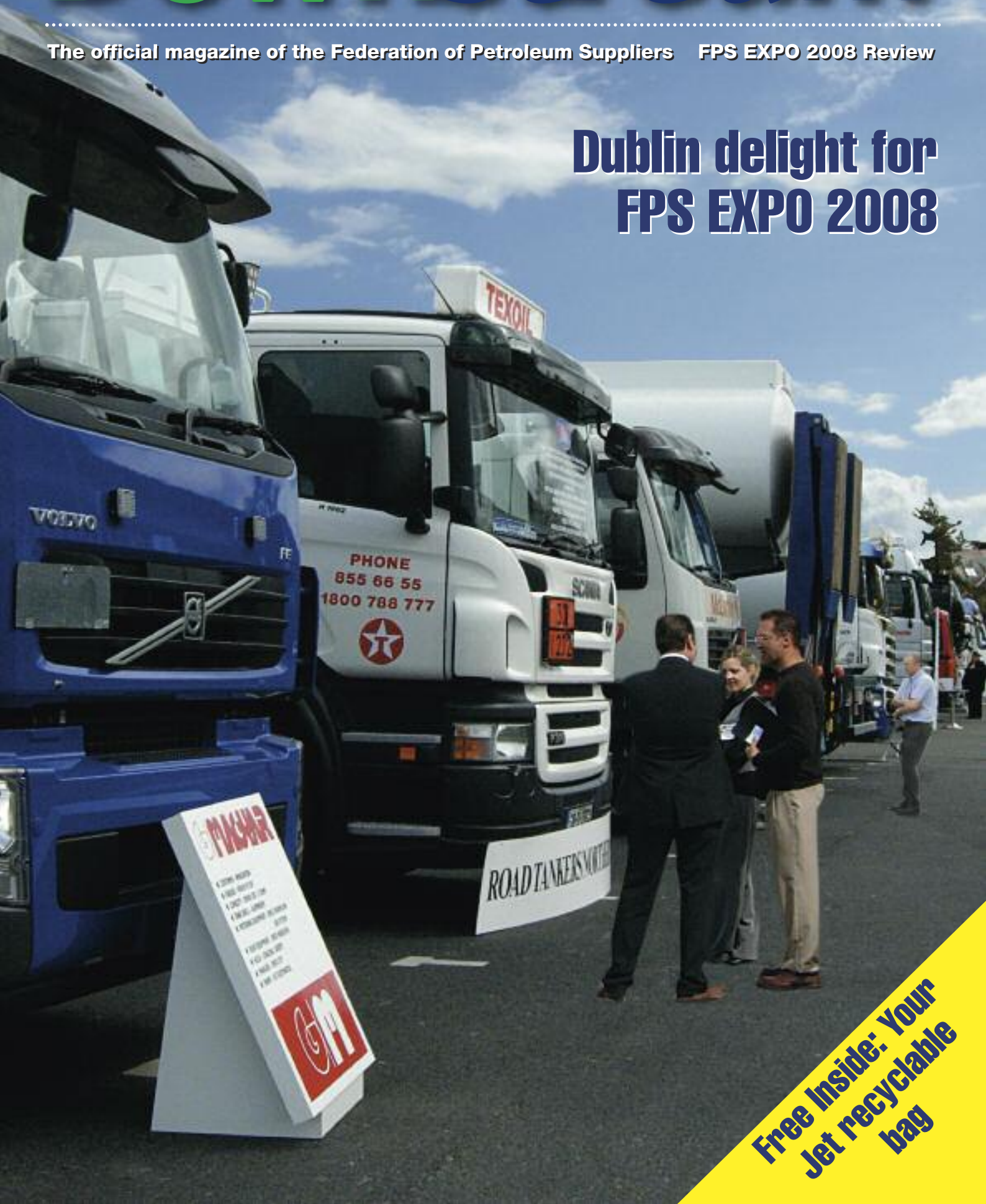


Downstream

The official magazine of the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers FPS EXPO 2008 Review

Dublin delight for FPS EXPO 2008



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VISI LEVEL

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FPS Distributor Conference & Charity Golf Day

Downstream

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Flying high

- 1,935 visitors
- 118 exhibitors
- 8,677 sq metres of stand space taken
- Over 50% of stand space pre-booked for FPS EXPO 2009, Harrogate.

“This was our second recent visit to Dublin and it was tremendously successful. Already, Harrogate next year looks as if it will equal if not surpass it.” said FPS Event Manager Vanessa Cook.







Depot of the Year Award 2008

The FPS Depot of the Year Award was presented by Peter O'Neill of sponsors QBE.

WINNER

Par Petroleum

of Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Weir. The award of a crystal trophy and £500 was collected by Simon Roy-Toole.

RUNNERS-UP

Heltor

of Newton Abbott, Devon, and
Opie Oils
of Redruth, Cornwall.

The awards of crystal trophies and £250 were collected by Paul Kingdon of Heltor and Mike George of ConocoPhillips on behalf of Opie Oils.

