

# Downstream

The official magazine of the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers

Autumn 2008



New award for  
rising young stars

## Death of Terry Furlong

It is with great regret that we have learned of the death of Terry Furlong. Terry developed the FPS Depot Certification Scheme as well as working with FPS and its members on other health and safety initiatives. Terry was known to many FPS members and others in the industry from his work with us and his time with Shell. He died suddenly on 23 September at his home in Burntwood, Staffordshire. He will be sadly missed and FPS extends its condolences to his wife and family.



It takes more than just a close family wedding to stop FPS staff member Joan Wheat and FPS EXPO organiser Vanessa Cook making a beeline for a tanker. Said Joan: "My son was getting married and we spotted the NWF tanker while we were waiting around for photographs, so we couldn't resist going over to pose for a quick picture."

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# Downstream

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# FPS EXPO 2009

Harrogate International Centre, 1 & 2 April 2009

## Growing exhibition set to expand to yet another hall

With over 70% of stand space already sold, FPS EXPO 2009 Organiser Vanessa Cook has expanded the Harrogate exhibition to another extra hall.

"We have already experienced high levels of demand for space from previous exhibitors who have simply re-booked because earlier FPS shows have been so successful for them. We are also receiving numerous enquiries from other potential exhibitors. Many of these are considering coming for the first time because they have heard of the show's growing reputation. The event will now take place across four halls," she told Downstream.

Latest first-time exhibitors include Coryton Commercials, a road tanker repair and maintenance servicing specialist, and Fremantle Training and Transport, a transport training services provider.

The free workshops, which proved a hit with visitors to FPS EXPO 2008 in Dublin, are to be continued in Harrogate.

The Credit Control workshop is to be re-staged by popular demand. A new workshop will focus on Contracts of Employment. The organisers are working on adding further workshops and these will be announced in future editions of Downstream.

"The workshops were very popular and, like last year, we shall be asking delegates to pre-book place," said Vanessa.

### EXPO brings Greek and UK orders to Fort Vale

Fort Vale, a long-standing FPS EXPO exhibitor, reports delivering the first part of an order to Greece. The business was secured as a result of a visitor from Greece calling on the Fort Vale stand at FPS EXPO 2008 in Dublin.

Fort Vale is supplying a manual version of its Safeload couplers to the Greek customer. It is also supplying a significant order for manual couplers to a UK client for fitting to a new type of skid that was also on show in Dublin. Fort Vale will be exhibiting at FPS EXPO 2009 in Harrogate. See page 27 for more on Fort Vale.



## Delighted BP re-book for 2009



BP has booked for FPS EXPO 2009 following the success of its debut at the 2008 event in Dublin. BP promises a higher profile stand presence and the company is also promising to offset the travel emissions of delegates who visit its stand over the course of the event.

Tim Laffan, Sales Manager Wholesale for BP UK Fuels Value Chain, said: "We were delighted with the success of our FPS show debut which proved an ideal platform to highlight our wholesale and resale business, including the customer benefits that our buying power can leverage."

"The EXPO was invaluable in helping us get our message out, and most excitingly a number of genuine new business leads were developed. We are looking forward to the same success, if not more, at the 2009 EXPO."



Forget fancy number plates... Liz launches her own ship!

Tim and Liz Rix alongside the new vessel



**Some people have personalised number plates on their car. Liz Rix has a personalised ship name!**

The LizRix was launched as the latest development in the JR Rix and Sons £12 million investment programme in their fleet of coastal tankers.

The East Yorkshire company's brand new, 2000 tonne oil tanker was named in a special ceremony in Alexandra Dock, Hull.

Historically, Rix ships have been named

after family members and the LizRix was named after Elizabeth Rix daughter of J R Rix and Sons Ltd Managing Director Tim Rix. The new vessel is twice as large as any of the other Rix ships and benefits from an up to date design incorporating sophisticated systems and a double hull to comply with current maritime legislation .

Tim Rix, M.D. of J R Rix and Sons Ltd said: "The decision to invest £12 million into our shipping business has been made in response to increasing customer demand for deliveries of fuel

oil to ships around the coast of the UK. We have been moving fuels around the coast of the UK, the Humber Estuary and surrounding river waterways since the 1970s and in the last few years we have seen growing demand for this service, particularly in view of increasing transport costs and awareness of environmental issues."

The LizRix is the second of four new ships which the company will add to its existing fleet. "It will allow us to offer a fast, efficient and competitive service to maritime customers," said Tim.

# Report raises gas stocks questions for UK

A new German report produced by AFM+E, an association of independent companies in the German petroleum and energy industry, is opening up the debate on the logic of stockpiling oil but not natural gas, and is calling for legislation to require strategic gas stocks to be held by EU Member States.

The importance of gas to national and European economies has grown substantially but has not been accompanied by corresponding growth in the necessary precautions to ensure security of supply.

In Germany, gas is the second most important source of energy after oil. Nearly a quarter of its primary energy consumption is provided by gas and almost half of households use gas heating. Germany imports more than 80% of its gas, mainly from Russia. This compares with the

UK, where natural gas accounts for almost 40% of primary energy consumption, around 32% of which is imported (2007 figure), and 81% of household heat demand is met by natural gas.

*Gas stockpiling in Germany* reveals that the gas companies there lay in stocks for about 40 full days' supply at the start of the heating season. As in the UK, they also have interruptible supply agreements with major users. UK gas suppliers and gas transport customers are required to cover a "1 in 50" winter peak supply. The gas transport system is tasked by Ofgem with ensuring that, in the winter, minimum stocks of gas are available in reservoirs across all storage locations in the UK, and that the system operator can always run the system reliably if an emergency arises. This is designed to ensure gas supplies to households and certain other categories of customers, for example hospitals.

The German report points out that, unlike oil stocks, there are no strategic gas stocks for national emergencies. It believes that interruptible supply agreements safeguard supply to essential users to a certain degree, but that legislation is needed to ringfence stock and provide neutral decision-making in the face of customer pressure.

Up to now, the German and European gas industries have been unwilling to impose additional burdens on consumers at times of rising prices, but, unfortunately, this does not do justice to the situation.

Among the benefits of strategic natural gas stocks, the report lists greater independence if supplies are restricted or cut by the supplying country or third-party country and greater price stability.

## Asia 'will keep oil \$ price high'

**A new report forecasts that the recent drop in oil price will be short-lived and that Asia's explosive growth and demand for oil will keep prices about \$100 a barrel for over a decade.**

The situation will affect growth rates of developing Asian countries and force their governments to implement 'painful' measures to increase energy efficiency and curb oil use, forecasts the report, from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Developing Asia is a net importer of primary energy. It consumes three times more than it produces. "High oil prices are here to stay, and the sooner that developing Asia wakes up to this reality the better," said Ifzal Ali, Chief Economist of the Manila-based ADB.

"The past few years of robust growth in the face of rising oil prices should not

delude us into believing that Asia's growth prospects will be immune from the effects of expensive oil. Looking ahead, a prolonged elevation of oil prices would almost certainly have an adverse impact on Asia's future growth."

The report notes that the oil price surge, which began in 2003, is fundamentally different from previous oil shocks in the 1970s, which were caused by temporary supply disruptions. This time, it says, high oil prices have been mostly driven by surging demand and the inability of suppliers to keep pace.

Demand will continue to place upward pressure on oil price. Further, the report says, a reduction in surplus oil capacity caused by increased demand – alongside financial speculators betting on higher oil prices – will lead to even greater price volatility in the oil market.



**Gleaner Oils have renewed their agreement as the principle sponsors of the Speyside Rally. This rally is round 6 of the Scottish Rally Championship. The event, held in early August, attracted a record 113 entries from all over the UK. The eventual winners were David Bogie and Kevin Rae after the reigning British Champion, Guy Wilkes, was forced out by mechanical failure.**

**At the prize presentation, David Todd MD of Gleaner Oils announced the firm would continue to sponsor the event for the next three years.**



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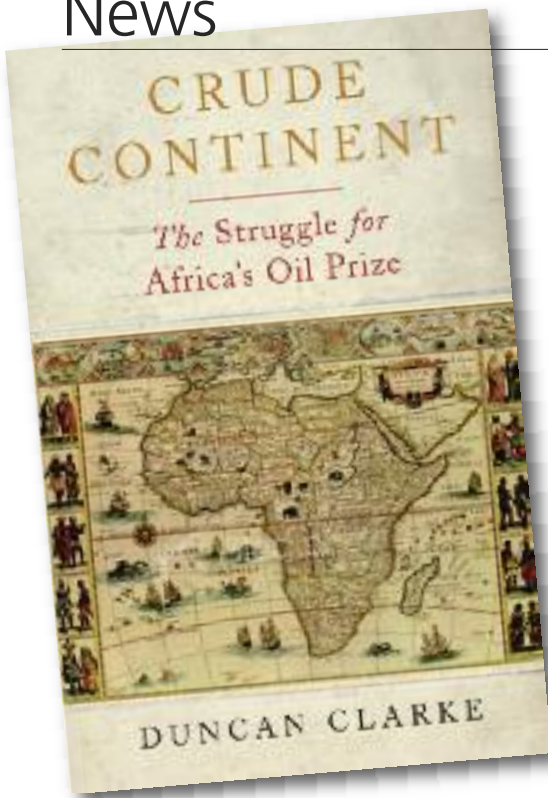
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## Africa's oil anarchy

**Africa is a dark continent not just for its air of mystery. It also holds large amounts of oil. In *Crude Continent, the Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize*, author Duncan Clarke identifies 500 corporations, including state oil companies from six continents, who are chasing the jackpot.**

The book is an insight into the continent's oil history, economics and fragmented geopolitics. Based on an intimate understanding of the origins, evolution and current state of Africa's oil game, Clarke shows how an array of flawed and fragile governments, shadowy politicians, warlords, militia, oil executives, financiers, state institutions and myriad 'masters' are all seeking their piece of the prize. From oil-rich countries to hopeful states with exploration potential, it is an enduring epic struggle – and one that has left many empty-handed.

