

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2007



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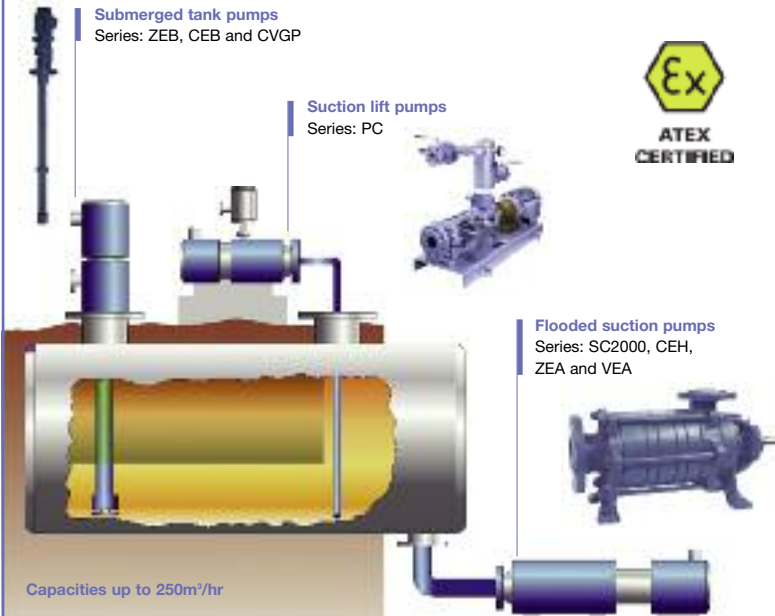
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THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY KNACK FOR ADAPTING



Faye Spiers
Editor

From here, the industry's future looks vibrant. It has always had a knack for adapting itself to changing attitudes and confronting change head on.

When pollution and the depleting ozone layer became an issue, converters and suppliers, already with a head start as lp gas is much less polluting than petrol or diesel as a vehicle fuel, geared up for an autogas revolution. Climate change is still a concern, and the industry has been investigating new technologies to see if they fit.

No one can say that there is not a place in the future for lp gas – it has already attached itself to new technologies, such as fuel cells, combined heat and power and solar heating. And it is still an essential part of people's lives in more traditional areas, such as barbecues and patio heaters, camping and caravanning, and domestic heating.

With the coming changes recommended by the Competition Commission in the domestic heating market, it will be essential for supply companies to stay in touch with all their customers and make them feel valuable. Smaller businesses may find this a bit daunting, especially if they rely solely on salespeople to communicate with them.

Unfortunately, in this era of remote communication and increased competition, that may no longer be enough, and companies will have to become more sophisticated in their customer contact. In this issue, there are some good ideas on how to do that through direct mail and newsletters and enhancing your website. In later issues, we will look at how to do this via email and other methods.

LP GAS THE VOICE OF THE UK LPG INDUSTRY

Reflecting the objectives of a thriving, diverse industry and its customers, LP Gas is distributed free to LPGA and ALGED members and other registered readers.

Individual copies: £4

Overseas subscription: £40 pa.



ISSN 1362-7813. FEB/MAR 2007

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Fax: 01323 411050

Email: ppl@prgtd.co.uk

Web: www.lpgasmagazine.co.uk

Publisher: Raymond Groves

Editor: Faye Spiers

Production: PRG Design

Printed by: Adland Paul Green, London

ADVERTISEMENT ENQUIRIES

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FRONT COVER PICTURE CUSTOMER CONTACT

See page 18



Are You Operating Illegally?

A revised inspection regime for tanks and cylinders carrying dangerous goods has been introduced. Those who inspect tanks and pressure receptacles carrying dangerous goods now have to be appointed by the Department for Transport (DfT) on the recommendation of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

UKAS accreditation manager for engineering inspection and development, Lal Ilan, said: "These revisions bring the UK into line with international practice. Organisations or persons that carry out the inspection of tanks and pressure vessels whilst they are in service may now unwittingly be operating illegally, simply

because they are unaware of the changes in the legislation."

UKAS engineering inspection accreditation is responsible for assessing the competence of organisations that apply to the DfT for these regulatory appointments. Specialist assessors and experts from UKAS will carry out the assessments of competence based upon criteria agreed between UKAS and DfT to internationally recognised standards.

