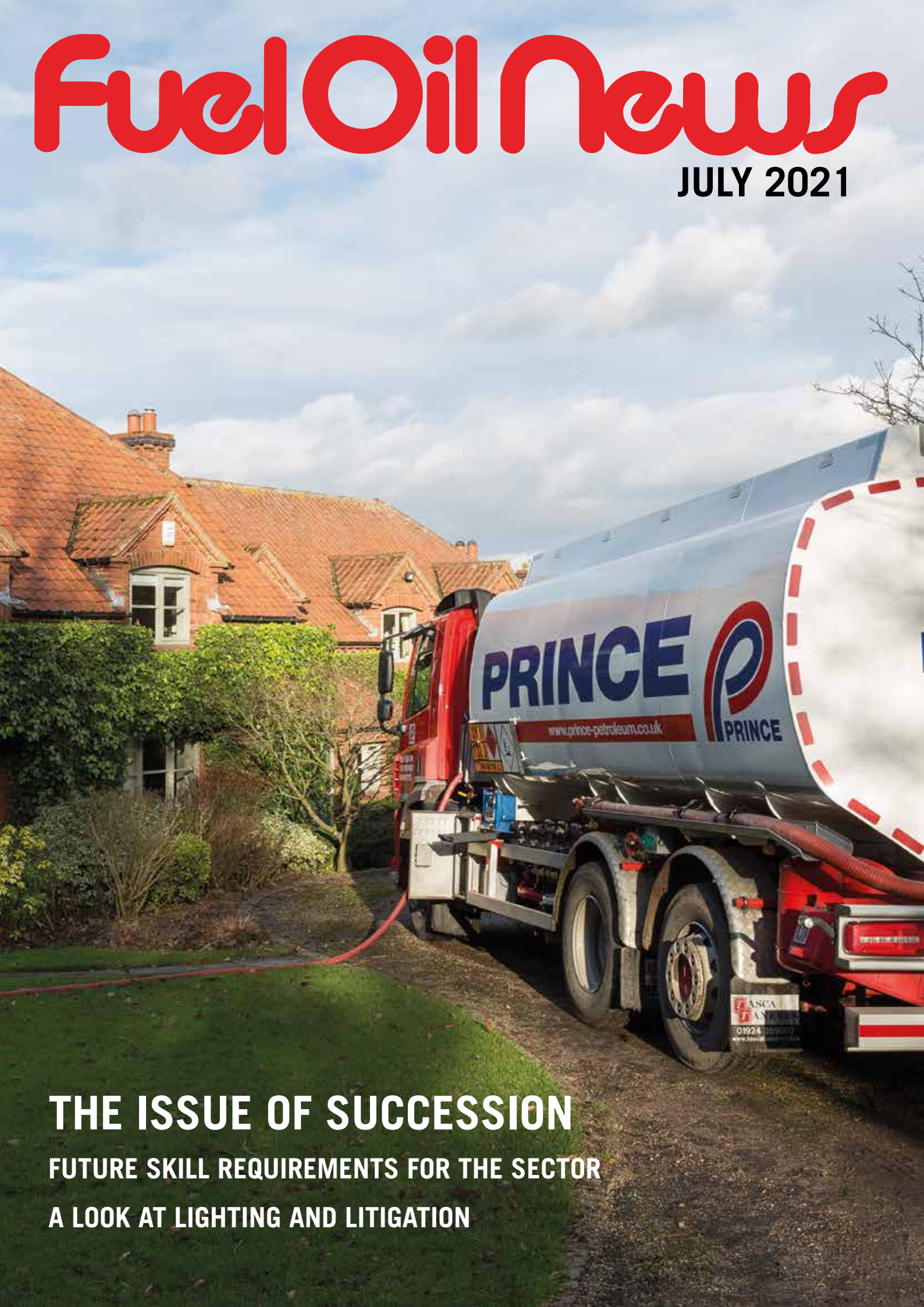
Fuel Oil News

JULY 2021



THE ISSUE OF SUCCESSION

FUTURE SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SECTOR

A LOOK AT LIGHTING AND LITIGATION

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Ready to embrace the challenge of change

It is bizarre that, in last July's issue, I was writing about the uncertainty of emerging from the original lockdown and here we are, a year on, still finding the right way to emerge from this latest round of restrictions.

In the intervening months, those within the fuel distribution industry have, in their usual pragmatic fashion, embraced the challenges, adapted their approaches, adopted new processes and got on with getting the job done, all the while protecting their customers and teams and implementing new technologies. It is arguable that the impact of the pandemic has been to hasten the rate of inevitable change and to impose on an industry that has been, in large parts, a reluctant adopter, ten years' of evolution in a single year. We would have come to the same point eventually but, without the unforeseen external factors, we'd have taken our time to get to the destination and almost certainly enjoyed the journey a little more!

However, with many of those developments and system implementations out of the way, the sector is now very well placed to grab its destiny with both hands, work out where it needs to be next and plan how to get there. The experience of the past year only goes to prove that we are stronger than we think, more fleet of foot that we would have given ourselves credit for and extremely resilient.

With increased confidence in the industry's ability to evolve and adapt, many of the challenges that once looked daunting can now be viewed with enthusiasm, and regarded as opportunities. For as long as there are people who heat their homes, farm their land and use plant there will be a need for fuel. What that fuel may eventually be is, as yet, unclear, but the opportunity is there for all those involved in our industry to be part of that journey. In this issue we consider some of the questions this evolving industry raises – future skills, new products and services and succession planning and, as always we'd welcome your thoughts – drop us a line!

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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

A glorious image of a Prince Petroleum tanker making a delivery sums up the importance of distributors to their communities. On page 10 we hear from David Prince how the family-owned business continues to grow and thrive.

In this issue

In our Industry Analysis on pages 12 & 13 fuel distributors tell us how they are safeguarding the future of this vital service through succession planning and we discuss the various challenges this presents as they steer their businesses into the future.

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OnlineFuels acquired by DTN

OnlineFuels, the leader in digital transformation solutions for the refined fuels market, has been acquired by DTN, a leading data, analytics and technology company. With the addition of the OnlineFuels innovative online trading platform, DTN is now the leading provider of solutions that bring visibility where it hasn't existed before.

James Stairmand, founder of OnlineFuels commented: "Proud to announce that after nearly 6 years of founding OnlineFuels, we have been acquired by DTN. A massive team effort to get this over the line. I'm excited for the next chapter and looking forward to joining the DTN team.

"I started the business with a view of one day exiting, so I'm delighted with the outcome. Happy I took the risk and went on my own adventure!"

"Our customers look to DTN to not only make sense of their data and deliver operational intelligence, but also to do so through innovative solutions that support complex decisions and give their business a competitive advantage," said Marc Chesover, president of DTN.

"Adding the OnlineFuels team and online trading platform to DTN solutions strengthens our ability to serve our customers around the world and solve a long-standing challenge of digitising their buying and selling transactions."

"By joining the DTN team, we see a great opportunity to continue investing in our ability to support digital transformation within the refined fuels industry in Europe and, later, North America," added James. "Through the integration, we will match our solution with existing and future DTN platforms to give our customers the tools needed to confidently make decisions, mitigate risks and turn their operations into a competitive advantage."

Read more about this acquisition in our Industry Analysis feature on p.12 & 13.

Exclusive! Commercial Fuel Solutions product launch

Commercial Fuel Solutions Limited, a UK-based engineering firm specialising in the design, manufacture and distributor of commercial refuelling solutions, tells us more about an exclusive product launch coming to this year's UKIFDA EXPO.

"With over 20,000 active customers and traffic exceeding 6,500 visitors to our website every month, our reach into the market is significant, if not unrivalled. Subsequently, Commercial Fuel Solutions Limited has developed a unique software platform that will connect fuel suppliers to our ever-increasing customer base and high frequency of website visitors," Robin Futcher, managing director, Commercial Fuel Solutions Limited, explains.

"Our customers remain loyal and value our brand, making us a perfect platform to introduce additional products to our followers, visitors and customers alike.

"Launching at the UKIFDA future fuels 2021 virtual event, our new software platform is unlike any other of its kind. Typically, fuel and oil price sites look to obtain customers when they are ready to buy fuel and often target domestic users. Not only does our system target commercial users, who require significantly larger volumes of fuel, but our system also introduces the products to prospective customers continually during their visit to our website. This ensures that both the distributor brand and price are kept at the top of their minds.

"For example, when a potential customer visits our website, they could be looking for anything, such as a replacement fuel filter or perhaps a consignment of AdBlue. In either instance, they may not even be looking to order fuel. But, during their visit, they would be able to access all fuel prices available in their area, with the most competitive rates predominantly displayed at the top of every page on our website."

Recognised for innovations in technology to reduce harmful emissions as well as authoring technical guidance promoting awareness and improving working practices throughout the industry at an international level, Commercial Fuel Solutions is also recognised as the UK's leading independent supplier of AdBlue.

For more details on this unique system, join Commercial Fuel Solutions Limited at this year's UKIFDA EXPO on 7th July. Contact rfutcher@commercialfuelsolutions.co.uk for your exclusive invitation.

Full details will be on the FON website after launch as well as in our August issue.

Shortlist announced for Fuel Oil News sponsored award

With the 2021 UKIFDA virtual Expo now imminent, the shortlist for the inaugural UKIFDA Innovation Award, sponsored by Fuel Oil News, has been announced. In an industry well known for its ability to innovate to continue to thrive the three nominations to have successfully made the shortlist are from:

Eliminox
Crown Oil
Mitchell & Webber

Join the awards ceremony, taking place at the Expo on 7th July, to find out who takes the award. We congratulate all those who made the shortlist and look forward to celebrating with the inaugural winner.

Vital fleet manager conference set for physical return

Logistics UK's ever-popular Transport Manager conference series – sponsored by Bridgestone Tyres –will return in autumn 2021 with live events planned at 11 venues around the UK. The conferences will highlight key issues for fleet managers, providing professional advice, and helping them to remain compliant and up to speed on the latest legislative developments.

Topics to be covered by the event's knowledgeable speakers will include logistics in urban centres, low emission vehicles, working safely with alternative fuels, a compliance update and much more.

James Firth, Logistics UK's head of road freight regulation policy, comments: "We are delighted to once again be running this conference series in person.
These popular conferences enable busy transport managers to stay up to date with ever-changing legislation and good practice advice. Compliance is vital in the logistics industry; it has been a challenging 12 months for operators and the conferences provide operators with peace of mind that they are equipped with all the information they need, as well as giving them the opportunity to hear from senior figures in the industry and have their questions answered."