Clarke is an industry insider who shares his great knowledge of the African oil frontier. *Crude Continent* should intrigue anyone who makes a living from oil products.

*Crude Continent* is published by Profile Books, priced £35, ISBN 978 1 84668 097 7.

## Big price spike 'on the way'

The world will experience a serious oil supply crunch and associated \$200 price spike within 10 years unless oil demand collapses. This is the conclusion of a new Chatham House report, *The Coming Oil Supply Crunch*.

Professor Paul Stevens, the report's author, says that investment in new supplies has been and will be inadequate. This is partly due to incentives for international oil companies to return dividends to shareholders rather than reinvest them. It is also a result of some governments starving their national oil companies of investment funds.

To ward off a potential crisis, the report recommends helping producers manage 'resource curse' issues, welcoming sovereign wealth funds and bringing OPEC into the International Energy Agency's emergency sharing mechanism.

The present price rise has materialised partly because OECD governments are reluctant to intervene in energy markets. However, if the supply crunch and price spike happen, governments will be forced to change tack, he said.

The report argues that not enough money and expertise were invested in the 1990s to maintain the excess of supply capacity over demand. History shows that whenever that happens, the oil price rises sharply.

## Challenge to refining industry

**The global petroleum refining industry faces significant reconfiguration and investment challenges over the coming dozen years in order to avoid shortfalls in diesel, heating oil and jet fuel supplies, said Cambridge Energy Research Associates' (CERA) Downstream Director Olivier Abadie.**

"While refined product demand growth becomes increasingly concentrated in the middle of the barrel, particularly for diesel and jet fuel, CERA believes that light liquids including natural gas liquids (NGLs), condensates and – to a lesser degree – biofuels, gas-to-liquids (GTL) and coal-to-liquids (CTL) will dominate supply growth between now and 2020," Global Oil Senior Director Peter Jackson said.

CERA estimates that overall supply capacity will more than match the increase in demand, but that the 'cocktail' of hydrocarbons within that supply will change significantly, with light liquids accounting for 32% of the total supply in 2020, up from 19% in 2007.

Changes in supply composition have significant implications for refiners. Middle distillate products (diesel, heating oil, jet fuel and kerosene) are projected to account for more than half of world oil demand growth between 2007 and 2020. However, light liquids – the largest additional component of liquids supply – yields only an average of 20% middle distillates, resulting in a middle distillates deficit of about 3 mbd, and gasoline supply 3 mbd higher than demand. The global refining system has the challenge to adapt its configuration to cope with this significant mismatch.

"As we move beyond 2010, the key challenge for the refining industry will be adding the appropriate type of conversion capacity – particularly hydrocracking – and not necessarily adding more volumes of simple crude distillation capacity," Mr Abadie said. "In the dynamic oil industry, investment responds to market signals. The degree to which refiners invest in adequate conversion capacity will be critical in successfully addressing this significant change in the composition of global liquids supply," he added.

# New award for your rising stars

**Have you got a rising star in your office? A young gun whose enthusiasm and drive is helping your distribution business go fast forward?**

**If so, and you are an FPS distributor member, we want to hear from you.**

FPS has teamed up with Reynolds Trade Credit to launch the FPS Young Employee of the Year Award to acknowledge the hard work that young people – anyone aged 25 or under on 31 December 2008 – put in to your distribution business.

That person can work almost anywhere within your business: in telesales; in accounts; in administration; in depot maintenance; in management – anywhere in fact, except as one of your tanker drivers (because we already have the FPS Driver of the Year awards for them!). Entering eligible staff for the Award is

easy: just send us their name and date of birth and tell us, in no more than 500 words, what special effort he or she made in 2008, or why they are exceptional within your company. Email your entry to Vanessa Cook at FPS, [vc@fpsonline.co.uk](mailto:vc@fpsonline.co.uk) by 31 January 2009.

FPS and Reynolds will go through the entries and draw up a shortlist of three finalists, who, along with a guest, will be invited to the FPS 2009 Awards Dinner where the winner will be announced. This invitation also includes overnight accommodation and VIP passes to the FPS EXPO 2009. Along with the striking crystal award, the winner will receive a cheque for £500, and each of the runners up will receive an award and a cheque for £250.

**Call Vanessa on 01565 631313 to find out more.**



**"We're delighted to sponsor an award that promotes the importance of young people in business," said Paul Martin of Reynolds.**

## Government's Renewable Energy Strategy spells more woes for the fuel poor

**With the number of households in fuel poverty now put at over 5.4 million, the Government is considering a renewable energy strategy that will involve a tax on all fossil fuels. The tax money would subsidise households off the gas mains to switch from fossil fuel heating to renewable heating.**

The Renewable Energy Strategy is being developed because the Government has signed up to achieve an EU target of a certain percentage of renewable fuel by 2020. The Strategy looks at ways of achieving the target. This cannot be done without a massive change of household and business heat sources to renewables. Renewable energy involves new technology in many cases and so many of the policies proposed in the strategy have had to be based on unknown quantities and suppositions.

The policy makers have decided that the way to achieve the high targets the Government has signed up to is to push for households off the gas mains to change to wood pellet boilers. This is not exactly music to oil distributors' ears, nor does it seem logical. The industry is in the process of signing up to a voluntary agreement with Government to encourage its customers to take up more energy efficient measures, such as condensing boilers, better insulation and solar panels. Now, along comes a new strategy that will penalise all fossil fuel appliances, however efficient they are, and will subsidise customers to replace their new condensing boilers with wood pellet boilers! As wood pellet systems are more expensive to run, only affluent rural households are likely to take advantage of the grants – which the fuel-poor will have paid towards...

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# Fire-hardened Rock hits a healthy 80!

Rock Oil is celebrating 80 years in business this year – and is still in the same family that started it back in 1928, and still in the same town, Warrington. The current chairperson, Barbara Hewitt, is the daughter of company founder, Fred Malone and the current MD is Charles Hewitt.

The key celebration was a party for Rock employees present and past and key customers. It was a chance to reminisce about a fine sporting pedigree, a disastrous factory fire, and steady growth in a forward-looking company.

Fred Malone started Rock because he fancied a change from the profession of weights and measures. The business ticked over locally for many years, and after World War 2 it really took off, gradually building up custom. The purchase of its first sign-written van in 1958 was a proud moment. Barbara and her husband Ted Hewitt became directors of the business in 1966, the year when Rock Oil acquired its first tankers – allowing the company to deal with bulk fuels for the first time. A couple of years later Rock moved site. But disaster struck in 1973, when the premises burnt to the ground. To make matters worse, the company was uninsured! In 1975 Ted became the MD after Fred sadly passed away. Ted was confronted by the serious job of rebuilding the company after the total loss of the building and all materials.

With blending being taken care of by another blender, the business slowly but surely recovered and went into the 1980s reasonably fit, but with a choice to make: either pile it high and sell it cheap or gain some credibility.

With serious technical products, it was decided to become involved in racing. It was then that Rock entered into the motorcycle market. The need for the lubricants to be able to perform to the highest possible level was essential because of the high demand on components in motorcycle engines and

gearboxes. Technical excellence backed up with the involvement in racing meant the Rock name quickly became synonymous with top performing motorcycle products. It was at this time the current MD Charles becoming active in the business – and he spent many a wet weekend at race circuits helping the Rock brand become established.

The first major name to become involved was the Kawasaki 'Team Green' off-rovers. It is fair to say even



banner. A.E. Bennetts of Liverpool and Nickerson Lubricants of Halifax were both long standing independent lubricant blenders with their own specialised areas of business. Ted maintained a major involvement in the business until his death in 2005.



to this day Rock is still remembered for the involvement with Kawasaki. It was also during this time that Rock gained its first export customer and since the mid-1980s has built a very good level of export sales with friends worldwide. Charles took over as MD when Ted encountered health issues in the late 1980s and the 1990s saw the move to the present purpose-built site in Priestley Street, Warrington.