"The transport of goods by road or rail has the potential for accidents," said Lal. "Where the goods being carried are flammable, corrosive or under pressure, there are additional risks from loss of containment

and fire, spillage or explosion. The proper inspection of containers carrying dangerous substances is crucial to minimising the risks arising from any accident."

UKAS's status as the sole national accreditation body recognised by the UK government is formalised through a memorandum of understanding between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and UKAS. UKAS accreditation involves assessment and verification against international standards of certification, inspection, testing and calibration activities.

**Contact UKAS on
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HSE Opens New Event

The chief executive of the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), Geoffrey Podger, will open a new regional exhibition and seminar, Health & Safety '07. The event will be held at Sandown Park Racecourse on February 20-21 and the Reebok Stadium in Bolton on October 10-11.

"The HSE wants to see health and safety as an important issue on every company's agenda," he said. "We support events that raise the profile of health and safety and highlight its importance, both as the cornerstone of a civilised society, and as an essential part of any efficient business."

The aim of Health & Safety '07 is to make life as simple as possible for anyone with a responsibility for health and safety. They can access products and services more easily through the exhibition, network with other local organisations, and keep up to date with new regulations through the seminar programme.

"Launching a new event on this scale can be a daunting project, but we have been overwhelmed by the response we have had from the industry," said Tim Else, director of Western Business Exhibitions, the organiser. "The association of the HSE is the final seal of approval, and a reflection of what we are hoping to achieve, i.e. the provision of a professional, informative and educational event."

The exhibition and seminars are free to enter, but seminar places are restricted, so it is recommended that visitors pre-register at www.healthandsafety07.co.uk.

AEGPL 2007

AEGPL 2007 will be held at the Acropolis Conference Centre in Nice, France, on June 6-8 with the theme "the advantages of liquefied petroleum gas: Lpg, a clean, efficient and available energy".

Four sessions at the conference will cover the positioning of lpg in Europe; lpg applications in the transport sector; good practices and the standardisation policy, and innovations and new lpg



applications. Delegates will also be offered the option of attending technical workshops for the first time.

The exhibition at AEGPL 2006 in Istanbul, Turkey, had over 1,000 visitors from 46 countries, 70 per cent of

which were decision makers. This year, companies will exhibit equipment and activities related to the production, storage, transportation, distribution and installation of lpg, including Clesse Industries, Kosan Crisplant, RegO, Sterling Fluid Systems and TouchStar Technologies.

To book exhibition space, visit www.aegpl-expo.com or, to attend the conference, contact the AEGPL on +32 25 669126 www.aegpl.com

Alta Gas Founder Fraud Charges

Peter Bradley, founder of Alta Gas, has been charged with 36 offences, including theft, false accounting and Companies Act offences. He was detained in Majorca on suspicion of £10 million fraud in November last year.

Alta Gas collapsed six years ago when the Serious Fraud Office launched an investigation into the company after it was revealed that the firm had been overstating its financial position by more than £40 million.

Invoicing irregularities came to light when a major investor became suspicious about management claims as they tried to raise more funding from the company's bankers. Receivers, saving the majority of the firm's jobs, eventually sold the company to Flogas.

Kevin Mawer, administrative receiver at accountancy firm, Grant Thornton, arranged the sale. He said: "The fraud started the day the company started.

A whole series of people were duped into lending money on the basis of false invoices that made out that the company was more profitable than it really was.

"On the face of it, the company was extremely successful, when in fact it had been losing money every year."

Peter Bradley is currently being held at HM Prison Liverpool and is due to appear in Liverpool Crown Court to plead in May. A trial date has been set for March 2008.



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- **Networking Lounge** sponsored by **BP Franchising** - come and enjoy some refreshments and relax and network with colleagues. **NEW**
- The **Top 50 Indies** - held on March 6 - including guest speakers and attended by retailers with some of the biggest forecourt chains in the UK.

Focus on Convenience

Running alongside the International Forecourt & Fuel Equipment Show will be the Convenience Retailing Show (CRS). Your registration to IFFE will also allow you free entry into CRS.

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Indigo Retail Holdings Limited	Washers (UK) Ltd
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Schneider Appoints New Director



Robert Cato

Robert Cato has been appointed to the board of directors at Schneider Industry (UK) Ltd as sales director.

Robert will continue with his

duties as sales manager, but will take a more active role in determining the long-term strategy of the business, including the improvement of services and the development of new markets and products.