The price for Logistics UK members is £299 plus VAT for the first delegate and £269 plus VAT for subsequent delegates; for non-Logistics UK members the cost is £399 plus VAT for the first delegate and £369 plus VAT for subsequent delegates. This price includes access to all the exclusive conference sessions, a full package of refreshments throughout the day and a take-home bag packed with useful information.

For further information, or to book a place, please visit: www.logistics.org.uk/transport-manager

New HVO-fuelled tanker for James D Bilsland

Croftamie-based James D Bilsland has recently shared images of its brand new tanker which runs on HVO.

Jodie Allan, manager, James D Bilsland commented: "We have just purchased a new truck from RTN and have made the decision to run this vehicle on HVO, enabling us to reduce our carbon emissions by up to 90% with this vehicle and start decarbonising the rest of our fleet. We are pleased to be able to offer this fuel to customers looking to decarbonise, as it is a great product that produces positive results without any modification to vehicles."

The company is currently partaking in the first trials that see HVO renewable fuels used as an alternative to kerosene for home heating in Scotland, as part of the future fuels trial.

Jodie continued: "We are so far pleased with how HVO is performing as an alternative to kerosene in the domestic market within a property that we have converted."

We look forward to keeping up to date with James D Bilsland's HVO trial as well as reporting on the industry's continued efforts to help the UK to reach net zero with its supply of sustainable alternative fuels.

OMJ expands offering to prepare for a low carbon economy

The Oil Market Journal has greatly expanded its product offering to help clients to future proof their business for the low carbon economy.

In addition to providing oil prices, OMJ now also provides a wide range of prices for sustainable fuels as well as pricing for power, gas and emissions.

As an S & P Global Platts licenced distributor, OMJ can provide prices for new sustainable products, including Used Cooking Oil (UCO), Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

OMJ also provides pricing for Tallow, TME and UCOME.

In preparation for a low carbon marine sector, OMJ now publishes methanol futures prices. As electric road vehicles gain market share, OMJ is pleased to provide a wide range of electricity pricing, including baseload and peak prices for both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

UK, Ireland and European gas pricing and spark spreads are also now available along with emissions pricing.

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OTS Group delivers solutions for changing fuels

With UK developments in sustainable fuel increasing both the range available, as well as the ways in which they can be used, OTS Group identified the need to ensure that there are appropriate fuel delivery, storage and maintenance systems available for these sustainable fuels. Working with organisations like the Fuel Experts Association (FEA), which represents companies who are developing clean energy and clean liquid biofuels such as HVO, the group has developed its sustainable fuels storage offering.

OTS Group, the UK distributor for the 'Green' storage tanks, is leading the way to aid end users with temporary (and permanent) storage solutions for sustainable fuels, which are available for purchase, hire or loan, while they evaluate their desired route for sustainability.

The flagship products are the double-walled polyethylene tanks intended for storage and distribution of HVO (or other biodiesel fuels). These tanks are made of high-quality polyethylene, the main feature of which is resistance to various weather conditions and come with built-in dispensing equipment stowed in a secure cabinet.

"Throughout this constant evolution, innovation has remained the underlying principle to everything we do," comments OTS Group chairman, Bruce Woodal, and managing director Steve Gain believes that there is a bright future for clean drop-in fuels: "One of the main opportunities for these fuels is that they can be manufactured to directly replace conventional fossil fuels (so called "drop-in" fuels) which means that the uptake is likely to be quick and widespread as it can be used by the existing fleet."

There are currently in excess of 34 million passenger vehicles on the road in the UK using conventional engines, and more will be added between now and 2035.

Excitement builds for soon to be announced key industry award

The 2021 winner of the prestigious 'Driver of the Year' award will, this year, be presented at a virtual ceremony during UKIFDA EXPO 2021 and Future Fuels on 7-8th July 2021. As well as the coveted title the winner will also receive £1000 prize money and certificate and, most importantly, the recognition of the industry in a year of unprecedented challenges that has seen many of the industry's drivers go over and above.

Sponsored by OAMPS – the specialist insurance advisor to the hazardous fuels and environmental industries – for the 20th consecutive year, the 2021 Driver of the Year Award will celebrate the best UKIFDA member drivers in the industry.

Karl Jones, account director of OAMPS hazardous industries, comments: "We're delighted to be sponsoring the Driver of the Year award for the 20th consecutive year. By creating a competition that encourages all tanker drivers to be the best they can be in every aspect of their job – from safety to efficiency as well as customer service – we feel we're not only rewarding the drivers, but supporting the wider industry by championing the delivery of cleaner energy solutions and raising awareness around the environmental impact of accidental spillages. As ever, we expect to be hugely impressed not only by the ultimate winner but also by the attitudes and achievements of all nominees."

Recent winners include Clifford Tappin of Lovell Fuels, Buckinghamshire, who was named Driver of The Year 2018 after being runner-up in the 2017 awards.

"Clifford Tappin stood out as going above and beyond in his work," explained Tony Brown, technical manager for the association and Driver of The Year Awards judge. "He won the competition this year thanks to his impressive commitment to his job – his driving professionalism, quality of work, customer care and motivation are inspiring to witness.

And the last time it was presented, in 2019, it was James Coates of Barton Petroleum Ltd who took top honours, chosen for his exceptional customer care and going above and beyond the call of duty.

Tony Brown, technical manager for the association and Driver of The Year Awards judge, said at the time: "James Coates did stand out from his rivals purely because of his extraordinary commitment to customer care.

"In the five years he's worked for Barton Petroleum, James has always demonstrated strong customer service together with high standards of safety and expertise."

There was, however, one day early in January 2019 that elevated him above the competition and ensured the much-coveted award was his. Finding an elderly lady unconscious by a busy road, the extraordinary driver was professional and sensitive throughout as he reassured and shielded the lady, who had wandered away from her nearby sheltered housing, until the appropriate help arrived.

As Tony commented: "Every year, the standard set by all the tanker drivers is impressively high – and choosing just one winner and two runners-up is far from an easy task."

Following a year when liquid fuel distributor drivers have been classed as key workers and kept busy delivering fuel for farms, essential heating oil for homes, as more people worked remotely, and helped keep the construction industry going throughout the pandemic, UKIFDA was particularly proud to launch the search for the best tanker driver in the industry this year.

We all look forward to the unveiling of the eventual 2021 winner at this year's virtual expo.

The UK embraces hydrogen

Further to the news that Scotland is keen to embrace the opportunities that hydrogen offers as a fuel to 'green' transport, the Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport, recently highlighted that enabling a safe and sustainable recovery of international travel for 2021 and beyond is essential as the UK recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that utilising new and innovative methods is key to improving the transport sector. "As we continue on our road to a green recovery, we know that to really harness the power of transport to improve our country – and to set a global gold standard – we must truly embed change. That is why I'm delighted that, through our plans to build back better, we're embracing the power of hydrogen and the more sustainable, greener forms of transport it will bring."

The £23 million 'Hydrogen for Transport Programme', launched in August 2017, includes plans for £6.3 million of funding for a green hydrogen refuelling station and 19 hydrogen-powered refuse vehicles in Glasgow, a world-first. This will give a huge post-Covid boost to local economies in the UK through the creation of green jobs while also vitally decarbonising the transport network.

Hydrogen trains

Trials of the UK's first hydrogen powered train, known as HydroFLEX, began at the end of 2020, supported with a £750,000 grant from the Department for Transport (DfT). The ground-breaking technology behind the trains will also be available by 2023 to retrofit current in-service trains to hydrogen, helping decarbonise the rail network and make rail journeys greener and more efficient.

Hydrogen for heating

The UK is already a world leader in investigating the use of hydrogen for heating, replacing fossil fuels like natural gas with hydrogen and hydrogen blends. The government is keen to accelerate this work and support industry, particularly within the transport sector.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps stated: "we're going further and faster than ever to cut emissions from our roads, cleaning up our air as we accelerate towards a zero-emission transport future."

Exolum to try its hand in hydrogen

Exolum, an international leader in the transportation and storage of liquid products, wishes to leverage its experience as a comprehensive manager of energy product storage, transport and distribution facilities in order to participate as a relevant player in the development of the hydrogen sector, which will play a decisive role in the future energy mix.

To achieve this, the company has submitted a portfolio of renewable hydrogen-based projects in response to the call for expressions of interest which has been launched by the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge and the Ministry of Industry. This portfolio of projects has associated investments that total over 500 million euros and include various projects to be developed on the Iberian Peninsula, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands.

Exolum focuses on integrating solutions throughout the whole value chain for the production, transport, storage and distribution of green hydrogen. One of the most ambitious projects is the development of hydrogen corridors that cover the whole Iberian Peninsula, thus allowing the new energy vector to have a uniform penetration.

The company is also developing alliances throughout the hydrogen value chain that enable the development of new technologies.

Hydrogen front and centre of Scotland's climate strategy

Nicola Sturgeon's announcement that hydrogen will play a central part in the SNP's climate change agenda for Scotland has been applauded by Wrightbus owner and executive chairman, Jo Bamford.

Wrightbus launched the world's first fleet of double decker buses in Aberdeen last year and has plans to expand its network of zero emission buses further across Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Jo Bamford, also the founder and executive chairman of Ryse Hydrogen, said at the time: "The firm commitment today from the SNP to put hydrogen front and centre of its climate strategy for Scotland is greatly welcomed.

"Hydrogen not only represents a fantastic opportunity for the country to achieve the clean air, zero carbon future it strives towards, but it will also bring huge economic benefits.

"We've long believed that Scotland has the potential to create a world-leading hydrogen economy, bringing multi-million pound investments and tens of thousands of jobs – and this announcement gives confidence to the sector.

"We were immensely proud, at Wrightbus, to launch the world's first fleet of hydrogen double deckers onto the streets of Aberdeen last year, and we stand ready to go with further Scottish projects and investments from Ryse Hydrogen and Wrightbus to help unlock Scotland's hydrogen potential."

Developing the skills for the fuels of tomorrow, today

HYDROGEN IS SET TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN DECARBONISING THE GLOBAL ENERGY SYSTEM AND INVESTMENT IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF HYDROGEN PRODUCTION IS ACCELERATING, WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS MAKING INCREASINGLY AMBITIOUS COMMITMENTS TO THE SECTOR. AS THE WORLD WORKS TO RECOVER FROM THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS, THE UK HAS A CHANCE TO BUILD BACK BETTER.

IN THIS ISSUE, WHERE WE CONSIDER BOTH SUCCESSION PLANNING AND FUTURE SKILLS FOR THE SECTOR, WE SPEAK WITH **HUW BEMENT**, DIRECTOR OF COMPEX, THE CERTIFICATION BODY THAT IS ALREADY SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPETENT WORKFORCE IN A BID TO MAKE THE UK A GLOBAL LEADER IN GREEN TECHNOLOGIES, TO HEAR HIS THOUGHTS ON THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S SKILLS TODAY.