In the last 20 years, two other well established lubricant firms, were purchased and brought under the Rock

In 2008, the business is the largest it's ever been with nearly 70 employees and a turnover which has doubled in a decade. Barbara still plays an active part in the running of her father's business and is as enthusiastic now as when she became a director over 40 years ago.

With the next generation of the family now actively involved in the running of the business, the Rock story will doubtless take a few more twists and turns on its way to celebrating its 100th birthday!

# TV stardom for rugby-crazy Owens gang

If rugby is a religion in Wales, then Colin Owen and his mates must be the high priests – complete with outlandish outfits!

Back in 1999, he and his rugby-playing friends went to the test in Argentina dressed in rugby blazers and ties, and wearing giant fuzzy wigs – a headdress, Colin proudly says, that they pioneered! They caused such a stir that they were invited to the British Embassy in Buenos Aires – in costume.

Since then, they've made madness their trademark, and come up with crazy costumes whenever they attend an overseas test. In Australia, they were Steve Irwin look-alikes; in Argentina, they transformed into the Four Amigos.

Colin, General Manager of Owen Fuels in Wales; Mark Griffin, who looks after Owen Fuels' boiler care, and former transport owner Tony Rosser have grown up together, played rugby together for Llantwit Major rugby club and have done business together too.

In June, Welsh TV channel S4C's programme Friday Night with Jonathan (hosted by Welsh-born rugby hero Jonathan Davies) contacted Colin. The producers knew they could count on the lads to give them something interesting to film during the test in Pretoria in June – rugby aside, of course.

And these rugby fans par excellence came up with the goods! Colin's wife Shirley invented a 'Rorke's Drift' look that mixed together Welsh soldiers and Zulu warriors. They then had the (very expensive) outfits custom-made for them by a theatrical costumier.

They made such an impression that they had to refuse 'bookings' for appearances and presentations while they were in South Africa. There were slots on South African TV, guest appearances at business luncheons and hundreds of photos to pose for.

The S4C programme is due to be screened in November, but they've already had their fair share of TV stardom.

"At the test, the Sky cameras picked us up and within seconds our phones were red-hot," says Colin. "People were calling non-stop from Wales saying they could see us on the telly. It's not at all bad for business, either. You'd be amazed at the number of customers and contacts who get in touch."



## Welsh rugby celebs are right on queue

Owen Fuels' devotion to rugby pays big dividends nearer to home. At this year's Vale of Glamorgan Show, the company boasted a formidable front row, as the picture below shows (from left): Ieuan Evans, Neil Jenkins, and Shane Williams.



Shane plays for the Ospreys and Wales and is also a British Lion. Neil was the former world record point scorer in international rugby and the first to score over 1,000 points in international rugby. Ieuan was Wales international captain, former record try scorer for Wales, a British Lion and currently Sky Sports commentator. The back row Owen Fuels team was a



little weaker in rugby terms, but nevertheless very enthusiastic! It comprised (from left) Colin Owens, Audrey Williams, Lynette O'Shea, Myrddin Wilcox, Andrew Farrow, Paul Creed and Mark Griffin.

The line-up proved a fantastic piece of PR and really pulled in the crowds. Said Lynette: "It was a wet and dreary day at the show but we're not a company to let a bit of rain dampen our spirits, especially with the three of the best known and admired Welsh rugby players on our stand." The atmosphere was exciting and there was no way that anyone was going home, even wet, without a signed Welsh rugby fixture wall planner, as the queue picture below shows.

Owens fielded another rugby crowd puller at the Monmouth Show a little later in the month, in the form of Dafydd Jones, who plays flanker for the Scarlets and Wales.

# Gleaner backs the ride to help war heroes

Gleaner Oils is helping to provide vital support for the Help for Heroes charity as it aims to raise £6million for facilities to rehabilitate British servicemen and women injured in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

Gleaner will pay the fuel costs of a team who will support a trans-American endurance ride in May 2009 by two cyclists in a joint RAF and Metropolitan Police fundraiser called Operation Long Road.

The cyclists, Warrant Officer Nick Styles and Jason Lewis MBE, will be tailed by three support staff, physio Roy Hunte, administrator Peter Taylor and mechanic Andrew Jones, as they pedal from Santa Monica, California to Ground Zero, New York. The aim is to cover the 3,100-plus miles in 46 days.

Help for Heroes is trying to raise £6million for a new swimming pool and gym for the armed forces rehabilitation centre at Headley Court, Surrey. Jason himself is a British casualty of the fighting and said: "Now I can no longer contribute on the battlefield, I, and the rest of the team have turned our energies to supporting those who can."

Gleaner's Marketing Manager Andrew Laing said: "With two RAF and one Army base located within our delivery area, the number of servicemen and their families which could benefit from this charity are very high. We have agreed to fund their fuel cost for when they are in the US."



Gleaner MD David Todd (second left) presents the cheque to the riding team.

If other FPS members feel they would to support Operation Long Road, then phone Andrew on 01343 557445 or visit this website: [www.justgiving.com/longroad](http://www.justgiving.com/longroad)

## Bill is FPS Ireland golf winner



FPS in Ireland held a successful golf competition at Glasson Golf Club, County Westmeath in September.

Above, Laurence Coey from sponsors Harlequin present the FPS Irish Golf Trophy to the winner Bill O'Brien (right). Runner-up was Ned Kenny, who also got nearest the pin, and third was Nick Hayes. Damien Keating hit the longest drive.

## CHEVRON INCREASES SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

Chevron, owner of the Texaco brand, has upped funding for its 2008 Texaco Sportstars Bursary scheme to over €100,000. As a result, 25 clubs from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland will benefit from disbursements.

The number of qualifying clubs in the Republic increases from 10 to 20 and in N. Ireland from three to five. The Republic winners will each receive €5,000 and the N. Ireland winners will each get £3,500.

■ In Britain, Chevron, has signed a three-year partnership deal to become an Official Partner of The Football League Championship.

With Coca-Cola as the title sponsor, the deal provides the Texaco brand with exclusive rights to use the designation 'Official Motor Fuel Partner of The Football League Championship'.



Left to right: Stuart Morgan, Partnership Manager, The Football League; Mandy Hodson, Manager Brand Marketing Europe; Andrew Cox, Manager Area Marketing Support Europe.

## GULF'S RACING PEDIGREE ON SHOW

The Goodwood Festival of Speed celebrated 40 years of Gulf's racing history by featuring arguably the largest collection of powder blue and orange sports cars assembled in the UK.

Gulf has enjoyed an association with some of the greatest marques and racing drivers in the history of world endurance racing. The Aston Martin Racing DBR9 which won at the Le Mans 24 Hours this year, lined up alongside the historic Ford GT40 and Porsche 917, the McLaren F1 supercar and more.

Jonathan Turner, Managing Director of Gulf Retail, said: "We are very proud that a festival with the presence and prestige of Goodwood has decided to celebrate Gulf's 40 years of achievements in motorsport. At a time when we are working hard to increase the size and profile of Gulf's UK forecourt



and lubricants business, this is a mouth-watering prospect for all those associated with Gulf and the many enthusiasts who, like me, have grown up with images of GT40s winning at Le Mans and Steve McQueen doing battle in a Gulf 917.

The Aston Martin Racing DBR9 was driven to victory at Le Mans in the GT1 class by David Brabham, Darren Turner and Antonio Garcia.

## Charity choice

**Countrywide has chosen the Rural Stress Helpline as its charity of the year to benefit from various fund-raising efforts by the company.**

"We were impressed by the passion shown by the Rural Stress Helpline towards supporting and advising the rural community, which in many ways echoes Countrywide's own approach to rural life

and business," said Rebecca Barningham, Countrywide's Group Marketing Manager.

The Rural Stress Helpline team fields calls on subjects such as farm diversification, business problems, family problems, external relationship problems, government and local bureaucracy (rights of way, planning) mental and physical health, finance, housing and isolation.



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# FPS Regional Representatives

FPS is kept going by its distributor members, in particular the people who attend the regional meetings. In this and future issues, Downstream will profile the Regional Representatives who organise the meetings and give time to helping the industry in general. We start with DAVID HODGE, who is also currently FPS President.

## Loyalty is Ribble's key ingredient

It's a matter of pride to David Hodge, MD of Ribble Fuel Oils and FPS North West Regional Representative, that so many of his staff are long servers with the firm.

Mick Lofthouse joined the firm as a driver in 1973 and is working with them today on sales to agricultural and small commercial customers. Keith Yates started in 1978 and is still there, and many of the office staff have been with Ribble for 15 years or more.

Loyalty and continuity are vital ingredients to the way Ribble has grown over the years, believes the MD.

"You're only as good as your people. With this business in particular, customers like personal service and to hear a familiar voice. Call centres are all very well, but we encourage loyalty in our customers and centres can't achieve that for us. Our staff can," says David, who is FPS North West Regional Representative, and 2008 FPS President.

Ribble was launched by his parents, Hermon and Andrea, in 1967. "It was a 'one man and his dog' outfit, but they didn't have the dog," quips David.