Robert said: "I am delighted to join the board of Schneider UK which, for the past 19 years, has been dedicated to the lp gas industry. Our industry will be

facing some challenging times in the future with the fundamentals of vessels ownership. I am confident that our industry can continue to depend on Schneider Industry to offer a competitive product manufactured in the UK for the UK market."

Contact Schneider (UK) Ltd on 01332 525840 www.schneider-industry.co.uk



Anna Dore

Staying the Distance

Anna Dore of the LP Gas Association (LPGA) will be participating in this year's London Marathon, which takes place on April 22. Many of you will know Anna, who joined the LPGA in 1999 and has acted as membership secretary, conference/meetings organiser, etc, over the years.

"I've been a keen runner for many years and have previously taken part in races of distances from 5km to the marathon, although I have a particular liking for off-road runs that involve plenty of mud, water, hills and beaches, and lots of sweat – the original dirty weekend!" said Anna.

This year, Anna will be running her first marathon for eight years in support of Julia's House, a registered charity that cares for life-limited and life-threatened children in Dorset. The charity supports children and their families in their own homes and also at Julia's House itself, giving a much-needed break to parents.

"I hope that those who know me, and hopefully some who don't!, will give generously, particularly as my office colleagues would like to point out that I am getting on a bit and my legs might give out before I get the chance to do another one!" said Anna.

If you would like to make a donation, please go to the Julia's House website at www.julias-house.org or send a cheque made payable to Julia's House to Anna Dore, c/o LP Gas Association, Pavilion 16 Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Road, Ringwood BH24 3PB.

Pre-Budget Commitment

In the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report, Gordon Brown confirmed the commitment from the Government that the differential in duty between autogas and petrol/diesel would reduce by a maximum of only once pence per year by raising autogas fuel duty by 2.25p and that on petrol/diesel by 1.25p. This means that the price of lpg at

the pumps will continue at around half the price of petrol and diesel for the foreseeable future.

"There are over a million motorists worldwide benefiting from running on lpg," said Rob Shuttleworth, director general of the LPGA. "In the UK, this figure is over 130,000 and growing, and with 1,300 public access refuelling sites in the UK, it is

easy to fill up wherever you are in the country. With the significant environmental advantages of using lpg, motorists changing to this fuel should not only save money, but also be playing their part in improving the environment by way of both carbon savings and enhanced air quality."

www.boostlpg.co.uk

Developers Undaunted by Off-Mains

A survey carried out by Calor Gas, in which the company spoke to over 200 UK developers, has revealed that 84 per cent actively purchase land in off-mains gas areas because they are confident fuel will not cause a problem.

The survey showed that 88 per cent of developers make fuel decisions in-house with only 12 per cent using an external supplier. Fifty four per cent confirm that price still affects fuel

choice decisions, and 30 per cent are non-risk takers preferring to stick with a previous, tried and tested fuel type.

One surprising outcome was that 36 per cent of developers still say oil is their first choice for fuel above lpg and electricity.

Newton-Abbot-based developer, Millwood Homes, is currently building a 63-home development in Hatherleigh, Devon, and all the homes will be fuelled by lpg.

Construction director, John Mount, said: "Lpg is definitely more acceptable to purchasers in this area, more so we would say than oil or electricity, the latter of which is often perceived as being expensive. There's nothing complex about it, it's a solid choice environmentally and financially and, above all, the fuel is completely fit for purpose across all applications, from central heating and real flame fires to cooking."

Trading Workshop

Vostock Capital is holding an international workshop on lpg trading in London on February 14-15.

The event will focus on lpg production and trading issues, including:

- Storage and transportation
- Pricing, price drivers and price risk management
- Lpg marketing, trading

instruments and workshops
■ A detailed lpg consumption market overview.

Speakers will include Jacqueline Richardson and Charles Lawrie of Richardson Lawrie Associates, an independent firm of international maritime economists and business consultants; Dermot

McGowan of Poter & Partners, specialists in lpg trading and transportation; Jim Gretton, who spent 25 years at Shell, and Jeff Pym, who managed BP's gas businesses around the world for 16 years.

Contact Vostock Capital on 0207 394 3090 www.vostockcapital.com

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A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Rob Shuttleworth, director general, LP Gas Association

The lp gas industry has been around in the UK since the 1930s and has proved resilient and innovative for, as traditional uses declined, new uses were pioneered to ensure that lpg remained in the consumer's portfolio of energies and used for a huge variety of purposes.