Congratulations to everyone!

Full reports on the winners will appear in the summer issue of Downstream.



A victorious Simon Roy-Toole of Par Petroleum holds the trophy aloft



The FPS Depot of the Year Awards encourages distributors to take a very responsible attitude to depot safety. We understand the risks involved in this unique field of business and believe the FPS scheme contributes to minimising the inherent risks.



From left to right Paul Kingdon, Simon Roy-Toole, Peter O'Neill of QBE and Mike George





Driver of the Year Award 2008



FPS-OAMPS Driver of the Year Tony Norris of Tincknell Fuels enjoys the moment.

The FPS Driver of the Year Award was presented by Adam Shefras of sponsors OAMPS.

WINNER

Tony Norris

of Tincknell Fuels,
Quintrell Downs, Newquay,
Cornwall.

The prize was a crystal
trophy and £1,000.

RUNNERS-UP

Sam Williams

of Samuel Cook & Co.
Lancashire.

Richard Amos

of Hall Fuels, Purfleet, Essex.

The awards comprised crystal trophies and £250 cash prizes.

Congratulations to everyone!

Full reports of what the drivers did to win will appear in the summer issue of Downstream.

“The drivers are the unsung heroes of the fuel oil distribution industry. We’ve sponsored the Driver of the Year Awards from the start because we know the care and effort they put in is a huge factor in limiting serious incidents.

**OAMPS PETROCHEMICAL
INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

Winning smiles from (left to right) Richard Amos, Tony Norris and Sam Williams





FPS 2008 Awards Dinner



GET INVOLVED! That was the rallying call from FPS President David Hodge (left, with FPS Chief Executive Susan Hancock) to the 750 capacity audience of black-tie dinner guests.

The fuel distribution industry was undergoing major changes in structure, he said, with fewer companies controlling a greater percentage of the market. More than ever, those companies needed effective representation as an industry, and needed active involvement with FPS activities.

David stressed the effectiveness of FPS in representing the industry to Government at a time when increasing amounts of red tape are making it more difficult for distributors to function efficiently.

BERR, he said, takes fuel distributors much more seriously following meetings with FPS. And FPS had played a vital role in developing a workable, practical, voluntary Energy End Use Efficiency Scheme. The alternative would have been a statutory scheme administered by Government.



Above left, top table guests at the President's Reception. Above right, the charity raffle winner, Jean Suthers, collects her £1,000 prize from President's wife Catherine Hodge. The raffle raised £3,500 for the industry's charity, Oil Together. Below left, the after-dinner entertainment included a charity auction. Below right, after the fine food, guests enjoyed a flutter on the fun casino tables.



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One Small Step For Man...



Electronic gauges are a godsend if you're a householder or installer. No more going outside to check the level of oil inside your tank. No more replacing discoloured sight tubes.

But for tanker drivers, they can be a right pain.

You're either trampling through someone's home to read the receiver unit – or coming armed with a Handheld Driver's Unit. Not surprisingly, one tanker driver asked us "If they can put man on the moon, why can't you supply a tank which indicates the level of oil inside the tank, at the tank as well as inside the customer's home or office?"

So that's exactly what we did. Dipsticks are now being phased in as standard on selected 2008 Model Year Harlequin tanks.

Some people call it 'local and remote tank measurement'. But at Harlequin, we just call it common sense.



Common Sense Fuel Storage Solutions... That Work

Visit Harlequin Online at www.oil-tanks.co.uk

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FPS EXPO 2008 heralded the introduction of workshops dealing with current issues in place of the traditional conference, which is now being held later in the year (see p.24). The more intimate atmosphere of the workshops was popular with the participants and yielded truly useful round-table discussions on Employment Law and Credit.

To your credit...

Credit is a crunch subject for every fuel oil distributor. Suppliers are allowing less and less time for payment while customers are delaying payments at every opportunity. Because of market turbulence, it is increasingly common for distributors to find themselves out of pocket for buying new stock at higher prices even when they have tight control on invoices outstanding.

Help with your Credit Problems was a workshop, run by Michaela Hilton and a team from Graydon, that

provided a forum for all the participants to discuss how they were coping with the various aspects of credit control and cashflow. These are some of the points made during the hour's discussions.

With price volatility, it is prudent to drag back customers' credit limits and repayment times. If distributors have to put up with these restrictions from suppliers, then it is fair to impose similar restrictions on customers.

Two approaches to safeguarding your business against bad debts:

- take out insurance
- save the premium and ring-fence the money as a rainy day amount for 'self insurance'.

ON FRAUD

Fraudsters are ingenious. They can sting you by asking you to deliver to portable storage facilities while they are waiting for their new permanent storage to be completed – and then are never seen again. Fraudsters can be patient, building up a trusting relationship with on-time payment for several amounts over periods of months before stinging the distributor with the 'big hit' order.