The firm expanded steadily. David joined in 1985 and his brother Ian three years later. From the one base in Bamber Bridge, today Ribble Fuel Oils has three additional distribution centres, in Southport, Liverpool and Manchester, to service the whole of the North West and the South Lakes. It runs 16 tankers, has a payroll of 40-plus and it is a Total AD.

David and Ian both know the business from the ground up. Both hold Class 1 HGV and ADR licences and David still drives at peak delivery times.

Until recently, the brothers were joint MDs of Ribble. But things have changed. Ian now heads a completely



separate but complementary company, Complete Tank Solutions. This is dedicated to supplying and servicing tanks of all sizes, from small domestic up to 100,000 litre industrial. And with UK Spill accreditation, the company is also into environmental clear-ups.

It's a logical expansion from the core fuel delivery business, as was Ribble's acquisition of lubes specialist Geo. Broughton and Co.

With a busy company to run and growth in mind, David nevertheless makes a determined effort to carve out time for FPS.

So what does David think the future holds for fuel oil distributors?

"For firms of our size, I think continuing expansion through acquisition, enlarging the customer base and lateral growth into associated business areas makes sense. I also think smaller distributors, with say two or three tankers, will carry on much as they do now."

"The big change will come in mid-sized firms. To grow, they are confronted with having to make a step-change. From being a size where a handful of people can do all the necessary jobs, they have to think about appointing full-time staff dedicated to specific

tasks, particularly with all the legislation and regulation that applies these days. I think many will either join larger operators, or go back to being a slightly smaller concern."

### STAUNCH FPS SUPPORTER

David has been attending FPS meetings ever since he went with his father in the far-off days when Jim Rowson was FPS Chief Executive.

He said: "If people are putting their life and soul into their business, as I know many distributors do, then I think they should also try to give some time to the whole industry. It benefits the industry and their own individual companies. You can't expect other people to do the work in sorting out technical issues, and thinking about the implications of proposed regulations."

"I've seen that people who give their time to help the industry can be worth their weight in gold. I would love to see more oil distributors play an active part, if only by turning up at regional meetings. These are not just about work, they're good social occasions and highly enjoyable."

The FPS Distributor Conference, at the Mottram Hall Hotel and Golf Complex near Manchester, was excellent for high-quality, thought-provoking presentations from fluent speakers. It was sponsored by Reynolds Trade Credit.

## Defra aims to minimise impact of Energy Services Directive

As far as the EU and UK Government were concerned, there was a link between climate change, global warming and fuel use, said **David Rigal, Senior Policy Advisor, Climate Change Group, Defra.**

Through the Energy Services Directive, the EU would place an obligation on energy suppliers to promote energy efficiency and improvements to end-users. The best way of fulfilling that aim was for suppliers to ensure there is advice available. Defra could then monitor its availability when necessary.

Defra had worked with FPS and other trade associations to arrive at that view and extensive consultations had revealed that the best way of implementing it was through a voluntary agreement rather than legislation.

“We want to minimise the impact of the obligation on the industry and this is the best way forward. We are not trying to put you out of business,” stressed Mr Rigal.

Another possibility, a levy on suppliers to contribute to an energy efficiency fund, was dismissed because it would be unpopular and too difficult to implement.

The UK Government wanted to be seen as green and the Defra objective was to have a voluntary agreement that, when read by the EU, would be very clear that it fulfilled the UK’s obligations.

Small suppliers, those with a turnover of less than €2million or energy sales of less than 75GWh or less than 10 employees, could be exempted from the regulation, but should still be able to participate through FPS and other trade bodies.

“We will ask you to tell your customers that energy saving services are available and direct them to where they can find them,” Mr Rigal said.

Among his suggestions for how suppliers could implement the voluntary agreement were these:

- handing out advisory leaflets with deliveries or bills
- advice through companies’ own and FPS websites
- being ready with advice to customers suffering fuel poverty
- sharing best practice.

With Phase 1 of Defra’s work on the Directive’s voluntary agreement complete, Phase 2 would start in January 2009

**Downstream Autumn 2008**



“We want to minimise the impact of the obligation on the industry and this is the best way forward. We are not trying to put you out of business.”

and would involve reporting data on the Directive’s progress to the EU.

Mr Rigal felt the best way of collecting this information was through FPS and other trade bodies. Defra would collect data annually to December 2016, including breaking down customer numbers by fuel supplied, aggregate volumes supplied, energy services activities with the customers, and number and type of referrals from suppliers to third-party organisations.

**Continued on page 14**



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## Continued from page 13

He revealed that some non-members of trade associations were indicating they would refuse to take part in the Directive. While options to compel participation were limited, he felt that non-participating companies would be unlikely to supply to any public sector body.

If a whole sector refused to play ball, then the Secretary of State could be

forced to consider options other than a voluntary agreement.

### Fuel poverty: Request for help

In the debate which followed, FPS member Ian Macmillan from Swan Petroleum asked for help in providing specific, accurate information to those afflicted by fuel poverty.

“A lot of people will be in a lot of trouble with this and we want to help

them as much as possible. We want to be able to tell them to ring Social Services and ask for form XYZ.”

Another delegate stressed the importance of correlating temperature fluctuations to fuel use when the collected data was analysed.

Seminar Chairman Geoff Shaw told the speaker: “We all appreciate the light touch that the department is choosing to take.”

## Battling to nip NOx-ious Euro measures in the bud

**Michael Bennett, Executive Director of Eurofuel, the European Heating Oil Association, gave an insight into the challenges ahead for heating oil providers and suppliers.**

Oil provided 20% of heating throughout the EU, and the challenge for suppliers was to provide enough energy at affordable prices. Oil produced fewer particulates than wood and pellets, but more than gas, he said.

A major issue was the Energy-Using Products (EUP) Directive due to be implemented in 2013 on NOx emissions. Eurofuel was currently engaged in some intensive lobbying to change proposals that could make it impossible to manufacture kerosene-burning boilers from 2013.

**“We are working on the EC project team and MEPs. MEPs do not see the NOx Directive being justified.”**

The problem lay in the fact that UK and Irish kerosene-burning condensing boilers were unique in the EU and, unlike the much larger gas oil boilers used in mainland Europe, could not cut emissions to the level the EU wanted. The EU had stipulated a maximum of 105 mg/kWh of NOx emissions by 2013. Eurofuel was arguing for proposed cuts from today’s 250 mg/kWh maximum to 195 by 2013 and 120 by 2018. To give UK and Irish manufacturers time to achieve this, it was proposing a five-year derogation.

The EU would prefer to push the UK into using gas oil as its prime heating oil fuel, in line with the rest of Europe. Gas oil



boilers were larger and more expensive to make. Such a change could drive existing users to alternative fuels such as electricity, which would not make sense.

The irony was that NOx emissions were primarily caused by transport and mostly affected heavily-congested city centres, not rural areas where oil heating is concentrated.

MEPs were sympathetic to the cause, Commission officials less so.

On the Energy Services Directive, he pointed out that both France and Austria had gone down the route of a contributory fund into which every supplier would have to pay.

Mr Bennett said that while the perception of EU policy-making was of some giant machine churning out regulations, the reality was that each regulation was often put together by a small team of Eurocrats.

In conclusion, he said Eurofuel was making good progress on lobbying on the EUP directive; and that advocacy work with MEPs on the RES directive had paid off. He invited delegates to a Eurofuel event in Brussels on 11 February 2009 during the EU Sustainable Energy Week. Information on the event would be placed on the website – [www.eurofuel.eu](http://www.eurofuel.eu).

**Forthcoming FPS Regional meetings feature speakers and discussions on key industry issues. Phone FPS on 01565 631313 for details of meetings near you.**

## Defusing the time bomb of tanker driver shortages

**Chris Fylan, Skills for Logistics (right),** opened his talk on the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) by saying that, in common with other logistics industry members, fuel distributors were sitting on a time bomb – the age imbalance in the tanker driver population would cause a huge shortage soon.

Of 309,100 drivers in logistics, 2% were under 25 while 53% were over 45. Some of the problem had come from non-replacement of blue collar workers who had been promoted into management.

The FPS would be a key training provider for fuel tanker delivery drivers when it comes to implementing the EU directive on driver professional competence.

Among the aims of the Directive, said Mr Fylan, were to improve road safety, have safer and healthier drivers, improve the professional image of the industry and its drivers, and establish continuous professional development.

The CPC qualification would be in two parts, similar to the ADR structure – an initial test for new entrants and periodic training for all existing drivers.

The initial test would comprise a theory paper that would contain 100 questions compared with the existing 60, and hazard perception tests - up from 14 to 19. Twenty per cent of the syllabus would centre on safe, fuel-efficient driving practice so drivers would reduce wear and tear on vehicles.

For existing drivers, the CPC required that they go through 35 hours of approved training every five years – the equivalent of one day a year between 2009 and 2014. An industry like fuel distribution could formulate its own modules, tailored to the specific requirements of the industry. There was no requirement to test, so no passes and no failures.

But some delegates felt that literacy and numeracy problems that would be brought to light in training procedures may well force old drivers into early retirement and deter young people from entering the industry.