Rob Shuttleworth

Now, we enter 2007 with climate change, energy use and "carbon neutrality" at the forefront of all parties' political agendas and in the news on an almost daily basis. It is both a time of challenge and a time where we can take advantage of the opportunity, and it will call on the same resourcefulness we have shown in the past.

Lpg is, apart from natural gas, the lowest carbon product of the main fossil based energies and the UK exports around three times what it uses, so we can play a significant role in reducing UK carbon output in off mains areas. We can do this on our own with existing products, both at an individual building level and through local piped networks, and at the same time develop our relevance to the emerging technologies of micro combined heat and power and local heat and cooling networks.

We can further develop the role of lpg in fuel cells and understand our relationship to renewables to ensure that we continue to play our part as a provider of low carbon energy to UK markets. Industry is also coming under increasing pressure to reduce its carbon footprint, with the leading companies publicly stating that they aim to become carbon neutral within the near future. Lpg and our industry can build on our sound relationships with our industrial customers to continue to provide them with energy whilst helping them achieve these aims.

CC FINDINGS

More immediately, 2007 is likely to see the implementation of the Competition Commission findings, something that has occupied a

huge part of the industry's time over the past few years, and comes with its own set of challenges and opportunities. As reported in the last issue of *LP Gas*, representatives of the main domestic gas supply companies and ALGED have already met, under the auspices of the LPGA technical management committee, to agree a set of guiding principles to ensure smooth implementation of the Competition Commission findings with the aim of ensuring that the lp gas industry's reputation with its customers and potential customers is maintained and enhanced.

Meantime, the association will continue its base workload – maintaining technical standards and associated publications; working to ensure a viable autogas industry, and working closely with the AEGPL to monitor European and UK consultations and legislation.

CHANGES

2007 also promises to be a momentous year for the LP Gas Association itself. Any changes we make must be justified by the external context in which we work, and by our members' views and objectives. And in 2007 we will be implementing a number of changes with the aim of improving our service to members.

We are to move offices to the Midlands by the end of July to a location easily accessible to members, with a meeting room and facilities that can be used as a resource. Right now, Advantage West Midlands is searching for suitable premises. Watch this space (oh, bad pun).

We will be recruiting a communications manager as part

of the move to help ensure lp gas receives its due prominence within the energy debate amongst key decision makers, and focus on raising the profile of lpg amongst key audiences.

If the memberships of both organisations so wish, we will progress the merger with ALGED, ready to kick off the new organisation in January 2008. As you all know, a proposal has been put up for discussion and was presented and debated at the joint ALGED/LPGA meeting in October. LP Gas Association members will have the chance to further debate and decide at the AGM in May.

We have come a long way over the last six months in developing the case for our organisations to merge – we are a small industry in a rapidly changing world and having one organisation makes a lot of sense.

We plan to make fundamental changes to our website, starting this year with the requirements of the Competition Commission to provide information on companies selling domestic gas, but want to improve the web experience for both customers and potential customers in all areas of gas use, for those seeking information about our product and industry, and for members in terms of news and information. The development of the website will run in parallel with the planned merger with ALGED to ensure that its look and content reflect the new organisation.

CONFERENCE

This year, we are holding our Annual Conference & AGM in a different venue with a different format. The conference will be held in Edinburgh, kicking off on

Wednesday May 16 with a technical forum in the afternoon for those with a specific interest in technical matters, followed by the conference proper and AGM on Thursday May 17.

The theme of the conference is sustainability – how we sustain our product in this changing environment, how to sustain an industry and, as importantly, how we each sustain our individual businesses with an appropriate skill base for the future.

It promises to be exciting and participative, and we hope a little different from past conferences. We look forward to welcoming as many of you as can come to Edinburgh and, in particular, extend a warm invite to ALGED members.

As we have chosen such a fine city for the conference, we have taken the opportunity to hold our dinner in a venue other than the hotel. Please look out for the brochure that will be with you shortly, giving full details and a booking form.

And, lastly but by no means least, we look forward to welcoming Jeff Watson back during, we hope, the first half of the year – his terrible accident was a shock to his family and to all of us in the industry. So it was a tremendous relief to witness his speedy recovery and it is great to see him champing at the bit, as he has been sorely missed – watch out the TMC!

It goes without saying that this office is always open to members to visit and to call, and it is my intention to continue meeting members on a regional basis throughout the year.