Addressing problems with employees

David Brown, a solicitor from Simpson Millar LLP, took a workshop audience through the fundamentals of dealing with sickness absence and problem employees.

Absentees create pressure for other employees, and well-drafted contracts, and good sickness absence policies and procedures can help cut absence levels, as well as show that the employer cares about the welfare of its employees.

Employers are not legally required to have a written sickness absence policy, but it is advisable. Statements containing intent or aspirations are best kept separate from detailed procedures to avoid arguments about breach of contract.

Steps to reduce sickness absence include monitoring and recording all absences, and reasons for them.



Analysing these could help reveal absence patterns for individual employees or indicate any underlying health or disability issues. Employers should keep in touch with employees off sick, ask for self certificates and then doctors' certificates. They should conduct a return-to-work interview and record what was discussed.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was discussed at length before moving on to how to deal with problem employees, in particular in relation to misconduct and poor performance.

The advice included

- having a bespoke, well-drafted

code of conduct

- addressing conduct and performance issues as they arise
- use of monitoring periods, targets for improvement and provision of training and support
- keeping records of all discussions, formal and informal
- before dismissal, consider the circumstances and alternatives
- at present, the statutory dismissal and disciplinary procedure must be followed.

The cost of an unfair dismissal claim can reach £75,000 and there is no cap if disability discrimination is found. Simpson Millar provide a free legal helpline for FPS members, and offer a number of support services.



ON CORPORATE HIJACKS

Any registered company is at risk from corporate hijack. Strangers can register as a director of your company, using that status and those powers for their own gain, and you will not discover it until you receive the paperwork from Companies House. Imposing a PIN number on your Companies House details can help prevent malicious manipulation of your details.

ON INSOLVENCIES

- There is a dramatic increase in the number of hauliers going bust, particularly sole traders and partnerships.
- Beware of limited companies – Companies House figures may not be accurate and may be months out of date.
- Directors no longer have to give their home addresses.

ON INSURERS & CREDIT REFERENCE AGENCIES

Insurers receiving multiple credit check requests about the same company should earmark that company as a specific insurance risk. Total value of fuel card and bulk claims fielded by one insurer in Q1 of 2007 was £1.1million, involving 110 claims. In the same quarter of 2008 the figures were £1.6million and 185. Fuel card claims were already running at 70% of the collected

premium, and the bulk sector figure was 48.5%. Premiums will rise. Credit reference agencies should log the number of requests on any particular business and contact customers to assess the level of credit they are extending to the business. Graydon can then see how much exposure the company has within the sector. It could be £40,000 or Euros to one distributor, but hundreds of thousands across the sector as a whole.

AVOIDING BAD DEBTS

Avoid bad debts in the first place:

- By listening to the delivery drivers – they see at first hand how customers operate and live
- By insisting on up-front payments for first and second deliveries
- Ask for cash payments (but be aware of the risk of exposure to money-laundering and register amounts received in that way)
- Being suspicious if a lapsed customer suddenly comes back with a big order
- Cut or even zero the credit limits of inactive customers after a set period of time
- Know your customers!
- Graydon circulates companies on Stop list to Graydon clients on a confidential basis
- Get personal guarantees witnessed
- If a property is jointly owned,

secure Personal Guarantees from each of the owners

- AUDDIS paperless credit information system alerts a distributor to bounced direct debits the day before they are due to go into the distributor bank account, so swift action can be taken by confronting the customer
- Do not trust bank credit references
- **Ensure you list problem payers on the FPS Credit Registers**

RECOVERING BAD DEBTS

Measures that distributors use to deal with bad debt:

- Up the insurance credit limit
- Meet the debtor face-to-face and deal at director level
- Seek a personal guarantee for the amount involved
- Bring direct debit payment forward
- Ask for a credit card payment
- Split the amount due into smaller, more frequent payments
- Impose an additional admin charge on customers whose Direct Debits bounce

Factors that can complicate bad debts include resistance by sales staff to confronting a customer owing money because it threatens the future relationship (and commission).

ON IN-HOUSE PRECAUTIONS

Don't store credit card details on the main computer system.



REYNOLDS LOGISTICS, Ireland's largest petro-chemical transport company, showed its More Efficient Vehicle (MEV). This is designed to be more economical and less environmentally damaging by carrying extra loads in existing trucks and trailers.

The MEV comprises a Mercedes 10m rigid truck pulling a standard 13.6m trailer with a two-axle connector unit. The current maximum permitted length of an HGV is 18.75 metres but the MEV can be up to 25m long. The weight of an HGV is 44 tonnes when carrying 38,000 litres of kero while an MEV would weight 63 tonnes and carry 58,000 litres.

Reynolds is currently in discussions to secure a temporary permit to use the MEV to deliver fuel from Dublin port to Dublin airport. Similar MEVs are in use in Scandinavia, and the Netherlands and Germany are also considering the system.