Mr Fylan's disclosure that LGV driving age drops from 21 to 18 from September 2009 was not universally welcomed. Many delegates felt that 18 was far too young to be in charge of a volatile liquid in a very expensive truck and that, anyway, insurance premiums would be prohibitive to reflect the risk of a young driver.



## Capitalising on the value of publicity

**Daniel Schraibman, Senior Press Officer, Chevron (below),** highlighted the value of press releases and media links to win beneficial publicity for fuel distributors.

Proactive PR augmented other marketing activities like flyers, newsletters and community sponsorships and events. It could be considerably more cost-effective than straight advertising. He pointed out that we all choose to forget that the energy industry was an essential public service, adding that distributors were all doing fantastic things in their local areas.

He peppered his list of hints and tips for winning publicity with lots of anecdotes. In particular he talked about Chevron's Communities in Crisis campaign, which put an interesting spin on rural life. The campaign had pointed out to people that filling up at the supermarket was not about saving 1p a litre on fuel – but potentially knocking thousands off the price of their property. This was because failure to use a rural forecourt/shop would force closure and so relegate a village to a hamlet without any community facility.



## Employer on a loser

**Tom Baker, an Associate Solicitor with Beachcroft LLP and David Cunningham, a Barrister at Old Square Chambers,** took delegates through a fascinating mock trial based on a real claim against an employer following an incident where an employee fell from a ladder in the workplace.

Having staged the proceedings, they invited delegates to judge for themselves whether the employer, employee or a combination of the two, had been at fault.

Most people felt the employer would have been liable – and they were in line with the verdict from the real-life hearing. The trial was a salutary cautionary tale for all distributors. No matter how strange an employee's action seems, the law weighs heavily on their side in almost all cases. The morals: be as mindful of preventing potential hazards and mishaps as you possibly can be, and always ensure your liability insurance is up to scratch!

The FPS Autumn Charity Golf tournament was sponsored by ConocoPhillips. Held the day before the Distributor Conference at the excellent Mottram Hall venue, it produced some good golf and lively banter.

Results: Nearest the pin - John Surtees. Longest drive - Peter Hodgson. 3 - Peter Hodgson. 2 - Len Hicks 1 - Tom Sadler, pictured below right with Tony Conway of sponsors ConocoPhillips.

The winner of the raffle at the dinner was Maurice Randall of Shell, who won a selection of Premier Cru wines. The raffle raised nearly £400 for the FPS anti-cancer charity Oil Together.



# Do algae provide the new route to diesel?

The same brown algae that coat rocks and cause anglers to slip while fly fishing contain oil that can be turned into diesel fuel, according to one microbiologist.

Drivers can't pump algal fuel into their gas tanks yet, but Keith Cooksey, of Montana State University, maintains that the idea holds promise and that it could be a reality today if people had not been so short-sighted 20 years ago. Cooksey is one of many U.S. scientists who studied the feasibility of turning algal oil into biodiesel in the 1980s. The U.S. Department of Energy funded their research. Cooksey's lab made a number of discoveries.

Funding dried up, however, and the scientists went on to other things. "Rumour had it that big oil got in the way," Cooksey said. "They didn't want competition so the project was dropped."

Cooksey retired as a research professor in 2003 but some months ago started getting phone calls and e-mails from researchers and others who had read about his algal work on the Web or had seen it referenced in scientific journals.

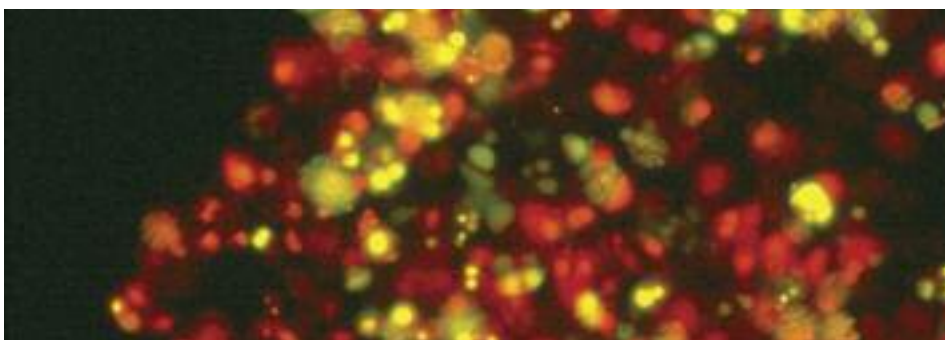
The revived interest in microalgae stems from global conflict, climate change and the resulting focus on alternative fuels.

Still interested in pursuing algal fuel, Cooksey said his lab in the 1980s figured out how to increase oil production from algae. It developed a system that screened algae for their oil content and greatly reduced the sample size needed for their research. It developed a stain for algae, called Nile Red. When treated with the stain, the algae became fluorescent under certain conditions, making it easier to measure their oil content. Algae grow naturally along rivers, the seashore, and in the mangrove swamps of southern Florida, Cooksey said. They also grow in wastewater treatment ponds and can be grown commercially in man-made ponds.

One design tested in the 1980s is a shallow pond that looks like a raceway. Another is a system of deeper ponds. Algae can be grown especially well in desert states that have plenty of sunshine and access to water unusable for traditional agriculture or drinking. Because of its salt content, salt water is more economical than fresh water for growing algae, so southwestern states with saline aquifers might find it easiest to grow them.

"In principle, lipids from microalgae are suitable for refining into conventional liquid fuels," said a 1983 annual report from the Solar Energy Research Institute that provided Cooksey's funding and some algal cultures. "Indeed, in the past, biological oils have been refined to fuels during shortages in petroleum supply."

Joseph LaStella, president of Green Star Products Inc. in San Diego, California, had his company build a demonstration  
**Downstream Autumn 2008**



This view was created by staining a green alga with Nile Red. The yellow areas represent oil droplets. The red areas are the parts of the cell that hold chlorophyll. (Photo courtesy of Keith Cooksey).

pond. Soybeans produce about 50 gallons of oil per acre per year, and canola produces about 130, he said. Algae, however, produce about 4,000 gallons per acre a year, and he predicted it will go far beyond that. He said algae require only sunshine and non-drinkable water to grow. The demo pond showed that algae will grow even at sub-zero temperatures.

David Tooke, director of operations at Sustainable Systems in Missoula, said: "With new interest in biofuels, it's another opportunity to supply those fuels. As far as surface area needed, it's more reasonable to assume we could attain those levels of production from algae versus agricultural crops."

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## CHANGES IN FUELS AND FUEL HANDLING – CHANGES IN MICROBIAL PROBLEMS

Clever things these microbes. They have been feeding on marine and automotive diesel, gas oil, heating oil and kerosene for decades, and on unleaded petrol as soon as we stopped poisoning them with lead. Now, if they had hands, they would certainly be clapping and thanking us for today's tastier fuel menus. Nicer food means faster growth, and growth equals the slime responsible for filter and injection fouling, and sometimes accelerated corrosion.

Microbes are everywhere, in small invisible numbers, and a sizeable proportion of them can proliferate in the bottom water phase associated with fuels and lubes, and particularly at the fuel/water interfaces in the tank bottom and on wet tank walls. From here, helped by the detergents (bio-surfactants) which they produce, they migrate into the fuel phase. Figure 1 is a sample from a heavily infected gas oil tank. Hydrocarbons provide carbon and energy for growth. Straight chain, branched chain and aromatic hydrocarbons can all be degraded and used as microbial food. Different microbes have different degradative preferences and capabilities.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING MICROBIAL GROWTH

As always, water is essential for microbes, and the rigorous removal of free water is a recommended housekeeping strategy to minimise microbial growth in all fuels. The ability of biodiesels to absorb water may be a factor in promoting today's exploding 'epidemic' of infected biodiesels.

Temperature is an important factor. Limited growth takes place below 10°C but above that, growth rate increases with rise in temperature: The optimum temperature varies with different types of microbes but is probably around 28°C. Microbial slime in vehicle tanks, particularly trucks and buses, has been a feature of the current epidemic of biodiesel problems, and this growth may be stimulated if the tanks are in warm locations or just by the warming effect of surplus fuel pumped to the fuel injectors and then returned to the vehicle tank. Possibly we are also seeing an overall influence from climate change, not only on land but also at sea, where fuel cargoes and

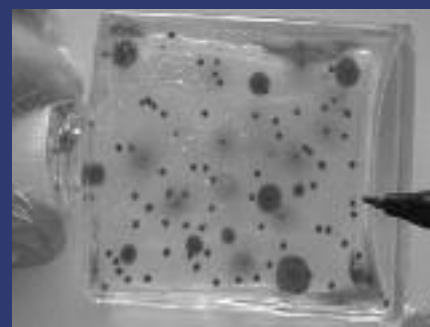


**Figure 1.** Gas Oil heavily contaminated with microorganisms. Note the turbidity of fuel and soft deposit of microbial growth. When the fuel is disturbed this 'sludge' disperses throughout the fuel.