During the Spring Budget 2021, Rishi Sunak announced that the government will provide £27m for the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone, helping to support North East Scotland play a "leading role" in meeting the nation's net-zero ambitions. In addition, the UK government said it would provide £4.8million of funding to support the development of a hydrogen hub in Holyhead, Wales, which will pilot the creation of hydrogen from renewable energy that will be used as a zero-emission fuel in HGVs.

A competent and skilled workforce is vital

With regard to the implications for future skill requirements Huw explains: "The characteristics of hydrogen are well understood and already covered within existing international standards in relation to explosive atmospheres. However, hydrogen does behave differently when compared to other conventional gas fuels because of its molecular size and weight, which means that it is more prone to leakage and will rise and disperse quickly in open environments. So, whilst existing knowledge and skills are directly applicable, it is still important to ensure that there is a flexible, multi-skilled and competent workforce ready to facilitate the transition to an increasingly decarbonised energy system.

"The UK has all of the ingredients to become a leading producer and exporter of hydrogen," Huw continues. "However, if we are to fulfil the ambitions set out in OGUK's (the leading representative body for the UK offshore oil and gas industry) roadmap to 2035, then it is vital we have a competent and skilled workforce. Our relationship with industry is critical to ensure that we can continue to provide a certification scheme that reflects future occupational requirements. Changing technology will shape the skills needed but also how we train and assess people.

"We're already consulting with key stakeholders within industry as to what a competent skilled workforce will look like for the future. Competency is more than knowing your subject, it's about your ability to apply and synthesise it in different contexts. We are committed to help equip workers with the right skills and capabilities, as well as work closely with the UK government and the devolved administrations to build a sustainable recovery and support a net-zero future.

"This isn't about reinventing the wheel, either. Since its inception over 25 years ago, CompEx has evolved, and is ready to support the emerging hydrogen sector. We already provide competency validation across a range of sectors including food manufacturing, pharmaceutical and of course petrochemical. It is critical that we continue to update the scheme, for example we are developing a Maritime Fuels module in response to a major cruise line which is moving from heavy fuel oil to liquid natural gas-powered vessels. By recognising the unique challenges that these different industrial applications require of competent individuals operating in a variety of hazardous areas, CompEx is well-placed to support on developing a competent workforce for a diverse range of sectors, including the transition to green energy."

HUW BEMENT joined certification body, CompEx as executive director in January 2021 and has already started looking at ways to guide the scheme through the next phase of its journey. CompEx has an incredible legacy spanning nearly 30 years, so Huw is working to ensure that the needs of all its stakeholders are met for many more years to come. Huw aims to leverage CompEx's technical expertise to increase the scheme's reach and support improvements to standards and safety.

In celebration of Prince Petroleum

PRINCE PETROLEUM WAS RECENTLY APPROVED FOR TWO PRESTIGIOUS ACCREDITATIONS FOLLOWING A PROJECT THAT BEGAN IN LATE 2020. AS A RESULT, THE LEICESTERSHIRE-BASED INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTOR WAS SUCCESSFULLY RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE IN ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS AS WELL AS AWARDED THE FLEET OPERATORS REGISTRATION SCHEME ACCREDITATION. FOLLOWING OUR RECENT REPORT OF THIS SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME WE SPOKE WITH MANAGING DIRECTOR, **DAVID PRINCE**, TO FIND OUT A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THIS FAMILY-OWNED DISTRIBUTOR.

David talked us through the story of the business from its beginning

Prince Petroleum was started by my late father, Victor Prince, in 1963. At this time, they were known as "Hawkers" for Esso blue paraffin and I recall, as a child, going out on paraffin delivery rounds with my father in what was, already, an old ex-MOD fuel Tanker.

In the mid to late sixties the business was appointed an authorised distributor for the then continental oil company (CONOCO) and, by this time, the business had expanded into road fuels, home heating oil and agricultural fuels.

From the early days a steady flow of business gradually moved onwards and upwards to the present day with the company now dealing in domestic, commercial, agricultural and road fuels throughout local regions of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Prince Petroleum remains very much family-owned, led by David and Rita Prince, and, with business continuing to grow, David was recently joined in the company by his two sons.

What have been the main company milestones of growth and change along the way?

In 1965 we were appointed an authorised distributor for the continental oil company and 20 years later, in 1984, we were appointed an authorised distributor for Total. The mid-eighties saw us change our name from the original, Hamblins Petroleum Products, to Prince Petroleum and, in 1989, we acquired a second, larger depot and distribution centre.

A Prince truck pre-Valero branding

Prince Founder – My late father in his original (restored) 1952 MG

Another significant change came when 2017 saw us move from our original Leicester base building to new, purpose-built offices at our current Broughton Lodge Oil depot.

In March 2019 we signed a branded distributor agreement with Valero Energy and late 2020 saw us embark on the accreditation project which led to the successful completion and award of both ISO 9001, for excellence in administration systems, and FORS Bronze (Fleet Operators Register Scheme)

What do you enjoy most about operating in fuel distribution?

I continue to enjoy the challenge of maintaining and adding new customers in what is, today, a very dynamic pricing environment. We do, however, believe that local service and knowing your customers needs counts. We have a genuine commitment to offering a first-class customer service and, with our decades of experience, we have a real understanding of the fuel supply industry. For Prince Petroleum, our customers' needs are at the heart of everything we do.

Latest range of trucks post Valero Branded deal carrying the Texaco Star livery

How does business divide between domestic, commercial and agricultural and has that changed over time?

The company is represented in all three market sectors and, while the domestic sector remains fairly static, transport and agricultural fuel sectors continue to grow.

In the light of the drive to reduce fossil fuel use do you still have faith in the future of the fuel distribution industry?

I think the simple answer is yes, as we transition into new future liquid fuel solutions.

Are you optimistic about the industry desire to persuade Government that a liquid biofuel should be part of the future for home heating?

I do think that new low-carbon liquid fuels will play a role in our move to a lower carbon environment.

Looking ahead what is the vision for the company?

The future of the business is to embrace the developing role of new low carbon liquid fuel solutions for our customers.

DreamTec

Take Control

DreamTec Systems develops solutions that truly transform how companies operate, enabling businesses to grow quickly and without constraint.

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The next generation of fuel distributors

TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF THE FUEL OIL INDUSTRY, WE NEED TO CONTEMPLATE ITS PAST. FROM A 'DIRTY OIL' IMAGE TO ONE DISPLAYING ADAPTATION, GROWTH AND EVOLUTION, THE CHANGING FACE OF THE FUEL INDUSTRY IS ONE THAT'S BEEN WITNESSED WITHIN OUR OWN PAGES MORE SO NOW THAN EVER BEFORE. STEERING A BUSINESS TOWARDS GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING INDUSTRY IS NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED, AND HERE WE SPEAK WITH DISTRIBUTORS CURRENTLY AT THE HELM TO SEE HOW THEY ARE SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE OF THEIR BUSINESSES WITH SUCCESSION PLANNING, AS WELL AS CONSIDERING THE CHALLENGES THIS BRINGS.

Playing a key role in the hiring process at Harlow-based New Era Fuels, we hear from HR manager, Vicky Finch, who tells us about her entrance into the company: "I entered the business having eight years' experience working within human resources and recruitment. I met with the finance director who presented me with New Era Fuels core values, which attracted me to the position. New Era Fuels was undergoing a growth phase and required a full-time human resources manager. I felt very excited to be part of the New Era Fuels family; I was especially attracted to the company culture, core values and the growth plans for the future."

Telling us more about the company's growth plans for the future and how the first port of call is looking within the company, Vicky comments: "As a business, we understand succession planning can be to identify business-critical roles for which potential successors are needed. New Era Fuels is always looking out for our 'shining stars' within the business."

New Era Fuels is not against bringing new talent into the business however, as Vicky explains: "We are pro-apprentices! We recruit for apprenticeships across the business and have the view that employing apprentices is a fantastic way to upskill, train and develop employees.

"Our apprentices make contributions to the workforce whilst they are learning – gaining skills on the job. We typically appoint a 'mentor' who will be the line manager of the apprentice. The mentor will help our apprentices to develop their approach to work, including building rapport, teamwork, integrity and remaining positive and professional. They will also teach the apprentices about company procedures, culture and the ways of working.

"Hiring an apprentice is a cost-effective way of recruiting and training our employees too."

A family affair

One of the most charming aspects of the industry is the number of businesses still owned and operated by families. With the next generation taking the reins from their parents, it seems that many in the sector have ready-made succession plans. David Prince, owner of Melton Mowbray-based Prince Petroleum tells us more about his own family's history with fuel distribution:

"Prince Petroleum was started by my late father Victor Prince in 1963, at this time they were known as "Hawkers" for Esso blue paraffin, I recall as a child going out on paraffin delivery rounds with my father in, what was already an old, ex MOD fuel Tanker.

"By the mid to late sixties the business was appointed an authorised distributor for the then continental oil company (CONOCO) at this time the business had expanded into road fuels, home heating oil and agricultural fuels.

"Today Prince Petroleum is owned by David and Rita Prince. The business continues to grow and recently my two sons have joined the business."

We also spoke with Tom Davies of Hampshire-based Rawlings Fuels about the issue of succession for an independent distributor but, with three generations of the Rawlings family still active in the company, Tom sees no reason why the business shouldn't continue operating independently for many years to come.

Terry Rawlings was the owner of Rawlings Fuels when Tom got

involved, as he explains: "I was originally a planner at Cemex in the construction industry and then came into oil distribution to work for Terry." Terry is still involved with the business but has passed it down to his son, Paul Rawlings. It is still very much a family business with Terry's daughter and grandson also working for the company.

Sam, Terry's grandson is currently the O-license holder for Rawlings Fuels and so the company is safe in the hands of three generations of the family with everyone focussed on the company vision of looking after its customers in the very close-knit communities Rawlings Fuels delivers to.

Finding the right person

For some, having a succession plan is only half of the challenge.

Having gone straight from school into Ultramar Golden Eagle and the family-owned fuel distribution business, Mark Nolan is someone who clearly sees the challenge that succession planning presents to the independent distributor: "My grandfather was the first distributor in the family supplying coal and wood to the local community. Then my dad came on board and set up selling petrol for Regent from fuel pumps at the front of the farm and then onto selling blue paraffin bought from Vine Fuels who then wanted a distributor for kerosene between Bicester and Aylesbury.