The UK Government has been asked to allow a similar scheme to be trialled. Reynolds says the MEV will improve fuel consumption per tonne of product delivered, quoting figures for the HGV of 1g of CO₂ emitted for a 103kg payload, as opposed to the MEV's 1g for a 121kg payload. Reynolds says the MEV will effectively reduce exhaust gas emissions by 6.2%. The proposal is based on using a standard truck and trailer already in service.

CONTREC unveiled the 515 blend controller for biofuel measurement. The device allows for safe and accurate loading of biofuel. The 515 can be supplied in ATEX-approved housings or installed in the control room for use via its Modbus link. Contrec also announced that its 1010 load computer now carries the latest Measuring Instrument Directive weights and measures approval, in line with EU requirements. The 1010 can load several compartments simultaneously.

HARLEQUIN launched a tranche of new tanks designed to expand, upgrade and refresh many of its established lines. Its 650 litre bunded slimline BND/ENV tank brings the option of heating oil to sites that were previously the preserve of mains gas and electricity only. At only 670mm wide and 1715 mm long, the 650BND/ENV is ideal for smaller domestic installations which use high efficiency, condensing oil boilers. For users needing more storage, Harlequin took the wraps off new 1,100 litre and 3,500 litre internally bunded tanks.

Harlequin also previewed Fuel Stations and BioFuel Stations supplied complete with 'run dry protection' and a 'filtration performance indicator'. It expects to make these features options on Fuel Station and BioFuel Station models later this year. The run dry protection system has been developed in partnership with Atkinson Equipment. If the tank becomes empty, the pump automatically shuts off, minimising the risk of damage through operator error. The fuel filtration performance indicator allows operators to continually monitor the performance of the fuel filtration system which is fitted as standard to all Harlequin Fuel Stations and BioFuel Stations.

Harlequin's new range of bunded waste oil tanks superseded its long-serving Oil Recycling Bank range and is available in five models, with capacities ranging from 350 litres to 2,000 litres. "The new Bunded Waste Oil Tank range is ideal for garages, commercial premises, farms, marinas... anywhere there is a requirement to store waste oils and lubricants," said John Switzer, Harlequin Marketing Manager.

Harlequin launched an all-new range of biodiesel storage tanks. Designed primarily for



MECHTRONIC reported a fantastic FPS EXPO with four staff working flat out from start to finish of the two days to deal with customers.

The four-year-old company has a reputation for innovation in vapour recovery and metering systems and reckons to have products in over half of this year's UK fuel distribution builds. Its basic manifold system allows tanker drivers to see the product with a sight glass. Its grade indication system can save tanker drivers from contaminating product and the manifold, metering and engine stop-start are all housed under one lid with a simple interface. The Mechtronic Visilevel aroused a lot of interest, displaying the grade and level of the contents of each compartment.

"Dublin was the best show we have ever had and we look forward to FPS next year," said Martyn Wilkie, one of Mechtronic's two directors. The other is Trevor Poulter.



connection to remote retail dispensing units, the new BioBund range is manufactured from a specialist, biodiesel-resistant medium density polyethylene. The range can hold biodiesel blends of up to B100 (i.e. a bio element of up to 100%) produced to British Standard BS EN14214 and comparable standards. Capacities vary from 1,450 litres to 10,100 litres.

Harlequin's new 650 and 3,500 litre bunded tanks

The **FUEL OIL SYSTEMS ALLIANCE** debuted its Refine software, offering an end-to-end business solution for fuel distributors. It takes in order capture, product pricing and valuation and stock control and can also integrate with a range of applications to tackle tasks such as on-board computing, tank monitoring, fleet control and route optimisation. Software authors JSM Technology says that Linton Fuel Oils, Wessex Petroleum and F Peart & Co are among early adopters.

TEAM-CV announced itself as a newly-formed division of the Reynolds group of companies, specialising in the repair and service of tankers and tanker equipment. The team operates from bases in Dublin Port and Ellesmere Port and plans to expand. Cork is next on its list.

LEDBURY WELDING & ENGINEERING came to FPS EXPO with a biodiesel bunded tank, a new storage device for this new product. Bunded tanks and dispensers handling over 30% bio will need special design to ensure compatibility. Ledbury Welding said it had adapted its range of totally enclosed units to cover heating, insulation and pumping where appropriate.

Fleet management specialist **MUTEC** showed a Mercedes Powershift with a 12 speed full automatic gearbox for shorter shifting times. The Poweshift allows short-term use of full engine power and increased economy through Eco-Roll

BP's debut at FPS EXPO 2008 proved a huge success, with BP introducing a range of demonstrations of its extensive fuel management solutions. The BP sales team also generated a substantial number of new business leads.

Visitors to the stand could view BP's short film starring football pundit Alan Hansen, which likened BP's new online services to ProZone, the football software programme that allows player's movements to be tracked and measured. BP's Fuel Management Solutions allow fleet managers to collate and analyse detailed, accurate data on everything from fuel usage to carbon emissions, in turn helping protect and grow their businesses.