**Figure 2.** Truck filter clogged with microbial sludge.



**Figure 3.** Testing Fuel for Microorganisms Using On-site MicrobMonitor2 test. After addition of measured volume of infected fuel sample to bottle of nutrient gel [3a] and incubation, each microbe in the sample has reproduced to form a visible red coloured spot (colony of microbes) [3b]. The number of spots is counted or estimated and is equivalent to the number of microbes in the volume of fuel tested.



ships' bunker tanks equilibrate to the warmer outside sea temperature. Nutrients, containing nitrogen and phosphorus compounds, are essential for microbes, and are sourced from fuel additives, and from ingress of sea and environmental water. Changes in additives and wetter fuels could be stimulating growth.

## NEW FUELS – NEW PROBLEMS

Only a few types of microbes can tolerate and degrade the small molecules in petrol. Lead is toxic to them and there were few operational problems due to growth in petrol until lead was removed – and new additives introduced to boost performance – and in some cases feed more microbes. Petrol/alcohol blends are not usually attractive to micro-organisms. Alcohols migrate from fuel into associated water; if they accumulate at an aqueous phase concentration of more than around 15% v.v., they inhibit all microbes. Propanol is more anti-microbial than ethanol and even more than methanol. At low aqueous concentration, alcohols become nutrients. Like us, different microbes have different tolerances to alcohol.

Fatty acid methyl esters (FAME) are relatively easy for microbes to split up (hydrolyse); the fatty acids formed are then readily degraded for energy and as a carbon source. Most of us have come across rancid fat - FAME degradation is analogous. In our laboratory we have tested many hundreds of samples of biodiesel, from all parts of the storage and distribution chain, including garage forecourts, and end-user tanks and vehicles, and we are finding widespread microbial growth, coupled to operational problems. Figure 2 is a truck filter blocked with microorganisms. We are recording unusual microbial growth everywhere, in all blends of biodiesel. FAME is also now being found in other fuels due to cross contamination during common use of pipe- lines and tanks. The predominant microbial culprits are yeasts. It had been anticipated that the fatty acids in FAME would encourage the proliferation of the highly corrosive Sulphate Reducing Bacteria, which depend on fatty acids as nutrients. However this has not happened, possibly because SRB are averse to oxygen, and rapid fuel turnover aerates

fuel and prevents stagnation. Adulterated fuel and unstable fuels are now in widespread distribution and use, and are probably more nutritious for microbes than stable and unadulterated fuels.

## ANTI-MICROBIAL STRATEGIES

Anti-microbial strategies should always include good housekeeping and rigorous free water removal has already been mentioned. This should be coupled with allowing adequate settling time, so that both microbes (density about 1.05 gm/ml) and water, can readily be removed. But at many terminals, rapid throughput does not allow this. Prevention of microbiological cross contamination from common use dirty pipe lines and tanks is also desirable, but rarely achievable. Poor tank design is another factor, particularly poorly located and poorly designed drains. If good housekeeping does not work, the next resort is to use an approved fuel 'disinfectant' – a fuel biocide.

Few fuel biocides are marketed in Europe. They must be compliant with the European Biocidal Products Directive, be endorsed by the fuel supplier, and approved by the engine builder involved. They must be fuel soluble so that they disperse in the fuel to wherever the microbes are lurking, and also preferentially water soluble so that they migrate into wet slimes and free water, and kill the microbes there. Dead microbes do not disappear and can still cause filter and injector fouling, sometimes worse than before biocide treatment. Thick slimes are not penetrated by biocides and many microbes will survive. Hence physical or chemical cleaning should take place before a biocide is used in a heavily fouled fuel system.

GrotaMar71 (Schulke & Mayr GmbH) and Kathon FP 1.5 (Rohm & Haas, USA) are two of the most widely used fuel biocides, with widespread endorsements from fuel suppliers and engine builders. They can be used as a shock treatment to decontaminate tanks and facilities, or at a lower preventive concentration to simply suppress growth. Suppliers of biodiesel may opt for preventive biocide dosing, either into the FAME before blending, or into the finished products.

Whichever anti-microbial strategy is used, its success should be validated by an assay for viable microbes. This testing can be carried out by a competent laboratory or can now be performed on site. Routine on-site testing for microbes is also a prudent monitoring strategy.

## ON-SITE TESTING FOR MICRO-ORGANISMS IN FUEL AND ASSOCIATED WATER

The MicrobMonitor2 test kit, which is recommended by IATA for testing aircraft fuel, is a safe and user friendly on-site test kit. It is quantitative, so trends can be noted, and limit values can be set and linked to remedial actions. It is much easier and safer to kill microbes when growth is just starting than wait until operational problems are occurring. In brief, a measured volume of fuel (or associated water) is introduced into a small bottle of a nutrient gel which is thixotropic – it liquefies when shaken. The bottle is shaken to mix the sample and gel together and the gel is allowed to reset as a flat layer. The bottle is kept warm, or placed in a small incubator, and each microbe in the sample reproduces within a day or so into a visible red 'colony'. The number of red spots equates to the number of microbes in the volume of sample tested. The MicrobMonitor2 test is shown in Figure 3. The test is not affected by fuel biocides and can be used to validate the efficacy of biocide use.

## CONCLUSIONS

Changes in fuels and in fuel handling have led to a substantial increase in the incidence and severity of problems caused by microbial growth. Many fuel suppliers, distributors, retailers and end-users are introducing monitoring programmes, using on-site or laboratory testing, and successfully implementing control measures.

Others are still wondering what these nasty slimes are and where they are coming from. Hopefully, this article will give them some assurance that they may be growing better fed, fatter, faster microbes, but these are not 'super bugs', and they can easily be detected and then inhibited or killed.

ECHA Microbiology Ltd, Cardiff, tel 02920 496321, [www.echamicrobiology.co.uk](http://www.echamicrobiology.co.uk)

## Getting serious about going UN

Traditionally, heating oil has been stored above ground, but subterranean storage is being considered in some quarters.

It may appear an attractive option, but it opens a whole new book of risks and procedures.

Given the potential for leaks to occur unseen in underground installations, companies undertaking such projects for domestic or commercial premises have to be absolutely certain they have followed procedures and that their products comply with regulations.

Planning permission is needed for an underground installation (see Environment Agency PPG27). The environmental sustainability of the site, tank design and materials used to construct the tank and associated pipework all need to be assessed. In particular, proximity to

watercourses, and the site's geology, hydrogeology and groundwater conditions need to be considered. In some cases, the Environment Agency may insist on groundwater-monitoring boreholes.

Any tank installed must be double skinned and have an interstitial monitoring device with automatic alarms so problems can be identified immediately. The access chamber should also have some form of containment so that, in the event of a leak or spillage in this area, the spill is contained for remedial action.

All underground tanks must have overfill prevention. Steel tanks must have durable anti-corrosion measures.

Pipework should be as joint-free as possible and, ideally, joints should have an inspection cover and testing point. Like the tank,

### Michael Ong FPS Safety Adviser

pipework should be double skinned and incorporate a leak monitoring system.

Leak detection systems should be robust and be able to monitor wetstock accurately.

Records detailing construction and build criteria (including the technical drawings, pipework routes, dimensions and materials used) must be kept and be readily available.

Once the tank is in place, its contents have to be measured in litres – not as a percentage. The best method is a fully calibrated dipstick that is integral to the tank filler inlet.

The grade of fuel must be displayed on a plate close to the filling point, and tank

capacity should also be visible, on the same plate ideally. There should always be an allowance of at least 5% between tank full and tank top.

There should be a permanent plate attached alongside the fill point giving full delivery instructions and include the information above and the location of the vent. Care must be taken that the vent does not exhaust anywhere where vapours may ignite, for example, close to a fence, barbeque, or building in which fumes can build up.

It has been industry practice for over 50 years for safety purposes that all underground tanks are delivered by 'gravity drop'. Deliveries at retail forecourts and commercial



Harlequin new 1100BND/ENV

## Out with the old, in w

### Slimline bunded tank is launched

Harlequin have launched a new addition to a fast-growing range of environmentally preferred bunded tanks.

"After 12 years' sterling service, the original 1100BND/ENV is being retired," explained John Switzer. "Its place within the Harlequin range is being taken by an all-new model, which builds upon the success of the original and adds to it contemporary aesthetics; space-saving, compact base dimensions, and a choice of top or bottom outlet."

"And of course, being a Harlequin it is available complete with the market-leading Apollo electronic oil tank contents gauge; fail-safe overfill prevention capability; electronic bund warning alarm, together with lockable manhole access and lockable fill and inspection points."

First previewed earlier this year at FPS Expo in Dublin, the new OFCERT Licensed model has already entered production at Harlequin's Advanced Manufacturing Centre in County Armagh. Its arrival brings

# UNDERGROUND

premises are delivered this way.

The tanker connects a hose from the vehicle outlet to the storage tank and allows the product to flow under its own gravity into the storage tank. This prevents pressurisation of the tank during delivery which can result in the tank being stressed to the point of failure. It also ensures that the fuel flow into the tank is controlled by the air being vented during the delivery. Vents must be equal to or larger than the inlet.