Contact the LP Gas Association on 01425 461612 www.lpga.co.uk

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Changeover with confidence

MANAGING CO RISKS

by former Health and Safety Minister,
Lord Hunt

There can't be many people who weren't shocked and saddened by the deaths of two young children in the recent gas leak tragedy in Corfu. Christianne Shepherd, seven, and her six-year-old brother, Robert, were found dead in their hotel room next to their father, Neil Shepherd, and his partner, Ruth Beatson, who were unconscious.



Lord Hunt

An investigation showed the family had been poisoned after carbon monoxide leaked from a faulty gas boiler. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated event, nor is it something that only happens abroad.

Every year in Britain alone, around 20 lives are lost because domestic gas appliances have not been properly installed or maintained. Several hundred more people also suffer ill health effects from carbon monoxide poisoning, but fortunately survive.

I know that gas safety standards have improved in the UK, and over the past ten years fatal carbon monoxide poisonings are down by a half. Yet recent evidence has shown that a worryingly high number of households are unaware of how to stay safe from carbon monoxide poisoning.

NEW EFFORT

This is unacceptable. It's clear that a new effort is needed to increase further the public's knowledge of gas safety risks and how they can be minimised.

Last year, gas safety charities organised the first ever Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week. This excellent initiative drew attention to the issue and helped increase public awareness.

As part of the week, both myself and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, John Hutton, called upon the gas, energy and heating industries to do more to reduce the number of people who needlessly die from carbon monoxide poisoning. People need to know how to minimise the danger and protect themselves – and I firmly believe that industry is not only well placed, but also has a responsibility to get this important message across.

By encouraging your customers to take a few simple precautions, you can help to ensure the risks are significantly reduced. In November last year, representatives of the gas industry agreed to do more to increase gas safety awareness, with CORGI in the coordinating role.

I welcome this commitment and will be reviewing progress regularly.

A Ministerial Group has been set up to monitor actions and progress, and Mr Hutton has written to CEOs of the major companies urging them to give personal support to this new drive.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which is sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions, is reviewing

domestic gas safety and will report in the coming months. It has produced some key messages on sensibly managing carbon monoxide risks, and I would call on you to support HSE and work with CORGI in delivering these messages consistently to the public.

For example, people should know to have their gas appliances checked and serviced regularly by a CORGI-registered installer. Approved carbon monoxide detectors in homes and rented properties are also strongly recommended, although these are not a substitute for regular checks and servicing.

TELLTALE SIGNS

People need to be aware that a gas appliance should never be used if they think it's not working properly, and that there are some telltale signs to look out for on boilers, fires and cookers, for example, yellow or orange flames, soot or stains around the appliance and a pilot light that frequently blows out.

Carbon monoxide fumes are particularly dangerous as they cannot be seen, smelled or tasted and can kill quickly without warning – as proven by the tragic deaths of Christianne

and Robert Shepherd. The symptoms of poisoning are equally hard to recognise, and can include tiredness, drowsiness, headaches and breathlessness.

The HSE and local authorities enforce the Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations 1998, which place responsibilities on a wide range of people, including appliance owners and those installing, servicing, maintaining or repairing gas appliances and fittings. Landlords also have a legal obligation to maintain and have checked any gas appliances they own.

However, if we are to prevent more unnecessary deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning, then a new effort is needed to increase the public's knowledge of gas safety risks and how they can be minimised. By working together to increase awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, we can help to ensure that these sorts of tragedies are not repeated.

Further information on domestic gas safety issues can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/index.htm>, or through HSE's Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300363.



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- LG Equipment:** GasGuard Refuelling Nozzles
- Manchester:** Self Fill FLT Cylinders
- Rochester:** Float Gauges & Remote Systems

Tel: 0121 506 2760 Fax 0121 506 2769

Email: info@tankgas.co.uk Web site: www.tankgas.co.uk

NCC REPORTS ON REGULATOR BLOCKAGES

Reports have been coming in for some time from the caravan and motorhome industry of problems with an unusual fluid found in regulators. Here, the National Caravan Council presents its findings after conducting an investigation with other interested parties...

In mid 2005, complaints began about blocked regulators in touring caravans and motorhomes. It is estimated that there is about a 4 per cent incident rate nationally.

These blockages all occurred in 30mbar bulkhead-mounted regulators designed to meet BS EN 12864 Annex D. The units affected were made from mid 2003 to the present day.