Kathleen Callender, business to

business marketing manager for BP UK Fuels Marketing commented: "We were delighted with the success of our FPS debut which proved an ideal platform to highlight the strength of BP Wholesale, as well as BP's new online management and reporting tools. Trade shows such as FPS EXPO are pivotal, as they not only give us the opportunity to meet and respond to the needs of our current customers, they also give us the opportunity to meet potential customers and demonstrate how we can give them the tools and know-how to manage their business more effectively and profitably."

BP launched a new customer newsletter 'BP Wholesale News'. The e-newsletter will be distributed every quarter to share industry insights and BP updates with customers.

mode. In addition, users benefit from sensitive manoeuvring through Manoeuvring Mode, high speed reversing and protection on difficult terrains thanks to Rock-Free mode.

Tanker builder **GRW ENGINEERING** is promising to plant 100 trees in various countries, including the Philippines and Ethiopia, every time a tanker is ordered in the UK and Ireland. The company has teamed up with Carbonme.org to offer the carbon-offsetting scheme and says its objective is to become entirely carbon neutral. It anticipates planting up to 15,000 trees in the first year. GRW also announced that SOS Tankers

had become the sole distributor of its tankers throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic.

The **HERBST** Insight Oil Module has been specifically designed for the oil distribution business. The package enables users to contact leads by text, email or letter and select by market type. Herbst said the drivers' hand-held devices give precise stock level management, can keep drivers up to date with live routing and orders, and can save 95% of admin time. The system integrates with a number of other Herbst software modules to give companies a complete management system.



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Exhibitor News from the Press Room – 2

GO, the Irish retail forecourt brand, has just secured its 12th site, announced its owners, **LCC LTD**. The family owned and managed business has invested over £1.5 million in two additional storage tanks, adding 10,000 tonnes capacity, at its Co Londonderry terminal. LCC's 44-strong tanker fleet serves the whole of Ireland via Londonderry and a secure supply agreement in Dublin.

IRISH TRUCK AND TANK has developed a new distribution and storage centre at its Chapelizod, Dublin, site, where it can service dispensing and IT equipment in a clean environment. The company is now also offering the complete range of Petrotec commercial products in Ireland, providing everything from high speed fuel dispensers to fuel management systems and Stage 2 vapour recovery.

WORLD FUEL SERVICES has moved into the British road transport and heating fuels sector. From its London office, Stephen Thomason (ex-Petroplus) and Tony Garner (ex Keyfuels) will cover all fuel grades and aim to supply from nationwide locations on an ex-rack or delivered basis. WFS provides fuel and services to commercial and corporate aircraft, ships and petroleum distributors at more than 2,500 locations around the world and is a Fortune 250 quoted company.

HEIL TRAILER announced that it had appointed Team-CV as its agent for parts, service, repairs and warranty in Ireland. In Britain, the company announced it had transferred these operations to A&R Vehicle Services of Wednesbury, West Midlands. Both moves are to improve the after-sales service available. Heil exhibited a 40,000 litre six compartment aluminium tri-axle semi-trailer at FPS EXPO and said it had produced over 200 tanks with its Polish production partner in the last two years.

TITAN ENVIRONMENTAL released a swathe of new storage tanks at FPS EXPO. Extensions to the EcoSafe bundled tank range included the ESV 1200 low



Tanker manufacturer **ROHR** were delighted with both their internal and external exhibits at FPS EXPO. An all-black semi-trailer tanker for heavy fuel oils and middle distillate was specially designed and made for Black Oil and Integrated Tankers of Walsall. The single compartment trailer volume was 38,000 – 42,000 litre and was designed for a 60 degree loading temperature. An Elongal 5186 45,200 litre semi-trailer road tanker was built for Tedcastle Oil Products. With a gross weight of 38,000kg, it had six compartments.

profile tank, the ESV1300 with smaller footprint but taller profile, and the ESV2500, a 2,500 litre tank for commercial users. Titan fits Sensor Watchman Plus remote monitoring devices to its EcoSafe range as standard. Titan also showcased Adblue and Biofuel tanks. Titan's BioMaster100 range is available in 1300l, 2500l, 3500l and 5000l capacities. It is fully bundled and compliant with all current oil storage regulations in the UK and Ireland.

HYTEK showed a range of new lubrication equipment suitable for

garages, workshops and plant. In addition, it showcased its Alpha FC10 fuel dispensing pump which offers a built-in control system and fuel management software compatible with leading third party fuel cards. Hytek also showed a range of biodiesel-compatible equipment for blends of up to B100.

SUCKLING TRANSPORT announced its Driver of the Year award had been jointly won by Ian Webb, who works on a Shell Grangemouth contract, and Ray Blackmore, a Shell contract driver at Pembroke. Third place was also a tie, going jointly to Bruce Dagleish (Grangemouth) and Roger Bailey (Hythe). A record 177 Suckling employees will receive National Safe Driving Awards for 2007 from RoSPA.