"This was how fuel oil distribution first became the family business and my mother and father set up Markim Fuels as a distributor for Ultramar which I became a director of and then Q8 bought out Ultramar so I set up independently as Nolan Oils in 1988. In truth I believe I now work twice as hard for a 3rd the profit my parents enjoyed, so they used to tell me!

"I'd love to expand but it's a challenge to find the right person to run a third depot with the industry not as attractive to come into as it once was. I can understand why others I know have sold up. Some have no-one to hand it down to, others see buying groups constantly eroding the profit margins and many youngsters perceive it as a smelly and dirty industry which reduces new talent coming into it."

"It's a shame because I still love the business as do my staff. I look after them and they look after the customers and, at the end of the day, that brings a lot of satisfaction."

Do you have a succession plan for your company? Have you thought about selling, or buying in the future? We will be looking into this more in our August issue, and would love to hear from you.

Please contact: stephanie@fueloilnews.co.uk.

Transportable lighting in the fuel industry

KEN EDDLESTON, SENIOR LIGHTING SPECIALIST AT CHALMIT, THE MARKET-LEADING MANUFACTURER OF LIGHTING FOR INDUSTRIAL AND HARSH AND HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTS, EXPLAINS TO STEPHANIE SAMUEL, CONTENT EDITOR FUEL OIL NEWS, WHY HE BELIEVES THAT THE FUEL INDUSTRY CANNOT AFFORD TO OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTABLE LIGHTING.

Workplace safety

For decision-makers in the fuel industry, workplace safety must always be the top priority. Settings, such as storage facilities, distribution points and depots, can be extremely hazardous and warrant appropriate respect.

The industry already pays plenty of attention to many areas of health and safety on site, with access, hygiene and cleanliness all in the spotlight. It is clear that firms appreciate the importance of providing safe passage for workers and vehicles, keeping facilities hygienic and cleaning up fuel spillages. However, not everyone is aware of the impact that a lighting strategy can have on health and safety.

One such consideration is transportable lighting which can be unplugged and moved around and has a critical role to play.

In a hazardous environment, such as a slippery fuel tank, it is imperative that workers have good sight of their surroundings. Given that it's not possible to incorporate fixed ceiling lighting in a fuel tank, or indeed in many other settings in the fuel industry, transportable lighting comes to the fore, allowing jobs to be carried out without workers having to operate in dimly lit conditions.

It is absolutely essential that high precision tasks in the fuel industry, such as quality checks and reading gauge measurements, are not done in dim light, as getting them wrong could compromise the health and safety of an entire site and workforce.

It is, of course, imperative that transportable lighting must be suited to the environment it's intended for. In the fuel industry, this might mean deciding upon lighting that can operate in a flammable or explosive environment.

When working in potentially explosive atmospheres, LED lighting is the sensible choice given that they remain cool and operate spark free. This ensures that combustible fuel won't be ignited, protecting the people and equipment that surround it.

Quality of light

In addition to the health and safety benefits provided by transportable lighting, it is worth noting that it is adept at supplying concentrated, targeted lighting, thus enabling tasks to be carried out with precision. As an example, Chalmit's Luna LED directs an output up to 5,600 lumens, and it is this kind of highly directional, uniform lighting, that provides workers with the necessary conditions to navigate hazardous settings and operate effectively.

Sustainability

Transportable lighting can also be implemented to boost an organisation's sustainability credentials. When using it to carry out one specific task it means that other lighting in a facility does not need to be turned on. This means that senior decision-makers can be much more deliberate with their lighting, without compromising on quality, and use less electricity in the process. This also limits the amount of unwanted light pollution being generated.

With lots of eyes on the fuel industry, having a poor sustainability record can harm a business' reputation and its ability to win new contracts. With commercial buyers and consumers increasingly making their final purchasing decisions based on an organisation's sustainability record, transportable lighting has a significant role to play.

Benefits to the bottom line

It might sound obvious, but organisations that incorporate transportable lighting into their business will use less electricity. This means that they will also see a noteworthy reduction in their bills.

In addition, transportable lighting boasts an impressive lifespan, with some products performing for over 10 years. Given that lighting carries ongoing costs with it, in terms of repairs, maintenance and replacements, using a high performing, long-lasting product makes good business sense. So, by implementing the right lighting strategy that invests in transportable lighting, a business can significantly boost its bottom line.

The value of a good lighting strategy

The fuel industry can present some of the most testing and dangerous working conditions to operate in. Developing a good lighting strategy that incorporates transportable lighting, will enable the industry to boost its health and safety credentials and afford workers the opportunity to carry out jobs with precision and accuracy, all while taking a sustainable approach that comes with significant cost savings.

Multiple appointments for rapidly expanding Attis Credit Solutions

Richard Webster

Attis Credit Solutions is a new name to the sector but is made up of a team of specialist credit insurance brokers whose experience spans over 70 years. Recently founded by Paul Martin and Steve Hamstead, you can read more about Attis in our 'In Conversation' on pages 16 & 17.

Focused and experienced in facilitating credit risk solutions, Attis has recently announced a number of additions to the team.

Richard Webster, former CEO of Euler Hermes UK and global trade credit lead at AIG is joining the board as a non-executive director. Richard will be working in an advisory role, utilising his experience in the credit insurance market to support the growth and development of the business.

In addition, Peter Bell will be joining the company's credit solutions team from its Leeds office as client director. Peter brings a wealth of experience and technical expertise as well as a proven track record in supporting companies to mitigate credit risk, whilst enabling growth.

With over 30 years' experience in sourcing credit insurance and working capital solutions for clients, 28 years of which were at Reynolds & Acumen, Martin Davey who was also one of the original shareholders in Reynolds, will also join the Attis Credit Solutions family as a client director in June 2021.

Having worked closely with the company's joint managing directors, Paul Martin, for over 28 years, and Steve Hamstead, for over 15 years, Paul commented: "We look forward to welcoming Martin back into the family."

attis
CREDIT SOLUTIONS

Appointments, promotions and retirements

Sunil Puri

Mark Pennifold

Essar Oil UK has further strengthened its executive leadership team with the appointment of **Sunil Puri** as the company's general counsel with responsibility for legal, governance and company secretarial. The company also announced the appointment of **Mark Pennifold** as chief people officer.

The International Spill Accreditation Scheme (ISAS) has appointed **Neil Marson** as ISAS scheme manager and executive director. Neil brings more than 30 years' experience working within the oil spill response and emergency crisis management industry at national and international levels.

World Fuel Services has made a series of promotions and appointments to strengthen the UK Land board, after the retirement of Bob Taylor. **Shaun Galvin** has been promoted to commercial director, UK Land, after previously holding the position of general manager, East. **Richard Leaman**, previously general manager, West has been promoted to domestic and customer services director.

Colin Francis has been appointed as operations director UK Land at **World Fuel Services**, assuming responsibility in May from Will Langham who has been holding the interim position. **Rob Wilby** has also joined the UK Land team, as head of wholesale, bringing with him a wealth of commercial experience gained in the fuel and lubricant markets whilst working for BP, Castrol and Gulf.

Peter Bell

Martin Davey

Attis Credit Solutions has appointed **Richard Webster**, former CEO of Euler Hermes UK and global trade credit lead at AIG, as a non-executive director. The company also announced **Peter Bell** and **Martin Davey**, who both join the Attis Credit Solutions family as client directors.

Previously a retail area manager at Harvest Energy, **Tracey Taylor** has been appointed finance and office manager at **BD Fuels**.

Michael Simmonds has been appointed as business development manager at **Halso Fuels / EL Oils**. Michael previously worked in the role of sales manager at Matric Services.

Adrian Bannister

Optilan, the leading security and communications company for the energy, infrastructure, pipeline, and rail sectors has appointed **Adrian Bannister** to its executive management team as chief financial officer.

George Kennedy has moved away from Cobo Tankers and Services to take on the role of product engineer at **Renault Trucks**.

Vic Brodrick

UM Terminals has appointed **Vic Brodrick** as commercial director.

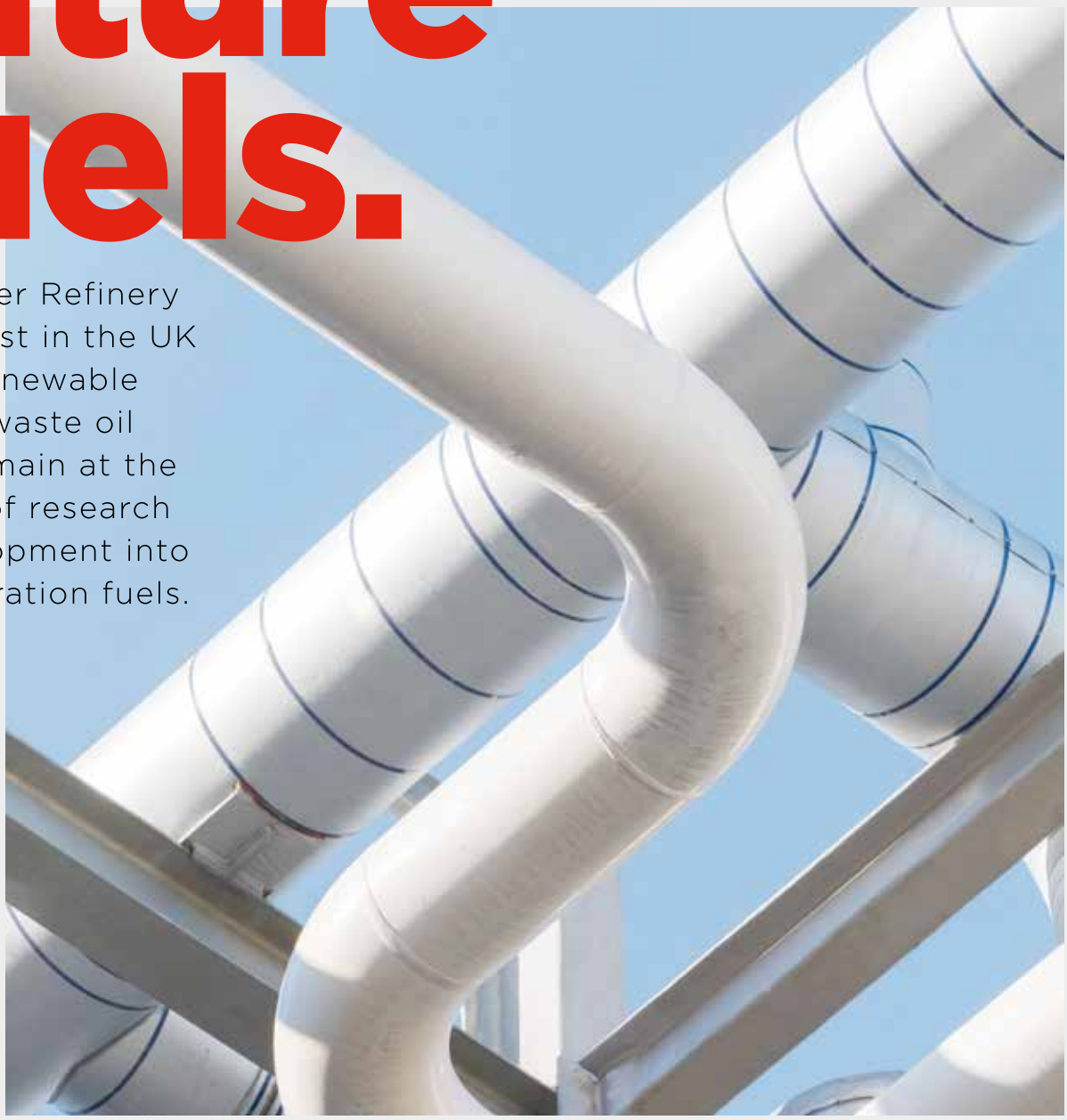
Fleetsolve has welcomed **Daniel Dodge FD Eng MIET**, a highly qualified field service engineer with 20+ years' experience of successfully operating and delivering within complex power generation environments. He joins the UK wide operations team under the leadership of Mark Lamont and David Jones.