Examination of the blocked regulators revealed that a yellow, oily fluid was present in the regulator. The fluid had come into contact with the rubber seat of the regulator, causing it to swell and block the inlet.

The GOK unit supplied by Truma was the most common regulator involved. Similarly, Calor Gas was involved because it has the largest share of the caravan market and its gas cylinders were connected to the regulators that were failing.

Analysis of the liquid by both Calor and GOK found that it contained plasticisers, a manmade material used in rubber and plastics to give flexibility and resilience across a wide temperature range.

INVESTIGATIONS

Both Calor and Truma/GOK began their own investigations to ascertain the cause. Appliances were set up with the identical regulator connected to cylinders and operated continuously. These ran for weeks with no hint of a problem. To this day, no one has replicated the field problem under laboratory conditions.

Incidents have now also been reported in installations operating on Butagas, Total Gas and Flogas. A few incidences of the fluid being found in other makes of regulator have been reported but, as far as we know, they did not stop working.



Gas and regulators both comply with the relevant requirements in every way. The only other components in the system are the high-pressure pigtailed from cylinder to regulator. These are made of rubbers and contain phthalates or other plasticisers.

With the cylinder-mounted regulator used in older, pre 2003 touring caravans and motorhomes, the hose connecting the regulator to the caravan pipework was at operating pressure of 28 or 37mbar, and when the gas was turned off, the flow stopped and the pressure in the hose remained substantially the same. This pressure is far lower than that which would cause the gas to re-condense out.

With the bulkhead mounted regulator, when the gas is turned off, the regulator closes and the high-pressure pigtail is full of gas at the same pressure as in the cylinder. As the thermal mass of the hose plus gas is much lower than the cylinder plus gas, it can cool more quickly and allow the gas to re-condense out on the inside of the hose and regulator. The hoses themselves are made to meet BS 3616.

In touring caravans complying with BS EN 1949, the regulator is generally mounted vertically, sometimes low in the cylinder compartment. Given the restriction on hose lengths (250mm), caravan manufacturers positioned the regulator to allow for a choice of cylinder size.

With the outlet facing

downward and the inlet upward, the high-pressure pigtail actually had a vertical downward section into the regulator. Obviously, any liquid in the hose could run downwards into the regulator under gravity.

So what do we think was the cause? An unfortunate combination of circumstances is the most likely answer, and there are several theories that have been considered, including:

- Re-condensation of gas in the high-pressure hose causing extraction of the plasticiser - this theory is feasible, but almost impossible to prove or disprove without lengthy testing.
- Gas supply system design that encourages flow of condensate into the regulator - counter arguments say that the volume of liquid found in some cases is too great for the amount of material that could be extracted from the hose, but we only know that the fluid contained some plasticiser, not a 100 per cent concentration. It is possible that a part of the liquid contained higher boiling point paraffins (the generic name for members of the butane and propane family of hydrocarbons) that had re-condensed. This may explain why, when hoses from failed systems have been cut open, the insides were dry, as the rubber would reabsorb the plasticiser fairly quickly and the hydrocarbons would evaporate when exposed to the air.

An examination of the domestic and holiday home environments finds some interesting comparisons. High-pressure hose and changeover devices are 'de rigueur', and they use the same gas and hoses, but have no reported problems. This strengthens the argument that the answer may lie in the system

design.

Good industry practice says that the hose should always lie such that gravity will allow any condensate to flow back into the cylinder. It is of particular interest that the recent revision (2005) of the Standard for domestic lpg installations, BS 5482 part 1, requires that hoses rise continuously to any regulator installation for this very reason.

The strong recommendation of all parties is to mount the regulator so that the hose rises continuously from the cylinder outlet to the regulator inlet. Caravan and motorhome manufacturers have adopted this practice for 2007 models. Processes are to be started to revise relevant Standards to reduce the extraction rate of hoses, tighten gas quality and improve the system design criteria in BS EN 1949, but this will be a long task and it will be some time before a revision can be published.

SUSCEPTIBILITY

So, it would appear that nobody has done anything wrong, but collectively a set of circumstances has arisen that created the problem. The European base Standard, EN1949, was many years in compilation, with leading gas authorities across Europe involved prior to its publication, and the potential for the current field situation to arise was not raised as an issue.