OPTRAK DISTRIBUTION SOFTWARE unveiled its i-Meter, a black box that captures flow information as it happens from DRUM and LectroCount meters and transmits it to HQ within 30 seconds. It also announced the latest version of its fuel and lubricants industry package, claiming new features aimed at reducing costs and increasing efficiency. Optrak also showed its latest vehicle routing package.

ALPECO revealed its new Liquid Controls TE550 electronic meter head. Compliant with the new MID regulations, it has been integrated with Alpeco's established DMX meter systems. The TE550 facilitates the control of other system components, including manifold, foot valve, delivery mode selection and product return, so offering simplified discharge control from a central work station. Alpeco also launched a new FV400 LP-1 foot valve for semi and rigid tankers.

FOZMULA brought out a new bund alarm and bund monitor with low cost and ease of use as their prime attractions. The company also demonstrated its capacitive fuel level sensor, sending a signal output to an OLE remote monitoring device.

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Graydon, in partnership with Reynolds Trade Credit provide an intelligence unit specifically for the petroleum sector. This is a network specifically designed to protect members against the risk of bad debts and slow payments.

- Unsatisfied payments (e.g. RD & RDPR cheques and direct debits)
- Collection/Legal actions commenced against a debtor
- "Gone aways" and other critical events

This is real-time information and once collected the information is distributed amongst all PDIU members*. PDIU members also benefit from free insolvency advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The message for credit and financial managers in the fuel distribution sector is very clear. You now have the weapons to start fighting back!

Interested to find out more?

Contact:

Michaela Hilton

Tel: 020 8515 1410

petroleum@graydon.co.uk

* All members report anonymously. Operated within the constraints of the Consumer Credit Act (1974), Data Protection Act (1988) and the Competition Act (1988)



FPS 2008 Golf Day – Druids Glen



For the second successive year, the FPS Golf Day bucked weather trends to enjoy glorious sunshine, this time on the Irish Open course, Druids Glen. It was a great day for the golfers, all of whom were severely tested by a well-designed course in a wonderful setting. The event was sponsored by Collins Youldon and Travelers. The roll of honour ended: 1 (and Nearest the Pin) Ben Moore of BWOC, 2 Nick Hayton of Forecourt Fuels, 3 Ned Kenny of Texoil. Longest drive, Bob Stoker of Q8 Oils.



Above, Nick Hayton, Ben Moore and Bob Stoker with Alan Grace of sponsors Travelers (second from right). Below right, Ed Hayes of FPS (left) congratulates Ned Kenny.



Golfers: make a note of the next big FPS event. Details on page 24

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The formation of the Fuel Oil Systems Alliance represents the achievement of the "Holy Grail" for organisations operating in the fuel oil and lubricant distribution sector: the provision of a true end-to-end solution that covers every facet of the IT requirement.

The Alliance offers a portfolio of software and hardware products which integrate to automate the entire supply chain from refinery to customer, working together to ensure the seamless passage of information through your organisation.

To find out more about the Alliance, its members and products, please visit www.fosalliance.com



What visitors said about FPS EXPO 2008



Michael and Christine Cecil, BFS Ltd., Essex: It's good to keep up with developments, talk to people about business ideas and keep up with the industry gossip.



Simon Cullen, Associated Agricultural Oils, Stirling: There's plenty to look at. I go to a lot of shows, but this one in particular is good for meeting people and finding out what's going on in the industry.



Derek Thompson and Mike Taylor, Refuels, London: We're a fairly new company, reprocessing contaminated fuel to its component parts. This is a first visit and it's good. We've made a lot of contacts and seen a lot of companies. We'll definitely be back.



Jason Britton, Countrywide Fuels: It's my first year here and my first in the fuel distribution industry. It's a great show, ideal for me, and I'm learning a lot very quickly.



Geoff Hall and Lynn De Vos, Jones Distribution: We're interested to see several different tanker companies here, particularly a lot more European ones. It's an excellent show and someone from the company visits each year. It used to be just management, but now we bring our operations people as well because we think it's important that they should see and assess what's here.



Mark Cope and John Stephenson, Centaur, who were with Duncan Allender, Central Fuel: It's a very good show, it's even made all the turbulence on the flight here seem worthwhile! This is the third consecutive year we've visited.



Aiden Cahalane and Colm Crowley, South of Ireland Petroleum: We came because the show's in Dublin and it's been well worth coming. There are a few things we've picked up on that we would not have come across otherwise.



Simon and Michael Murphy, Haz.Com Fuels, Waterford: This is our first visit and it's been an excellent show. We're looking to replace two tankers and this is the place to come.



James and David Kehoe, E Keyhoe and Sons, Wexford: We've met a good few people we know, and we've seen some very useful products.



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WHAT DOES FPS DO FOR THE INDUSTRY? The answers were to be found at the FPS 11th Annual General Meeting, held at FPS EXPO 2008 in Dublin. Chief Executive Susan Hancock told members that 2007 had seen rising oil prices following on from a mild winter – not good news. Nevertheless, new legislation continued to bombard the industry, most of it from the EU. These are the areas she talked about.