Tim Doggett

Tim Doggett was appointed as the new chief executive of the **Chemical Business Association** following the retirement of the previous CEO, Peter Newport. With a thirty-year career in logistics and distribution, Tim was latterly managing director of Clugston Distribution Services Limited.

Pioneering future fuels.

Our Humber Refinery was the first in the UK to make renewable fuel from waste oil and we remain at the forefront of research and development into next-generation fuels.



PHILLIPS 66

PROVIDING ENERGY.
IMPROVING LIVES.

DIVERSIFICATION CORNER

50 years of innovation and diversification

The May issue of Fuel Oil News looked in depth at the past 50 years of Oil Tank Supplies Ltd (OTS) as the company celebrated its 50th anniversary in the Spring. Here, we look at the various ways the company diversified, not only in bespoke fuel tank manufacturing, but also in the ways the company is improving its services to the customer.

Building a sustainable business

Established in 1971, OTS co-founder Bruce Woodal tells us how the company started manufacturing oil storage tanks in a cowshed in Churchdown near Cheltenham before moving into a factory and producing around 200 tanks a month. Just two years later, the price of kerosene more than doubled in 1973, decreasing orders to less than 50 tanks a month.

"It taught us that we had to diversify to build a sustainable business", said Bruce. The company then started dealing in second-hand tanks which were refurbished and resold mainly to the commercial sector, including farmers many of whom were friends from agricultural days.

"In 1982, OTS diversified into supplying tanks to filling stations and then to refurbishing filling stations ourselves, employing our own skilled tradesmen. This was followed by us purchasing old filling station sites to refurbish ourselves as 'hospital jobs' between contracts. The same year, the company purchased Happy Lands' Quarry near Chipping Campden, an 11-acre site, and got planning permission to use the site as our new premises for tanks and services."

Over the decades, OTS has constantly evolved in response to industry needs and new technologies. This has led the company to developing a number of unique patented products such as the OTS MultiServ™ which is effectively a pop-up commercial filling station. Now, OTS is the leader in the fuel storage and installation industry with a large fleet of fully compliant storage tanks up to 100,000 litres for hire, a highly skilled technical support team covering the whole of the UK and Ireland. The company also manufactures bunded steel tanks up to 200,000 litres to OFS T/200 which is the highest standard in the UK for bunded steel tanks. Furthermore, OTS specialises in designing and building distribution depots, fuel dispensing systems and management systems for the large food retailers and online distribution businesses.

Evolving further

With the drive to net zero by 2050 and, therefore, the advent of new fuels to reduce tailpipe emissions, the company has developed a fuel quality division to deal with the problems arising from modern biofuels which can cause issues with the latest Euro 6 engines. The subsidiary company, TankCare Ltd, holds the UKIFDA contract for fuel quality testing for their fuel distribution members in the UK and Ireland.

"We've evolved our bespoke fuel tank manufacturing process to build a design for the future. Sustainable fuels have characteristics that require alternative measures which we accommodate in the tanks to reduce the risk of contaminates.

"Throughout this constant evolution, innovation has remained the underlying principle to everything we do," adds Bruce Woodal.

In Conversation with Paul Martin of Attis Insurance

INTRIGUED BY THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW NAME IN THE SECTOR, WE GOT IN TOUCH WITH ATTIS CREDIT SOLUTIONS ONLY TO DISCOVER SOME VERY FAMILIAR FACES BEHIND THIS NEW CREDIT INSURANCE BROKER. HAVING FEATURED ONE OF THE FOUNDERS, **PAUL MARTIN**, IN OUR 'IN PROFILE' FEATURE BACK IN JANUARY, MANAGING EDITOR, MARGARET MAJOR, WAS PLEASED TO CATCH UP WITH THIS WELL-KNOWN INDUSTRY FIGURE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW INSURANCE BROKERS.

How did you end up where you are today? Has it always been insurance for you, or did you switch from another industry?
I've always worked in credit insurance since leaving college. My previous company was Reynolds, which I started working at, aged 19, as an office Junior. I liked the business so much that I bought it when I was 30 years old.

What brought you to the point where you decided to branch out on your own, and what are you most enjoying about operating independently?
We sold our last business to a very large multi-national corporate. The lack of control in such an environment became a huge frustration to the point I felt it affected the service delivery to clients and so decided, mid-lockdown with Covid, to get back to being in charge of our own destiny.

Clearly you have a huge amount of personal knowledge and experience, what industries will you be looking to cover and what is unique about the services you offer?
As always, we deal in all b2b trade sectors, but our business model is based on trade sector specialism. My personal specialism is obviously the fuel sector and I have been responsible for this for over 25 years including the oil majors, traders, distributors, bunker networks, marine bunkering and fuel card agents. After 25 years I'm still learning, but all I have learnt goes into tailoring the credit insurance programmes to each element of the specific business needs and the sector quirks.

Why choose Attis?
We are recognised specialists in the fuel sector. The team have personally been involved in crafting pioneering credit insurance products specific for the sector and continue to do so. For over 20 years we have operated a fuel credit circle and we continue to operate this at Attis where members meet regularly to discuss best practice and share legally appropriate information on defaulting debtors to prevent members picking up other fuel suppliers' delinquent accounts. We've also recently welcomed Martin Davey into the business and between just Martin and myself we have over 60 years' experience in this sector (we both started very young of course…).

How many are working with you at Attis, and do you see an opportunity for rapid expansion?
Including IT, compliance, finance and brokers we are at 10 people, but we have ambitious plans to grow this number. An associate company of ours that started a couple of months earlier has more than 30 people already.

What can you tell us about the company culture, values and vision?
We have a work hard, play hard attitude and our focus is on adding value to our clients, something which we are extremely passionate about. We offer service with integrity to all our clients and markets regardless of their size.

You launched around 2 months ago – what has been the industry reaction so far?
Amazing, and really encouraging, especially given the pedigree of the people we have. The underwriters we deal with love working with independents as they know we can be quick on our feet and incredibly ambitious to grow. With clients, we are tried, tested and trusted and they know we will work hard for them regardless of size.

What is a typical day for you now and what makes it a good day?
There is no typical day to be fair, as joint MD in a new company my role is varied and includes recruitment, IT, compliance, marketing, finance, legal, product development and client work. As the business grows, other than the overall strategy of the business and pointing

it in the right direction, my focus will be with clients as that has always been my strength. A good day is spent with existing clients and winning new clients.

Presumably you will be looking for additional people to join you at Attis. What are the most important skills to have in this sector and how easy is it to find the right people to work with?
This is very much a people business. In interviewing any likely candidate my first thought is always 'would I spend an hour in the pub with this person and enjoy it?'. You get through that, then it is down to technical knowledge, work ethic and ability to work in a team/family environment. No spoilt apples for us.

What are the 3 most fundamental challenges you see looking ahead?
The most obvious one is the likely fallout from Covid and the impact that will have on the economy in general.

The recruitment of our type of 'like-minded people' will also prove to be a challenge as we grow, as those people tend to be few and far between and, as I mentioned, we won't compromise.

I also foresee a challenge in maintaining the right balance between embracing technology to maximise our client offering whilst ensuring that we don't lose the important personal touch.

If you can project a year ahead from this time what would a successful first year look like and what would make you feel happy with it?
We will have exceeded budget, had fun, and grown the family, it's really that simple.

Are you still confident in the future of the fuel distribution sector?
Yes, for some time to come yet. Plus, a lot of the distributors are diversifying their business into other connected areas such as lubricants, telematics, renewables, EV charging etc which is a smart longer-term strategy.

What are the biggest challenges for you in serving the oil sector and what makes Attis a good solution for this industry?
The biggest challenge can be more related to the underwriters and their appetite for risk but this is largely controllable and we have access to a multitude of insurers to source the cover required by clients. With our experience in this sector – mine alone goes back 25 years in oil – we are extremely familiar with quirks of the sector and the T&Cs of the insurers. It's only through this experience that we can ensure the cover is appropriate and fit for purpose. Without this sector experience companies could be exposed to uninsured risk that could otherwise have been covered. Further, as an expert in this sector we are currently crafting Attis exclusives in terms of new products for the sector which we are really excited about.

With the challenges presented by covid how have you managed to maintain those important industry interactions?
For me, the biggest benefit business has gained from Covid is that it has forced companies 10 years ahead in their IT connectivity. To be fair though, some days I wish I could still be old school and just use the phone rather than a video call. That said, at Attis we are keen for that personal interaction with our clients and underwriters and will continue to work that way as much as is possible within any restrictions.

How do new customers find out about you?
90% of the time it is word of mouth as our reputation in this sector is undoubted.

Also, having been in the sector over 25 years, and given that I'll attend the opening of an envelope if it gives me an opportunity to mix with clients and prospects, it can be through a simple chance discussion.

Are there new areas you will be looking to cover in the future?
Absolutely, and we're in discussion currently with a few exclusives on that front for Attis clients. Some really exciting stuff to come.

And Fuel Oil News looks forward to bringing updates as this exciting new company grows further.

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Is it time to change the oil?

MAURICE MACSWEENEY, DIRECTOR OF LITIGATION FUNDING AT HARBOUR, EXPLAINS HOW CLIMATE LITIGATION IS SEEKING TO CHANGE CORPORATE BEHAVIOUR.