It is not uncommon for vents to become restricted/blocked between deliveries. This can build pressure which may well result in a tank failure.

There are a host of other issues for fuel suppliers to consider with underground tanks.

- The tanker must be within

20 ft of the delivery access chamber. This is because the hose(s) used have to be armoured and the maximum delivery hose is 30ft.

- The access chamber must be dry and allow the safe connection of the delivery hose. The driver must be able to monitor the vent stack throughout the delivery without moving from the tanker.
- There must be suitable access/exit and hard standing for a 26 tonne, industry standard vehicle.
- The storage tank must be capable of safely containing the complete contents of the compartment. For safety it would be advisable to allow approx 5% of the capacity limit (unless the driver/customer is familiar with the tank) for error in the tank calibration/dip stick. Because of that requirement, a top up system is not possible – the customer must order a safe specified amount.

## Underground tanks: buried treasure or buried problems?

If some householders will go as far as to drape their oil tanks with camouflage netting to hide them, wouldn't they all jump at the chance of a tank completely sunk from view?

That's the question some companies have been considering when looking at opportunities for new products. But, while manufacturers may have been cautiously weighing up the potential for underground domestic storage tanks, there are huge concerns over their safety.

Downstream spoke to six tank manufacturers, all of whom were highly sceptical about the suitability of buried tanks, citing the potential for an oil leak to quietly contaminate the area, unnoticed until serious damage was done.

Harlequin's John Switzer elaborated: "Domestic underground oil tanks have been available for some time in the UK, but research undertaken by Harlequin suggests there is little demand for them from consumers. By their very design, they are inherently unsuitable for most oil heating installations. Installation costs are also considerably higher than for a comparable, above-ground storage tank, which further reduces their appeal to homeowners and householders.

"Oil tanks are not fit-and-forget products. So in that context, how can a domestic buried oil tank be effectively inspected and maintained? Indeed, in parts of North America and mainland Europe, where domestic underground tanks were once prevalent, there is a move toward UK style, above-ground fuel storage. Placing a tank above ground, permits tanks, pipework and ancillary equipment to be easily inspected and maintained, in a way it simply cannot be when buried," said John.

He also doubted the need for buried tanks, given that above-ground installations could now be much smaller than in the past.

"Modern, high efficiency, condensing boilers consume significantly reduced amounts of fuel when compared with their predecessors. Therefore, oil tanks in modern home heating installations tend to be take up less space. At Harlequin, we have noticed a move toward smaller, domestic bundled tanks between 650 litres and 1,300 litres. This represents a significant reduction in storage capacity on only a decade ago."

Overall, John believes underground storage would be a backwards step.

"Besides which," he says, "demand, in our experience, can only be described as minimal for such a product."

## With the new

the total number of slimline bundled models offered by the company to four – ranging from 650 litres to 1,300. The company also offers 46 bundled tanks, available in 13 different capacities and three colourways.

"Since the arrival of the original 1100BND/ENV in 1996, bundled tanks have grown from representing less than one per cent of Harlequin sales, to representing the majority of sales today," added John. "The environmental benefits of are now well understood by industry stakeholders.

"We look forward to bundled tanks being made mandatory at all new and replacement fuel storage installations – bringing the UK and Republic of Ireland into line with the higher standards that have existed for some time, in many mainland European countries."

## Credit crunch brings swings and roundabouts, says Clarehill

**Slowdown in the construction market and high energy prices have taken their toll on the domestic storage tank sector, say Harlequin manufacturers, Clarehill Plastics, but the news is by no means all bad.**

### High expectations

Clarehill have found that, thanks to the internet, end-users are more informed than before about the products they buy. As a result, their expectations are much higher than they were even a few years ago.

"That said, it is still obviously important to offer a value-for-money product," adds John. "However, in our experience, end-users are increasingly looking

beyond the sticker price and considering the features and benefits of the product. And that is where the Fuel Station range scores.

Unlike some other superficially comparable products, Harlequin Fuel Stations are a purpose-designed diesel storage solution, not a heating oil tank with a pump clipped on the top and a different shaped lid, or a cabinet bolted on the side.

"The market has long moved on from being driven solely by price. Performance, specification and ease of use are today more important considerations than simply being able to buy a poorly specified product at a rock bottom price."

**The arrival of Euro IV and Euro V** generation common rail diesel engines has also led to end-users becoming more demanding in terms of specification. And high fuel prices have

made tank owners more aware of the need to control their fuel usage.

"At larger sites, where many different users may have access to a tank, the digital flow meter fitted to larger Harlequin Fuel Stations is definitely a selling point, being up to five times more accurate than some mechanical flow meters," says John.

### Fuel control essential

"And unsurprisingly, we've also seen an increase in demand for fuel management systems, which allow tank owners to restrict access by electronic key or PIN to authorised personnel only – as well as allowing them to monitor via their desktop PC how much fuel is being used and by whom. Only a few years back, the cost of a fuel management system would have proven prohibitive at all but the largest installations. But with derv well over £1 a litre across the UK, companies are asking whether they can afford not to control their fuel."

In Clarehill's experience, many companies are not simply seeking to stockpile fuel, but are also concerned about ensuring security of supply. Fuel protests and drivers' strikes earlier in the year certainly concentrated minds in the logistics sector. John spoke to one operator with distribution bases across the UK and in mainland Europe.

"They admitted that, in the absence of strategic fuel reserves, without access to forecourt diesel, their operations would come to a halt within three days. A week later and they'd be bankrupt," said John.

The cost of fuel now so outweighs the cost of the storage that specifiers are becoming happier to pay for extra features. If a more expensive tank provides important performance benefits such as ease of use, greater forward storage capacity, fuel management equipment or is simply better configured, many people will now happily pay the premium.



**Harlequin FS5000 Fuel Station**

"The replacement sector continues to be largely immune from the impact of the credit crunch," said Clarehill's Marketing Manager John Switzer.

"Regulatory change in Northern Ireland and Scotland in particular continues to drive the market towards bundled and away from single skin tanks.

"On the commercial side of our business, we've experienced significant demand for our range of Fuel Point and Fuel Station bundled diesel storage tanks.

"At Harlequin, we're fortunate in having a knowledgeable and solution-focused reseller base, that actively sell our products, together with the performance advantages they offer end-users."

# Sometimes great things come in small packages...



...like the new Harlequin 650BND/ENV Slimline Bunded Oil Tank. At only 65cm wide and 172cm long, the 650BND/ENV will fit into even the smallest of spaces – making it ideal for smaller installations incorporating a modern, high efficiency, condensing oil boiler.

But whilst the 650BND/ENV may be small in size, it's big on specification. As you'd expect from a Harlequin, it's supplied complete with electronic oil tank contents gauge, bund warning alarm, failsafe overfill prevention capability and a choice of top or bottom outlet. And it benefits from almost three decades experience in the design, development and manufacture of environmentally preferred, rotationally moulded fuel storage solutions.

**For more information on the complete Harlequin range, visit [www.oil-tanks.co.uk](http://www.oil-tanks.co.uk)**

**Common Sense Fuel Storage Solutions... That Work**

Visit Harlequin Online at [www.oil-tanks.co.uk](http://www.oil-tanks.co.uk)

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## Listening to customers leads to new products

**Suggestions from customers can sometimes lead to innovative and saleable products – and this has certainly been true for new lines introduced by Atlas Tanks.**

Atlas, based at Dundalk in County Louth, brought out a 1,000-litre bunded tank last year, and now has two new products in the pipeline – both the result of customer feedback.

“The 1000 Slimline has proved to be a real success thanks to its narrow width,” says National Sales Manager Richard Marsh.

At just 660mm wide, it has been a popular tank with end-users who have to fit a bunded tank, but only have a small space. A small footprint also makes it easier for installers to work with an appropriate slab base.

A second new bunded tank is due out

soon and Atlas launched Truck Depot at the end of September.

The Truck Depot is a small fuel storage unit, with a 12-volt pump. It can be moved around a site, or on the back of a suitable vehicle to dispense fuel for fork-lifts, plant or small vehicles. ADR-approved and designed to safely hold small quantities of fuel, it can be a boon for farmers and contractors who need to store and re-locate fuel easily and securely.



1000 Slimline tank from Atlas

“We have a very loyal and informative customer base, and we take our customers’ advice when looking at new products,” said Richard. “We’ve once again taken our customers’ feedback and developed some new products that will generate business for us and, more importantly, bring benefits to our customers.”

## Scotsman flying with Titan and Broga

**Titan Environmental and Brogan Fuels have upgraded the fuel management system at the Edinburgh depot of Scotsman Publications, part of the Johnston Press group.**

With its fleet of 30 vehicles, the Edinburgh depot services the city, Fife and West Lothian areas for Edinburgh Evening News deliveries.

With high fuel prices, the newspaper group wanted to ensure that all fuel was accounted for and Derick Cochrane from Scotsman Publications contacted Brogan Fuels to tender for the contract.

Working with Titan, Brogan Fuels were able to address one of the paper’s main concerns – fuel wastage and

security - and the Titan / Brogan Fuels submission for the work was also the most cost-effective solution for the paper.

The work involved fitting a Titan FuelMaster 10,000 litre tank – a bunded fuel storage and dispensing system. John Walsh, from Titan Environmental, said: “This product both facilitated the depot’s capacity requirements and guaranteed longevity of the tank. The new design combines performance with strength. The key is in the materials – a plastic inner

tank is encapsulated by a steel outer tank offering strength and robust security.” They also installed Titan’s Cube Management System. Each driver in the

fleet has an individual key and must register when dispensing fuel, thus tracking its usage. There’s a master key for the Distribution Manager and



The Titan FuelMaster 10,000 litre capacity tank

# Tuffa clears up fire risk confusion

**Fire safety is always an issue when it comes to storing fuel – and Tuffa's FireStop oil tank has become a popular product with installers.**

According to the company, the FireStop tank is a modern concept: quick, efficient and easy to install without the need to move the tank or construct firewalls.

"The success of the product and its usefulness in the oil tank market is borne out by its popularity with installers," says Tuffa's Managing Director Robert Shenton.

However, Tuffa have found that some users have misunderstood safety standards and assumed that the FireStop exempts them from building control requirements.

"There is continuing confusion in some quarters regarding siting tanks to avoid the fire risk," said Robert. "To clarify the position for the many installers who

use and value the FireStop approach, the tank is not an alternative method of compliance to that specified in BS5410."

Regulations state that: "Liquid fuel storage systems and the pipes connecting them to combustion appliances shall be so constructed and separated from buildings and the boundary of the premises as to reduce to a reasonable level the risk of the fuel igniting in the event of fire in adjacent buildings or premises."

"Installers may also wish to know that, thanks to the recent tie-up with the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors (APHC), self-certification of the tank installation is available to those who have joined the APHC's competent persons scheme."



Tuffa's FireStop tank

the device's sophisticated memory allows for all transactions to be recorded.

"It's one of the newest innovations in the market and is increasingly popular with distribution companies as operation costs continue to spiral," said John.

The firms also fitted a Sensor Systems GSM Signalman system.

Keith Kelly from Brogan said: "This enables us, at Brogan Fuels, to monitor fuel capacity thus ensuring the Evening News's distribution fleet maintains a consistently high level of fuel at all times."

National Distribution Manager at Scotsman, Derick Cochrane, said:

"We have noticed an increasing amount of benefits from the Titan products. The huge capacity of the tank has reduced our need for fuel cards, and in turn has minimised paperwork and time. We have incorporated a structured fuelling process into our drivers' day which has saved us valuable time.

"The Cube Fuel management system gives us the ability to cost each journey and track fuel usage which is an excellent benefit as accountability is key in the current economic climate.

Brogan Fuels is one of the largest independent fuel distributors in Scotland, operating out of 14 locations and employing a total of 220 staff.

## Petroleum Distributors Intelligence Unit (PDIU)

One of the leading business information providers specialising in Credit Risk Management solutions.

### GRAYDON

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](mailto: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)

# Site safety and security

## NCEC - 35 years of emergency response

### The National Chemical Emergency Centre is celebrating 35 years in existence.

NCEC was created in 1973 as a joint initiative by the Department of the Environment and the Home Office. The Government rushed through legislation to bring it into being following an accident on the M6 in 1972 when a car driver died after being overcome by fumes from a pool of sulphuric acid following a tanker crash in foggy conditions.

Prior to the birth of NCEC no formal arrangements existed in the UK for dealing with chemical transport accidents on a national basis.

Today, Carechem24 operates an emergency response service on behalf of many FPS member companies and procedures are put in place to ensure that the service becomes an integral part of their emergency and security plans. NCEC's strong links with OAMPS insurance gives mutual clients the reassurance that, should an incident occur, expertise is on hand to rapidly resolve a situation.

Back in 1974, in collaboration with the Chemical Industries Association (CIA), the Centre was instrumental in the formation of Chemsafe (UK Chemical Industries Scheme for Assistance in Freight Emergencies). Despite

emergency arrangements being established within the industry, it was anticipated that there would be some transport accidents involving chemicals where the manufacturer could not be readily identified e.g. imported chemicals or inadequately-labelled trade name products. Government considered it essential to have a national advice centre for use by the emergency services in such situations and this was the birth of National Chemical Emergency Centre. NCEC, along with its parent company, the environmental consultancy AEA Group, was privatised in 1996.



An emergency response service was developed for chemical manufacturers to help them to meet their obligations to UK legislation. Now known as Carechem24®, the service has developed over time to offer response – multilingual where necessary – to assist with all types of chemical incidents, wherever they occur in the world.

NCEC offers preferential rates to provide Carechem24 for FPS member companies. Contact Richard Shreeve on 0870 190 6621 or 07813 800646 for more information.

Soaring heating oil prices have made product sitting in domestic and commercial tanks extra-attractive to thieves.

Atkinson Equipment has launched a 2-inch lockable fill cap to deter them. The unit is hard anodised and fitted with a Yale four-digit combination lock and 7mm hardened steel padlock shackle. Atkinson claims the lock is easy to fit and seals tight in eight locking positions. Atkinson suggests that distributors can record customers' lock numbers on their computers so that it is printed on the delivery note for the driver.

Atkinson is selling the units at 10 for £280, or individually at £36.80.



Arco, one of the UK's leading suppliers of safety equipment and workwear is

presenting its biggest ever range of own-brand and branded products in a new, 924-page catalogue. The 'Big Book' contains 22,000 safety and workwear products, 2,222 new products and a whole host of safety information.

The publication features Britain's widest range of personal protective products, footwear, head protection, gloves, workwear, hygiene and environmental safety products - from top manufacturers such as 3M, Uvex, Sperian, Ansell, Berghaus, Sprayway, Snickers, JSP, Aearo, Shoes for Crews, Tork, Pal and Deb through to Arco's value for money own-brand ranges.

The company suggests handing in previous Arco catalogues for recycling and picking up a new one from a local Arco branch, or visiting [www.arco.co.uk](http://www.arco.co.uk)



## Safeload coupler proving its durability

Fort Vale reports that over 650 of its Mk3 Safeload couplers are now in service worldwide. The unit has been proving itself in the market place over the last 18 months.

Graham Johnson, Fort Vale's Production Development Manager, recently visited a UK terminal to check the condition of one of the first trial couplers, supplied in January 2007.

It showed no signs of wear to the triggers or seals after 18 months' hard service, with a throughput in excess of 90 million litres.

Although it could have been returned to service without replacing any parts, the seals were replaced as a routine procedure because the coupler had



**Mk3 Safeload coupler**

been removed from the rack and stripped down on the bench.

Following on from the Mk3 launch, Fort Vale has been working with clients to produce a bespoke product to suit individual applications.

Kathryn Ball, Account Manager for Fort Vale, said: "We first offered different handle options for the European market. Now we are particularly thrilled that, by working closely with a UK storage terminal, we have manufactured a shorter handle version to meet their needs." Two batches of the custom couplers have already been delivered.

Fort Vale have also delivered the first manual Safeload couplers, after extensive trials.

The first two are destined for a customer in Greece who visited the Fort Vale stand at the FPS EXPO in Dublin.

Following these, a significant order for manual couplers is being dispatched to a UK client for fitting to a new type of skid that was also on show in Dublin.

## SiteWatch monitoring

Security system specialist Drax (UK) Ltd. has launched SiteWatch, a new GSM-based system designed for simple, economical off-site monitoring 24 hours a day.

SiteWatch comprises one or more remote transmitters positioned by the equipment to be monitored, a central receiver unit and a PC equipped with management software, typically located at the facilities manager's office or service organisation.



The SiteWatch transmitters are hard wired to the monitored equipment's outputs and reads the signals generated by the equipment, such as on, off, fire, fault, open, closed, etc. SiteWatch encodes those signals and sends a customised data message via SMS.

Site details and the nature of the event are displayed and stored on the SiteWatch manager's PC, together with details of the site and any pre-configured instructions. Messages can even be forwarded to the appropriate personnel via texts to their mobile phones or via email.

Drax says the system is particularly effective on large or unmanned sites. Up to 255 transmitters can be monitored on one system.

## New rising bollards from BPT

BPT Automation Ltd has launched two new electro-hydraulic rising bollards, Coral and Vigilo.

The bollards' size and flexibility means that they can be used where space is limited, or where conventional gates are not possible.

Coral and Vigilo are operated via the BPT Elpro 10 electronic control unit, in either automatic or semi automatic mode and they have an operation time of just four seconds. The control unit is easily integrated with access control and safety equipment such as photocells and ground loops. There is also the option of an electro-valve and coupling, which automatically lowers the bollards in the event of an emergency or power failure.



Installation is easy because the bollards carry a self-contained hydraulic pump and piston assembly; no special adjusting or calibration is required.

Coral is the smaller of the new bollards with a diameter of 100mm, whereas Vigilo comes with a 200mm diameter. Both bollards come in 510mm and 810mm options.

# the fuel oil systems alliance



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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](http://www.fosalliance.com)