Legislation

Draft legislation continued to keep FPS staff and members busy. We monitored and returned comments on many topics including:

- Duty on fuel for private pleasure craft.
- The Energy White Paper, where we again highlighted how vital a robust oil distribution infrastructure system is to the country.
- The Energy End Use Efficiency directive.
- The change to the kerosene specification on which, unfortunately, DEFRA failed to consult in full.
- Various HMRC consultations, such as extension of HMRC powers, which we opposed, supply of duty free marine fuel and additional requirements to the RDCO scheme, which we also opposed!
- Many others, such as the revision of the Oil Storage Regulations England and environmental legislation in both England and Scotland.

And, of course, FPS had to lobby the devolved administrations as well, when they started to implement their own versions of the legislation.

Government liaison

FPS worked with Government on a number of issues:

- We are members of the DTI's (BERR since Gordon Brown became PM) contingency planning working group. This helps prepare strategies for dealing with emergencies relating to fuel disruptions; we fight the corner for commercial supply when the chief concern is retail.
- FPS is a member of the Energy Minister's Downstream Oil Industry Forum, where we seek the Minister's support on issues such as minimal taxation on gas oil for heating, reclamation of duty on bad debt and bolstering the infrastructure to improve security of supply.
- We kept in close contact with the staff responsible for oil at the DTI's Energy Markets Unit on issues such as stockouts and other problems in the supply chain.
- The Department for Transport's dangerous goods training advisory working groups.
- We sat on a number of cross-departmental dangerous goods security groups.
- The National Weights & Measures 'Volume' working group.
- In the Joint Customs/Industry Security & Intelligence Group, we raise members' issues with the RDCO scheme. The remit of this group is being extended into a general hydrocarbon oils forum.
- We had liaison meetings with Treasury officials and the Customs Minister prior to the Pre-Budget Report and the Budget itself.
- We sat on two Government working groups looking at how the Energy End Use Efficiency directive can be implemented into national legislation.

Training, best practice

FPS continued to promote best practice and training:

- The Depot Certification Scheme was well used in 2007, with 46 depots audited. In recognition of the worth of the scheme, OAMPS insurers QBE are continuing to provide funding to subsidise the cost to members of the audits. The funding is continuing through to the end of 2008.
- The Forecourt Operator Training scheme continued to be popular as a cheap and effective way for forecourt operators to meet their legal obligation to train staff.
- The FPS Driver Training Scheme also continued to be popular. We are now in the process of restructuring the scheme for accreditation for the incoming driver CPC.
- In conjunction with ORS, we organised some health and safety workshops for members.
- Calling on Michael Ong's considerable skills and knowledge, FPS offered health and safety and operations advice to members.

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Liaison with outside bodies

As well as Government-linked activities, FPS sits on a number of other committees and working groups, including:

- Four Energy Institute committees.
- The Environment Agency's Oil Care Campaign.
- Six BSI technical committees, where, amongst other things, we are continuing to support distributors' interests in the revision of BS5410, the Code of Practice covering oil storage tanks.
- We are represented on the European standards committee on heating oil, where we have to ensure that the position of kerosene for domestic heating is not overlooked.

We also met regularly with other trade associations in related sectors and carried out joint lobbying on issues where we share a stance.

FPS is a founder member of the Conference of European Fuel Distributors (CEFD) where we discuss common issues and EU legislation. We discussed the UK's problems with the domestic kerosene specification with a member of the Commission at the Conference's Brussels meeting, and we also hosted the 2007 Conference in Edinburgh in May, where reclamation of duty on bad debts was discussed.

Below, the UK delegation, from left, Bob Armsworth, President David Hodge and Susan Hancock at the Edinburgh meeting of CEFD.



Projects

Several projects occupied FPS staff over the year:

- We continued discussions with BERR and the Oil Pipelines Agency about opening up alternative terminals on the Government pipeline. It has been agreed that there will be an industry/government task group to look at strengthening the resilience of the infrastructure.
- With the backing of BERR, we lobbied the Treasury to reduce duty on gas oil for heating to try to alleviate to some extent the chronic shortages of domestic kerosene.
- Together with the British Marine Federation, the Inland Waterways Association and the Royal Yachting Association, we continued to work with HMRC on how to minimise the impact of the change in duty on fuel for private pleasure craft.
- Michael Ong took over the work started by Peter Emery on a quick release manual coupling to reduce spillages while filling storage tanks. Regrettably, it was concluded that operational problems made it non-viable.
- We worked with OAMPS and OHES on their poster campaign to reduce spillages during delivery.
- We started work with the Environment Agency and OFTEC on a guide for customers, advising them on the care and maintenance of their storage tanks.

Membership activities

- FPS held members' meetings in most regions, giving members the opportunity to discuss topical issues and with a variety of speakers from, for example, VOSA, the majors and the police.
- We followed up industry issues in response to members' concerns. These included stock reconciliation investigations by HMRC and equality in taxation of reprocessed waste oil used as fuel.
- We ran the usual Drivers' Wages Survey, which members find so useful.
- We continued to encourage members to use the

Hazardgram scheme to report hazardous tank installations, in an effort to get customers to address safety issues with their tanks and to warn distributors about unsafe installations, like the one below.



- Our new database enabled us to send news alerts to target groups of the membership.
- And we continued to respond to an enormous variety of queries from members.

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Ireland

Ireland is spared much of the overburdening regulation that afflicts the industry in the UK, so there are quiet periods when Irish members seek little support. 2007 was a prime example.

There were issues with legal metrology to deal with, the change to the kerosene specification, which has fortunately proved to have little impact on distributors, and the change in duty on fuel for private pleasure craft. We also continued liaison with the Dept of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources over implementation of the Energy End-use Efficiency directive.

Forecourt Division

Keith Ashton, the Forecourt Division Co-ordinator, faced a mammoth task in 2007 in getting the Garage Watch Campaign incorporated into the FPS as the Forecourt Division. We have found independent and rural garages in definite need of support at Government level and we are working hard to provide an effective voice for them. Keith has started building up membership benefits, for example the free legal helpline that is also available to Distribution Division members.



Below, FPS staff members Keith Ashton and Margaret Thornley talk to a visitor to the Forecourt Division stand at the IFFE at the NEC.



Media coverage

Our Media Representative, Rod Prowse, carried out numerous radio and TV interviews, dealing with press enquiries about topical issues such as the supply situation post-Buncefield and the rise in oil prices. He had interviews with most of the major tv and radio stations, including BBC Radio 5 Live, Anglia TV, GMTV, the Daily Express and the Daily Mail.

FPS issued a number of press releases and featured in the trade press, including boating, heating and commercial motor magazines.

Five issues of the FPS magazine *Downstream* were published. The magazine continues to attract quality articles from a variety of sources on matters affecting the industry and also gives FPS the opportunity to express industry views to a wider audience.

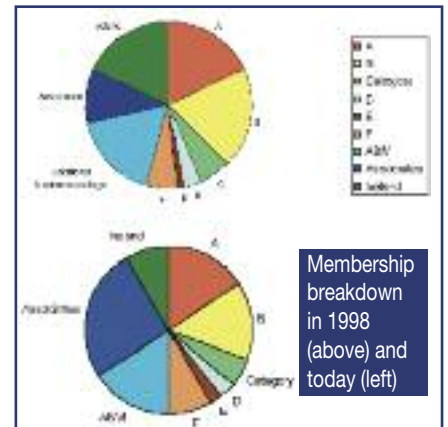
Membership levels

The continuing trend of mergers and acquisitions saw membership numbers drop slightly for the second year running. However, as a percentage of distributor companies in Great Britain, it remains high, with over 75% in membership. Compared with 1998, the first year for which FPS has detailed records, there has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of Associate Members, but a commensurate drop in the Irish membership. In the Ordinary member categories in the UK, the number of smaller members has decreased as the number of the largest ones has increased. The number of mid-range companies has remained generally static.

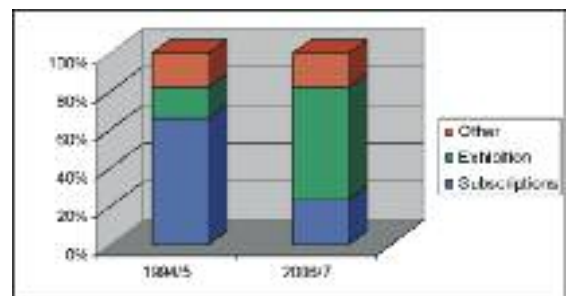
With an ever-increasing workload, FPS staff were kept extremely busy and I would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work. On top of their normal duties, they also had to cope with a move into our new offices. This has given us much improved facilities for hosting meetings and for working on the EXPO. In addition to the staff, we are fortunate to have a number of consultants who provide us with additional help in specialist areas.

The FPS has changed enormously over the last decade and a comparison of income streams of FPS today with those of 12 years ago is striking:

Our reliance on membership subscriptions has diminished considerably as we have developed alternative income streams. How the importance of the exhibition has grown since 1995 can be seen in the comparison of income streams and, thanks to the efforts of



Vanessa Cook and the rest of our team, FPS EXPO 2008 in Dublin was another resounding success. These additional income streams have enabled us to provide services and support for members and, we hope, will enable us to continue to do so long into the future.



Finally, as well as organising the Dublin event and all her other tasks, Vanessa Cook has also worked hard during the year organising FPS's Oil Together Charity. The proceeds of the raffle at the Annual Dinner in Dublin have been donated to the cause. FPS would like to thank Vanessa and the rest of the Oil Together Committee for all their hard work in running the campaign.



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