In the summer of 2015, the Dutch government found itself a reluctant defendant in a case which would determine whether ordinary citizens could bring about tougher climate policies through action in the courts. After a six-year legal battle fought by the non-profit Urgenda Foundation and 900 Dutch citizens, the District Court of The Hague found the government has a legal duty to prevent the occurrence of dangerous climate change. The government appealed twice, failing both times, and eventually in December 2019 the original decision was upheld by the Dutch Supreme Court. As a result, the government must now take urgent action to cut carbon emissions in order to comply with its obligations to protect the human rights of Dutch citizens.

A watershed

The case was a true watershed moment, opening a floodgate of litigation designed to bring about an improved environment. As of July 2020 there were at least 1,500 climate change cases filed in 38 countries (double the numbers reported in 2017), and the UN high commissioner for Human Rights has said the Urgenda case "confirms that the Government of The Netherlands, and by implication, other governments, have binding legal obligations, based on international human rights law, to undertake strong reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases". Indeed, cases have already been brought against all European governments (and other governments around the world) where claimants are seeking declarations that they must improve their climate change efforts, and as recently as 4 March 2021 the EU's highest court ruled that the UK had, for years, breached air pollution limits, and ordered it to comply with these limits or risk a fine. This litigation trend is very much here to stay.

But it's not just governments who are the defendants in this new wave of litigation; oil and gas companies are also in the sights of lawyers, and claimants know the best way to change corporate behaviour is to strike the pocket. This may be through substantial commercial claims for damages but. just as strategic, is litigation which generates publicity, and seeks to persuade investors to drive change in listed companies, as well as litigation which forces companies to change their business models more quickly than planned, which will inevitably incur very significant costs.

Urgenda's lawyer has returned to The Hague in pursuit of multinational Royal Dutch Shell, demanding that they be ordered to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 45% (compared with 2019 levels) before 2030. Shell already has its own goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 but losing a case of this magnitude could still have a transformative financial impact on them. Other cases are already underway against other global oil majors.

The stakes are high

The Corporate Duty of Vigilance law recently enacted in France is being used by NGOs and local authorities to force Total to set out how they are preventing (amongst other things) environmental damage (and the company has renamed itself TotalEnergies to underline a shift away from oil products). The US State of Connecticut seeks to make ExxonMobil pay for the cost of mitigating damage caused by climate change, and Oakland and San Francisco city officials brought similar litigation against Chevron, BP, Shell, and others, citing the costs they will face to upgrade sea walls to protect against future higher tides.

The stakes are high, and the familiar tactic of defendant corporates outspending claimants will no longer be as effective. The significant growth of the litigation funding industry means claimants can now call on large amounts of capital to help them pursue their case. Funders will only support meritorious cases, as to do otherwise would pose too high a risk to their investment [and encourage frivolous cases]. It should be noted that some funders also provide solutions for defendants, offering insurance products to help them recoup some of the costs of successfully defending cases. But with the trend of climate litigation only set to increase, and with greater involvement of external capital, settlement may become a much more attractive option. A litigation strategy of "fight all the way to trial" may not just be costly in terms of damages awards, but for those cases seeking to change corporate behaviour in other ways, it may also prove very costly in the court of public opinion.

It cost over $200bn for tobacco manufacturers to settle claims from US states. For many, carbon emissions are an even greater health threat, meaning climate litigation is undoubtedly here to stay. The question is, how large a bill will the oil and gas industries face?

MAURICE MACSWEENEY is a director of litigation funding at Harbour, the largest privately owned, dedicated litigation and arbitration funder in the world and has extensive experience of developing creative and mutually beneficial pricing arrangements for litigation funding solutions.

PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

JUNE IN VIEW

WITH PRODUCTION LIMPING AND DEMAND GALLOPING, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR OIL PRICES?

Long summer evenings, shorts and sandals, pub gardens doing a roaring trade (hopefully) and holiday makers waiting to see which of this year's holidays will be cancelled (hopefully not!). It's the half-way point of the year, so let's look back at the last 6 months and see how the markets have fared.

Back in January, Portland predicted a strong rebound in oil prices after the lows of 2020, although this was arguably not such a bold prediction considering just how far prices had fallen. Surely some form of recovery was inevitable? That being said, there was still enough demand uncertainty floating about at the time to keep many market observers on the bearish side, or at least maintaining a "flat price" point of view which predicted little movement either way. As it was, prices did rebound strongly, with crude rising from $50 per barrel in January to $64 by the end of the first quarter. As we write this report, the June Brent price has tipped up further and now sits above $70 per barrel.

"THE POST-2020 SHALE INDUSTRY LOOKS OUT FOR THE COUNT."

The obvious reason for this is increasing demand, with the western world coming out of lockdown and China…well…doing what China does, which is buy more and more oil whenever it can. However, the less obvious reason for the price rise – or at least the less documented reason – concerns oil supply and its failure to keep up with demand. In 2020, oil prices dropped so calamitously that multiple oil wells were simply "shut-in" (closed down) and numerous planned exploration projects have since been canned entirely. Contrary to the popular imagery of oil taps that can be quickly turned on and off, the reality of oil production is that once you stop the flow of oil, there is no effective way of quickly getting it back on stream. A shut-down well is either a permanent state of affairs or will take several years to get back to full production.

Oil producers and investors will of course be enjoying today's higher prices, but the likelihood is that few of them will see the current levels as anything other than a route to recoup some of 2020's losses. Even fewer will see this year's recovery as a clear enough signal to reinvest in oil production. And whereas in the past, the industry has relied on the more agile shale wells to increase volumes and fill demand gaps, the post-2020 shale industry looks out for the count (no miracle Tyson Fury style recoveries here!). Shale debts are too big and operators increasingly find themselves in the legislative cross-hairs of the new Biden Administration. The final part of today's supply jigsaw concerns future exploration and how and when these projects will be funded. Investors have been so scarred by the downward cycles of the recent past, that any large-scale oil projects will need to offer very significant returns (and quickly) if they want to get market backing. This in turn is further pushing oil companies from the conventional oil exploration model, as green energy projects have (for the moment) patient investors, who are happy to take more modest returns in the short-term.

With production limping and demand galloping, the more excitable in the analyst community are making ever more bullish predictions, forecasting that prices will soon be in excess of $85 per barrel. Some are even talking up a "super-cycle" of over-heating prices above the $100 mark. The latter certainly seems over the top, in so far that demand recovery is steady (rather than spectacular) and, of course, further global lockdowns cannot be ruled out. But with the fundamentals of the oil market (supply vs demand) being so out of kilter, an increasingly strong oil price does look an odds-on bet.

One clear "wild-card" in the supply pack does remain though and that is Iran. Joe Biden is beginning to make favourable noises towards this "rogue" state and is keen to bring it back into the 2015 UN-EU sponsored nuclear deal.

"AN INCREASINGLY STRONG OIL PRICE DOES LOOK AN ODDS-ON BET."

Should that happen, sanctions on Iranian oil exports could well be lifted by the final quarter of the year, thus allowing significantly more oil to access global markets. As OPEC's second biggest producer (after Saudi), Iran is certainly very keen to make up for the lost time of the Trump years. Also, unlike fellow OPEC members under production quotas (who thus cannot increase volumes), Iran can increase production with abandon - before it gets even close to hitting its own designated quota levels.

Extra Iranian volume would of course suppress prices, not to mention upsetting fellow OPEC member states who are only just beginning to see the light after last year's bloodbath and also cannot bear the thought of allowing Iran to take market share. This. in turn. might well lead to changes in overall OPEC production levels, but, along with sanctions being removed, any changes on these lines will not happen until the back-end of the year. Which means, for the here and now, you can expect oil prices to provide extra heat this summer!

For more pricing information, see page 30

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Products and services in review

CONTINUING FROM OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE, WE CONTINUE TO SHOWCASE THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY SUPPLIERS TO THE SECTOR TO DELIVER RESULTS FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN THE STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUEL. WE, AT FUEL OIL NEWS, LOOK FORWARD TO SPEAKING WITH YOU AT THE VIRTUAL UKIFDA EXPO 2020 7TH / 8TH JULY.

Software

DreamTec Systems

Dreamtec offers specialist expertise in operations systems and support, helping operations managers to perform their key business function proficiently. In our role of wayfinder, we resolve the key conflict you face, in your role of traffic controller, to manage the operational flow in your business without losing vital speed or data along the way.

Cutting edge technologies are all built around improving business by growing revenues and profits. From real-time stock distribution and monitoring, improved customer service and more, products are designed to help boost performance throughout your business with systems that allow clients to know where product is at all times, improve customer service and paper trails, and get insight into new business opportunities.

We also support staff retention and rewards and help companies improve their margins.

dreamtecsystems.com

EA Projects

EA Projects has had great success this year with the launch of a new anti-theft module for the iMonitor tank gauging system. This new product has been developed in response to the spate of recent fuel thefts across the UK. The system triggers an alarm in the event that there is an out-of-hours drop in product levels due to leakage or theft. This alarm can be read via e-mail or text message and the system can be configured to send a signal directly to a cctv system or can trigger an audible and visual alarm. Several large fuel oil suppliers have now adopted the system across their depot networks and it has been instrumental in stopping a number of attempted thefts.

EA-projects.com

Supply

Greenergy

As the UK's only national supplier, Greenergy operates strategic infrastructure in key demand locations, and has 25 supply locations across the country, including owned-stock managed terminals on the Thames, Teesside, Clydebank, Cardiff and Plymouth. An established supplier and distributor of transportation fuels, marketing also in Ireland, Canada and Brazil, Greenergy offers its customers unmatched supply resilience with a responsive, around-the-clock customer service team and in-house haulage operation.

For almost 30 years, Greenergy has been investing in lower carbon renewables fuels, and is Europe's largest manufacturer of waste-based biodiesel. As the transport sector looks to decarbonisation, the blending of biofuels into petrol and diesel remains the most cost-effective way to reduce emissions today. Responding to customer demand, Greenergy is now offering higher percentage biodiesel blends, such as B20.

Greenergy.com

Mabanaft

A leading independent UK fuel importer and wholesaler, Mabanaft supplies refined petroleum products and bio-fuels to independent distributors, retailers, commercial airlines, supermarkets and commercial and industrial businesses.

Managing director, Martin Cook, said; "Having a network of independently operated terminals located throughout the UK means we are well-positioned to supply fuel to customers wherever and whenever they need it. We're proud to have met our customers' needs throughout the pandemic and continue to hold increased stock to help ensure we can meet the transport sector's changing demands.