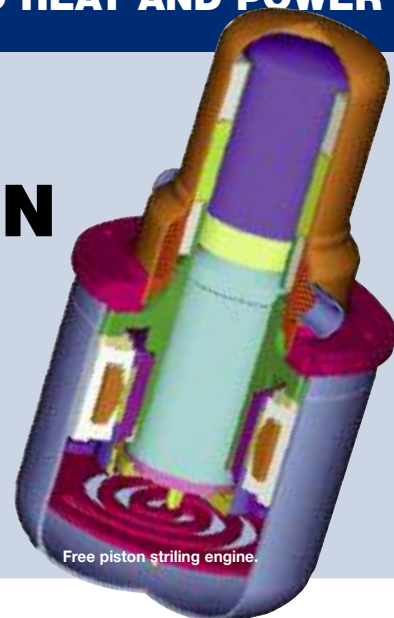
The question is, why has the problem only arisen in 2005/2006, when these regulators have been in use since September 2003? The only considered response to that is that the susceptibility has always been there; it just needed the right conditions to initiate it.

Contact the National Caravan Council on 01252 318251 www.nationalcaravan.co.uk

MICRO CHP – A LOW CARBON HEATING SOLUTION

By Ciaran Murphy, product manager, Baxi

Over recent years, low carbon microgeneration heating technologies have become recognised as a viable solution for lowering the UK's carbon emissions and homeowners' fuel costs. Here, Ciaran Murphy, product manager at heating manufacturer, Baxi, discusses the role that combined heat and power (CHP) units have to play.



Many scientists believe that an excess of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases are forming a dense layer around the Earth, preventing the sun's heat from escaping back into space. The result is a rise in temperature, which is thought to be causing damaging changes to the world's weather – otherwise known as global warming.

Current climate models predict that global temperatures could warm from between 1.4oC to 5.8oC over the next 100 years, depending on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted.

It has become clear that countries across the world must take steps to significantly reduce their carbon emissions. At present, around 6.5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide is emitted globally each year, mostly a result of burning coal, oil and gas for energy.

CARBON EMISSIONS

In fact, in the UK, 27 per cent of carbon emissions are generated through the energy we use to heat, light and power our homes. With conventional boilers being one of the least energy efficient appliances in the home – accounting for up to a third of all domestic CO₂ emissions – the development of more efficient heating systems can have a huge impact on the reduction of carbon emissions.

Therefore, heating manufacturers have been developing microgeneration solutions, which produce heat and electricity close to the point of use, thereby reducing energy wastage.

Microgeneration plays a key

role in the UK government's strategy to meet the requirements of both the Kyoto Protocol, a global agreement which set a target of an eight per cent emissions reduction by the period 2008–2012, and the Energy White Paper, which aims to achieve a 60 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. In fact, an Energy Saving Trust study commissioned by the Department of Trade Industry suggests that, by 2050, widespread installation of microgeneration products could reduce household carbon emissions by approximately 15 per cent.

CHP is a microgeneration technology fully supported by the UK government. In 2000, it set a target to achieve at least 10,000MWe of installed 'good quality' CHP – that is CHP plants that meet the efficiency criteria as defined by Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) within its CHP Quality Assurance Programme – by 2010.

Large scale and mini CHP units have been available in the UK for some time, but now small-scale derivatives are set to become a low carbon heating and power solution for domestic dwellings. The term generally used for CHP products designed for individual dwellings is micro CHP.

The largest capacity CHP unit used in individual homes is 5kWe, though in many markets, micro CHP developers are focusing on developing 1kWe units, because this amount of electrical energy is ideal for the average home.

Currently, central generators supply electricity to individual

dwellings in the UK. However, around 60 per cent of the energy is lost during the process of generation, and a further five per cent can be lost in transmission and distribution.

This means only 35 per cent of the energy ends up being used by householders. In comparison, micro CHP units are highly efficient. Running on natural gas, lpg or oil, CHP units can produce heat and electricity with only a 10 per cent loss – so 90 per cent of the energy can be used in the home.

POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGIES

Within the arena of micro CHP, there are a wide range of potential technologies, including fuel cells, Stirling engines, organic rankine cycles and internal combustion engines. For domestic properties, Baxi believes fuel cells, rankine cycles and Stirling engines are the most relevant.

In simple terms, a fuel cell is an electrochemical energy conversion device that converts hydrogen and oxygen into electricity and heat, with water vapour as the by-product. