety that are out of proportion to the event of situation that triggered them.'

What happens when we are anxious?

"Anxiety starts when we overestimate the threat and underestimate our ability to manage it."

When we perceive a danger, or threat (which could be a real physical threat, such as an angry dog running towards us, or a psychological threat, such as our manager criticising our work), our executive brain sends an urgent message to the primitive 'fear' centre of the brain, which then activates the 'fight or flight' response. This response involves the release of several hormones which place the whole body on alert.

Sometimes our executive brain can calm this response by rationalising the situation, thinking through the problem, and taking alternative action. However, when the threat is perceived to be intense, frightening and out of control, the fight or flight response affects our whole bodily systems.

We all have a slightly different combination of symptoms of anxiety which could be any of the those listed here:

Physical reactions include...

- rapid heart rate – 'heart thumping'
- rapid breathing
- sweating
- trembling
- nausea and stomach upset
- feeling dizzy or light-headed

- tight/painful chest
- numbness or tingling sensations
- bright vision
- heavy legs
- stammering or choking sensations
- hot and cold flushes
- urgent need for the toilet

Your mind....

- is whirring with repetitive thought patterns
- will dwell on negative experiences and outcomes
- can't concentrate or focus
- is forgetful
- has difficulty making decisions
- Is narrowly focused

Emotionally you may feel...

- tense, nervous and on edge
- a sense of dread
- restless or agitated
- frightened, terrified, scared or panicked
- out of control
- exposed and vulnerable

Behaviourally, you may find yourself struggling with

- poor sleep
- loss of appetite or over-eating
- completing tasks
- irritability and aggression
- alcohol, drugs
- withdrawal from friends and family
- lowered sex drive
- loss of enjoyment and pleasure

Managing anxiety

Everyone who experiences anxiety will have their own methods and strategies for dealing with it. Some people work towards reducing the symptoms, (through medication or breathing techniques), whilst other people

work on improving their confidence and resilience to reduce the original feelings of threat.

It's important that we all find the right combination of calming measures for ourselves. Here are the most common strategies that people use to manage their anxiety:

Thinking strategies to manage anxiety include:

- a. Education about the process and science of anxiety.
- b. Identify all the things that are within personal control and reduce the focus on what's outside personal control (e.g. I can't control if I get this new job, but I can control how much I prepare, and how many jobs I apply for).
- c. Focus on the reality of the situation, and what is possible now, rather than wishing it was different (e.g. the reality is that I'm not fit now and I'm anxious about my health, but it is possible to get fitter, bit by bit, every day, with a plan and support).
- d. Be creative in thinking about new ways to support yourself.
- e. Be aware of negative self-appraisal and work towards adding some positive self-affirmations. (e.g. I am hopeless, I will never achieve this, becomes I will give it a go, I will work towards achieving this with the help of others).
- f. Maintain perspective by pulling back from the detail and looking at the bigger picture given the circumstances and resources.
- g. Recognise that most of us have previous experience and knowledge in helping ourselves through anxious times (e.g. how many job changes you have successfully navigated, have you been made redundant before, and how did you manage it, has a significant relationship ended and how did you manage it and move on?).
- h. Identify and reduce personal triggers of anxiety (e.g. if you have been in an accident, or had an injury, avoid constantly reading about it on social media, and tv).
- i. Accept that things will go wrong, things will be a struggle, plan for the problems and forgive yourself.

Practical strategies for managing anxiety include:

- Mindfulness, meditation, visualisation
- Box breathing (Inhale for 3 seconds, hold

it for 3 seconds, exhale for 3 seconds and repeat)

- Relaxation techniques (Try the 4–7–8 technique of inhaling for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds)
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Counselling/Psychotherapy
- Exposure Therapy
- Coaching/mentoring
- Dietary adjustments
- Regular exercise
- Creating a calming routine of healthy habits
- Practice gratitude to promote positive thinking
- Medication (prescribed by a GP)
- Support groups (connecting with others who experience anxiety)
- Life changes



There are different types of anxiety disorders, and it can be helpful to recognise what aspects of your life trigger the symptoms of anxiety. Once this has been identified, a more tailored plan of psychological and behavioural strategies can be developed.

Here is a summary of the most common anxiety disorders. Please note that it is important to seek professional guidance to help diagnose the specific nature of the anxiety.

- **Generalised anxiety disorder:** persistent and excessive worry that interferes with daily activities. Usually, the worries focus on everyday concerns such as job responsibilities, family, health, finances.
- **Panic disorder:** recurrent panic attacks which are an overwhelming combination of physical and psychological distress, often including pounding heart, sweating, chest pain, fear of dying.
- **Agoraphobia:** fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult or embarrassing, or help might not be available in the event of panic symptoms.
- **Social Anxiety disorder:** fear of being embarrassed, humiliated, rejected or

belittled in social interactions. Common examples can include the fear of meeting new people, eating or drinking in public.

- **Specific phobias:** excessive or persistent fear of specific objects, situations or activities that are not generally harmful. Examples include spiders, clowns, flying.
- **Separation Anxiety Disorder:** excessive fear about separation from those with whom you are attached/intimate with. They may be persistently worried about losing the person, refuse to sleep away from the person and/or have nightmares about separation.

I would like to give the last word to Ricardo, so he can share how he managed his anxiety:

"My symptoms became worse over the course of a year, and I didn't tell anyone as I felt so embarrassed and silly. I couldn't sleep the night before and the night after I went to the site. I became more anxious that I would have an accident in my truck due to exhaustion.

"One day, I had a new colleague with me for a day, who started talking about his anxiety, and how he got help using medication and CBT. I was sceptical at first and felt that no-one could help me, but as he talked, I could see there might be some hope for me. I went to the GP who prescribed a short course of anti-anxiety medication and signed me up for an on-line CBT course.

"The medication really helped and although I didn't join in much with the course, it gave me some calming breathing techniques to use. I've started to do weight training again, which also helps. I now know how to manage my symptoms and feel more in control of myself. I still get anxious at times, but I know what's happening to me, and feel more confident that it will pass. I've also talked to other colleagues about my anxiety, which has helped me and them."

We will be continuing our conversations around the importance of good mental health through this year since, as Mandy says: "It's essential for all of us to proactively look after our mental health as it is the foundation of a good quality of life.

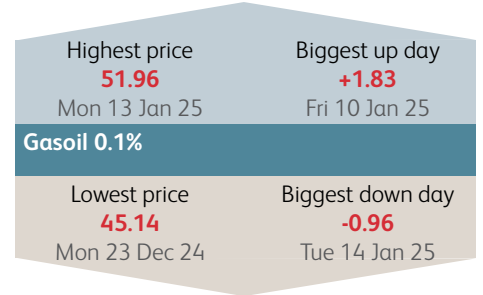
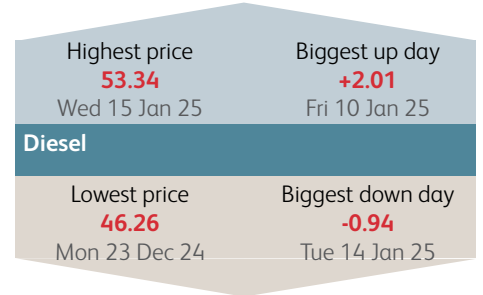
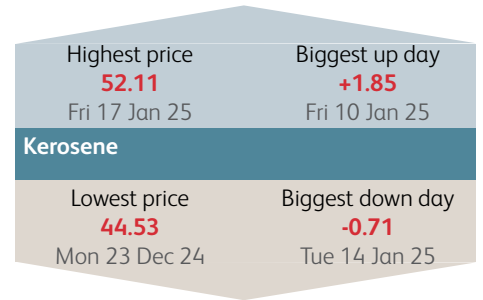
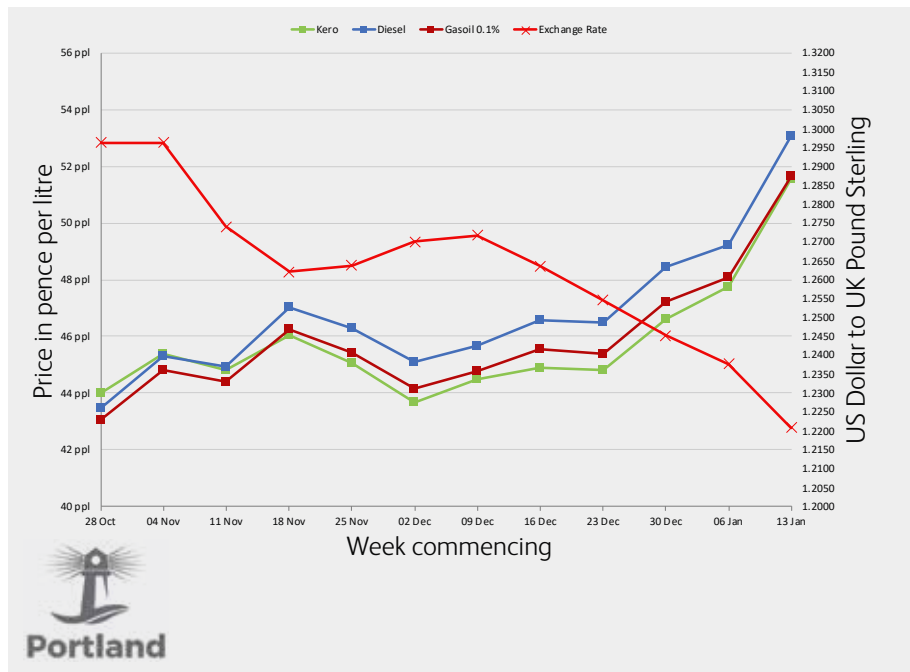
"There is no health without mental health."

Please contact claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk if there are questions or issues you'd like to see addressed.

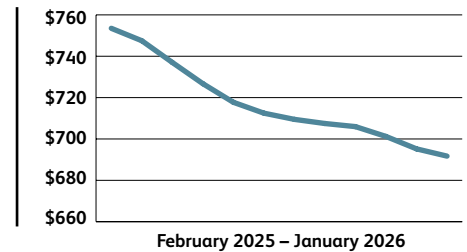
Wholesale Price Movements: 19th December 2024 – 18th January 2025

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	47.74	49.37	48.15
Average daily change	0.58	0.65	0.63
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	47.74	102.32	58.33

All prices in pence per litre



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	52.48	63.73	108.20	59.83	68.09	112.44
North East	51.43	62.36	107.28	61.66	66.43	110.39
North West	53.00	64.96	109.67	60.06	68.76	112.45
Midlands	51.50	62.89	107.74	58.41	66.90	111.12
South East	51.60	62.85	107.72	65.86	69.83	110.65
South West	51.95	62.69	107.56	61.14	66.69	110.24
N. Ireland	52.06	64.06	n/a	58.85	68.97	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	65.82	69.49	109.14	71.95	73.60	112.60
Portland	49.81	60.41	104.43			

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