"Mabanaft is keen to play its part in helping reduce carbon emissions. In addition to

bio blending, we are now looking to work with strategic partners to complement our current diesel offering to commercial clients. We are also exploring ways to source and supply other advanced fuels, in line with our long-term objective of making our activities as safe and environmentally friendly as possible.

Mabanaft.co.uk

Phillips 66

Phillips 66 Limited owns and operates one of the biggest and most efficient refineries in Europe, the Humber Refinery.

"We continue to invest in our advantaged UK-wide supply network, which meets approximately 15% of the UK's refined fuel needs," says Renee Semiz, managing director, UK Marketing for Phillips 66 Limited.

"We have access to UK supply infrastructure based on a network of major pipelines, rail links and a shipping operation, as well as a range of exchange and purchase agreements. Thanks to our extensive core and regional terminal arrangements, we're able to distribute over 11 billion litres of refined fuel annually across the UK, supplying our customers with what they want, when they want it.

"A three-way collaboration, between our refinery, our commercial team and our marketing division, means we are ideally placed to cost-effectively move quality product inland from our Humber Refinery, supplement this by our commercial division importing product and then market our products competitively within the UK."

phillips66.co.uk

The Prax Group

The Prax Group is a British multinational independent oil refining, trading, storage, distribution and retail conglomerate dealing in crude oil, petroleum products and bio-fuels, headquartered in London. The Group's ability to deliver innovative customer solutions across the world has secured its reputation as a leading presence in the global oil market.

The Group's success over the course of the past two decades has been achieved through its entrepreneurial spirit, dynamic team and lean structure. Forward-thinking in its approach, the Group has gained a well-deserved reputation of excellence, and is committed to maintaining this, with an aim of being best in class in every aspect of its business.

In order to continue to meet this commitment, and to ensure that the supply needs of its customers can be met both now and in the future, in March of this year the Prax Group successfully acquired Lindsey Oil Refinery, located five miles from the Humber Estuary in North Killingholme, along with its associated logistic assets. The acquisition will bring new investment to the refinery and underlines the Prax Group's determination to support the local economy and the wider community.

Prax.com

Valero

VALERO ENERGY remains diligent in seeking to improve our service for our customers to meet their needs. Developing great partnerships is key to our approach. In 2020 we introduced a new delivery service for distributors in Pembrokeshire, the home of our Pembroke refinery. Its introduction meant we increased the number of loads delivered and provided a more efficient service for our customers.

Maintaining regular contact with our customers is crucial so we can understand their needs better and more quickly, helping them adjust to the changing demands of their customers.

In December 2020, Valero completed the roll-out of the DTN TABS terminal automation system at our equity terminals, providing real-time information and notifications to customers, allowing more accurate forecasting and better inventory management. Our close relationships, flexibility and ability to respond reinforces our brand values.

valero.com

Tankers & Depot

Blackmer

Blackmer® Sliding Vane Pumps and other Blackmer technologies have been used to transfer refined fuels safely, reliably and efficiently for more than a century: moving products from storage into the plant or refinery, from process to process within the operation, to storage tanks and onto transport vehicles. Offering a wide breadth of solutions that span the entire refined-fuels market – from the smallest filling operations to the largest most sophisticated loading and unloading applications – Blackmer products deliver peace-of-mind quality assurance, increased product recovery, reduced maintenance costs and increased profitability. Learn more about how Blackmer Sliding Vane Pumps and technology can help your operation by checking out the Blackmer Interactive Refined Fuels Application Map at:
psgdover.com/refined-fuels

Dixon Group Europe Ltd

Innovations in Fuel Distribution

As a leading solutions provider, Dixon is always looking to improve and extend its range to offer new and innovative products to the fuel distribution market.

Already established as a leading manufacturer of petroleum tanker fittings and the FloTech™ Overfill Prevention systems; Dixon now offers a full range of fuel distribution products for use in the downstream market, including fuel terminal, fuel depots and skid units, where safety, ease of use and efficiency are key factors.

Additions to the Dixon range include Bayloc Dry Disconnects, Industrial Fluid Control products, new hardware and the FT700 Rack Monitor.
dixoneurope.co.uk

Econoprint

ECONOPRINT provides a wide range of print, media and marketing services to the fuel distribution industry.

With over 30 years' experience working with fuel distributors around the UK and Ireland, Econoprint has gained extensive knowledge of how a distributor operates and what they require to maintain a successful operation in terms of printed documents and marketing collateral.

The company has maintained consistently high standards and continues to provide a valuable service to its customers, ensuring that they come back time and time again.
econoprintgroup.co.uk

FAST

Here at FAST we watch the emergence – if not proliferation – of HVO with a mixture of amusement and frustration. Make no mistake it is an excellent fuel and has been around both as a concept and a product for close on 20 years, but only now, as a result of corporate box-ticking, political expediency, "me too" and perhaps even blind panic, has it come to the fore. It isn't – and actually won't be – for everyone, as volume remains limited. Data and statistics can be made to say an awful lot by clever (or even not-so-clever) marketers and please remember you can achieve pretty much all your performance, emissions and economy objectives by using good quality diesel stored properly.

MechTronic

OptiMate continues to revolutionise the industry and is leading the way in terms of fuel metering design and efficiency. OptiMate protects against contamination with its unique self-draining manifold, automatic line change procedures and onboard overspill prevention. Drivers are also reporting quicker delivery times, leading to efficiency savings for MechTronic's customers.

OptiMate has been successfully operating for five years. It is the electronic metering system of choice on over 300 tankers, with an additional 350 in build. With its class-

leading turbine meter and simple three-button operating design, it is clear why fuel oil operatives are moving to OptiMate.
mechtronic.ltd.uk

Training

Pen Underwriting / Driver Training

With over 26 years' experience. Pen Underwriting Driver Training offers specialist training services to customers, suppliers and contractors of the general fleet market, including hazardous haulage and tanker distribution.

Pen Underwriting Driver Training are approved by The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and The Joint Approvals Unit on Periodic Training (JAUPT) to run ADR, DCPC and PDP training courses.

Our training team has trained thousands of delegates and organised hundreds of training days both in the UK and abroad.

All services are delivered by our in-house specialists supported by a network of associates who are all experts in their own fields and have practical in-depth experience of the industry.
Penunderwriting.com

Environmental and insurance

Adler & Allan

For businesses that store and transport fuel, keeping tanks in good condition should be a priority. Ian Roberts from ADLER & ALLAN gives his top tips for essential tank maintenance – to extend asset life, prevent pollution and meet legislation.

Fuel is an expensive and potentially dangerous commodity, so it is important that the vessels that keep it contained are in top condition. Tanks must be tested and maintained on a regular basis.

The best approach to any asset maintenance regime is a planned and preventative one. It has been proved time and time again that reactive maintenance costs more in the long run, with expensive repairs and lengthy periods of downtime far more likely.

Thanks to the latest techniques and mobile testing facilities, tank testing and maintenance has become a much quicker and

less intrusive process. Combined with a planned and preventative maintenance regime, tank life can be extended, with minimal or no risk of pollution and stock losses.
Adlerandallan.co.uk

Attis Credit Solutions

Attis Credit Solutions specialises in the design, negotiation and implementation of credit insurance programmes and working capital solutions to the fuel sector. With a team of specialist brokers, whose experience spans over 100 years, we can arrange bad debt protection on anything – from your single largest customer, through top-up to close gaps in cover, to the whole of your customer base. Our policies can include non-cancellable cover to remove any uncertainty of protection. Moreover, our experience and leverage lends itself to policy endorsements/exclusives bespoke to Attis Credit Solutions. Our aim is to add value and service to our clients and underwriters with integrity regardless of size.
Attiscs.com

OAMPS

OAMPS HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES has provided specialist insurance for solutions to the petrochemical industry for more than 35 years.

Our tailored solutions include spillage, contamination and crossover cover, 24-hour emergency spillage response and environmental helplines, crisis response service, loss adjuster service, driver training and many other benefits.

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- Protected over 25,000 tankers, with replacement values of over £3,000,000,000
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- Handled over 100,000 claims
- Paid over £100,000,000 in claims to keep wheels moving and businesses trading

And in over 18,000 spillage claims where our consultants have provided the first response, there has not been a single prosecution under environmental legislation.
Oamps.co.uk

Oilshield

Backed by Aviva, one of the UK's largest insurers, Oilshield provides specialist insurance solutions to those involved in the downstream fuel oil distribution industry. We provide your motor and commercial combined insurance all under one policy.

Every Oilshield policy includes embedded risk management support at no additional cost to your business. Our team would be more than happy to discuss your insurance requirements on a direct basis or with your chosen broker. Oilshield are proud to be sponsoring this year's UKIFDA Green Award – recognising successfully implemented environmental initiatives in the Fuel Oil Distribution sector.
Oilshield.co.uk

oilshield

A closer look at key future skill requirements for the distributor sector

As businesses begin to resume normal practices with the ever-increasing easing of lockdown restrictions in the UK, we examine how skill requirements for the future may differ from those currently expected.

'Front and centre':

A centrepiece of the Government's recovery plan from the Covid-19 pandemic is described as a skills revolution, defined under three R's- renew, reskill and redeploy.

With this backdrop in mind, it seems appropriate to consider the kinds of future skills which will be required in the distributor sector. Many of these will be little different from those needed now.

Three particular considerations are worth highlighting at the outset:

- As businesses they span the full spectrum of normal commercial activities i.e. administration, logistics, marketing and sales and, it goes without saying, management and leadership, so require a broad-based skill-set.
- Directionally this skill-set will, in the future, need to reflect a shift in emphasis from hardware related activities to those associated with software.
- The energy transition will present challenges that necessitate the acquisition of certain new skills and/or a shift in emphasis in the importance of existing ones.

Principal skill categories:

These have been grouped into three areas, as follows:

- Operational / Technical / Administrative
- Commercial / Sales / Marketing
- Soft

Operational / Technical / Administrative:

As a reseller of a range of petroleum products the distributor's business has always had a strong focus on logistics, spanning product receipt, storage and delivery to a sizeable, diverse and geographically dispersed portfolio of customers. Consequently, three critical skill requirements have been:

- HGV driving, for both bridging-in and redelivery of products – with associated interfacing with customers.
- Vehicle maintenance capability – for the transport fleet.
- Depot operation and technical 'know how' for the operation and maintenance of product receipt, storage and redelivery facilities.

An emerging challenge has been identified in relation to HGV drivers where around half are in the 50+ age group, with very few coming through from the younger age groups.

One way or another, there will be a continuing requirement for the skills described above, certainly for the next 5 or so years. Beyond that, petroleum product demand is widely projected to decline and will be, almost entirely, phased out as an energy source for space heating.

The extent to which a low carbon liquid fuel, such as HVO, can and / or will be allowed as a substitute / drop-in alternative remains a major uncertainty as it has yet to achieve any measurable 'traction' as a future option within government policy intentions.

That aside, there is going to be a growing requirement for enhanced ICT literacy, as is the case across a broad spectrum of business activity, as the opportunities and imperatives of digitisation and its widespread applications present themselves in areas such as:

- measuring & monitoring
- IOT- the internet of things
- SaaS- software as a service and the possibilities available from the cloud

Two other skills likely to be important for ensuring continued business success in the future can be identified under the following broad headings:

- Design & creativity – considered to be complementary to the various demands emanating from digitisation and its expanding range of applications.
- Data analytics – the analysis of raw data in order to draw conclusions about the subject information. The associated techniques and processes have been automated into mechanical processes and algorithms that work over raw data for interpretation, helping to optimise business performance.

Commercial / Sales /Marketing:
The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant and sudden challenges to the way(s) by which business enterprises gain and maintain access to their marketplaces, necessitating greatly increased deployment of online channels. This, in turn, has placed a premium on the range of skills required to deliver and maintain an effective online presence- as already mentioned, above.
This is a step change and is expected to play an increasingly key role in ensuring future business success – but will be complemented by the timeless skills, such as:

- Commercial flair / nous / acumen
- Analytical / numeracy
- The capabilities required to be a 'keeper', to ensure the effective management of relationships with existing customers
- The capabilities required to be a 'finder', to drive the generation of new business
- Problem solving and, critically, being able to understand and utilise the seven key steps of its effective application

At a macro level there will be the ongoing challenge presented by the energy transition and the range of capabilities required to plan, prepare for, and position, the business, making the necessary changes to the model to secure future relevance and viability.

Soft:
These are interpersonal or people skills which are somewhat difficult to quantify, as they relate to one's personality and ability to work with others. There is a widely held belief that these will assume increasing importance for delivering business / organisational success in the coming years.
Among other skills, examples include:

- strong communication
- listening
- attention to detail
- critical thinking
- empathy
- conflict resolution abilities

We have already touched upon the challenges of the energy transition and planning / preparation for the various scenarios that this will throw up. Among the range of skills that this will require are two further, but key, soft skills, which are:

- Change management
- Leadership & strategic vision

Beyond that, the range of soft skills deployed will have a critical role in determining the success with which the sector navigates the future business environment. This will be one which will be subject to more disruption than anything experienced in the past 50 or so years, with a lot less certainty around what the future market and competitive landscape will look like.

The foregoing is no crystal ball but merely attempts to describe the range of skills and skill sets that the distributor sector is likely to need to have at its disposal in order to ensure future viability. What will almost certainly be required is increased attention on efforts in, or resources for, initiatives around re-skilling, up-skilling and a greater role for workplace learning and apprenticeship opportunities.

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

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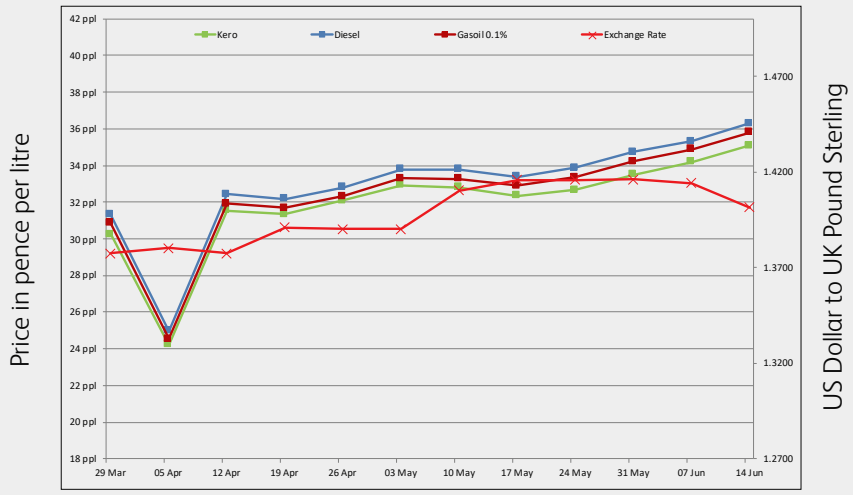
Wholesale Price Movements: 19th May 2021 – 18th June 2021

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	33.61	34.77	34.29
Average daily change	0.28	0.29	0.29
Current duty	0.00	57.95	11.14
Total	33.61	92.72	45.43

All prices in pence per litre



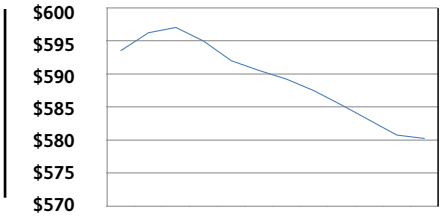
Portland

Kerosene	
Highest price	Biggest up day
35.43 ppl	+0.66 ppl
Fri 18 Jun 21	Mon 24 May 21
Lowest price	Biggest down day
31.84 ppl	-1.23 ppl
Wed 19 May 21	Wed 19 May 21

Diesel	
Highest price	Biggest up day
36.69 ppl	+0.63 ppl
Fri 18 Jun 21	Mon 24 May 21
Lowest price	Biggest down day
32.81 ppl	-1.22 ppl
Wed 19 May 21	Wed 19 May 21

Gasoil 0.1%	
Highest price	Biggest up day
36.11 ppl	+0.62 ppl
Wed 16 Jun 21	Mon 24 May 21
Lowest price	Biggest down day
32.35 ppl	-1.22 ppl
Wed 19 May 21	Wed 19 May 21

Gasoil forward price in US$ per tonne



July 2021 – June 2022

The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	37.05	49.42	97.15	42.24	52.80	100.95
North East	36.00	48.05	96.23	43.16	51.19	99.02
North West	37.57	50.65	98.62	42.57	53.61	101.12
Midlands	36.07	48.58	96.69	40.91	51.67	99.72
South East	36.17	48.54	96.67	46.16	53.93	99.30
South West	36.52	48.38	96.51	42.98	51.46	98.91
Northern Ireland	36.63	49.75	n/a	41.41	53.56	n/a
Republic of Ireland	50.39	55.18	98.09	55.08	58.44	101.20
Portland	34.38	46.10	93.38			

The price totem figures are indicative figures compiled from the Portland base rate using calculated regional variances.
Buying prices are ex-rack. Selling prices are for 1000 litres of kero, 2500 litres of gas oil and 5000 litres of ULSD (Derv in ROI). Prices in ROI are in €.

Wholesale prices are supplied by Portland Analytics Ltd, dedicated providers of fuel price information from refinery to pump.
For more information and access to prices, visit www.portlandpricing.co.uk

WELCOME TO JULY'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS.

FROM FOND MEMORIES OF HIS FATHER TO HIS LOVE OF FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS, WE CHAT WITH **PETER DAVIDSON**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TANK STORAGE ASSOCIATION TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PERSON BEHIND THE TSA AND HIS BEGINNINGS AS AN APPRENTICE.

Peter Davidson and his four-legged friend

"DO WHAT YOU DO BEST AND DO IT WELL."

PETER DAVIDSON

Give your career history in 25 words or fewer.
Apprentice, automation engineer, regulatory specialist, safety manager and, since 2016, executive director of the TSA.

Describe yourself in 3 words
Informal. Honest. Detailed.

What were your childhood / early ambitions?
To follow in my dad's footsteps to be an engineer. He started his career with the RAF as an electronics engineer – I still have many of his old exercise books (his writing was so tiny and neat) and also his slide rule, though I don't have a clue how to use it!

Describe your dream job (if you weren't doing this?)
Working for a dog rescue charity – I have a real passion for animals of all kinds, but especially dogs – I cannot remember a time when I didn't have dogs in my life. To give something back to these amazing, loyal and talented creatures would be perfect, though I would probably want to take all the strays home!

What's the best business advice you've ever received?
Everyone within a business is important and should be treated with the same courtesy. Everyone has a view and important points to make, and we should never be dismissive.

Share your top tips for business success
Attention to detail but try not to overcomplicate what does not need to be complicated. We have an amazing capacity to make things more difficult than they need to be. Not everyone is an expert – and that should be borne in mind when communicating. Also, be polite and respond to people in a timely manner.

What's your most recent business achievement of note?
Working with the fantastic secretariat at the TSA to build a modern, professional and well-respected organisation, whilst adhering to our core values of integrity and trust, representation, excellence, improvement and innovation, and teamwork.

Tell us your greatest fear
Policy makers not listening to all those involved when planning and executing the energy transition. All stakeholders in the energy supply chain have a critical role to play in achieving the Government's ambitions for reducing carbon emissions. Government needs to ensure it doesn't just listen to those who shout loudest.

Which is most important – ambition or talent?
Talent – do what you do best and do it well.

What's the best thing about your job?
The variety – one moment can be spent discussing secondary containment measures in tank farms, and the next discussing a response to a government consultation or call for evidence for a select committee's inquiry. This also means I get to work with some incredibly knowledgeable people and learn something new every day.

Which is the quality that you most admire?
Honesty, integrity and openness.

What are you most likely to say?
What do you think?

What are you least likely to say?
No, that's wrong.

Describe your perfect day
A good cup of coffee, a long walk with my wife and the dogs in the sunshine, a relaxed, funny and chilled afternoon and evening eating and drinking with friends.

Do you have a favourite sports team?
Mercedes Formula One Team – Lewis Hamilton is a local hero where I live!

What's the biggest challenge of our time?
Climate change – we need to act quickly, but proportionately.

Cheese or chocolate?
Chocolate.

Share your greatest personal achievement
From a humble and shy beginning as an apprentice, developing to become part of an amazing trade association.

What's your pet hate or biggest irritant?
People who do not care about, or think of, the impact the decisions they make have on others – whether in business or in their personal lives. If we all took a moment just to think "what is the right thing to do?" it would be a better world.

If you were elected to government what would be the first law you'd press for?
Criminalising and instigating severe penalties to anyone that deliberately harms animals.

If your 20-year-old self saw you now, what would they think?
He's not done bad, but will I really look like that in 30 years?!

What is number 1 on your bucket list?
To visit Japan.

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?
Books to read, a dog for companionship, and something to light a fire with!

Tell us something about you that people would be very surprised by
I have a keen interest in watches, and my collection is growing at an alarming rate!

Who would you most like to ask these questions of?
My dad, but sadly the opportunity is no longer here.

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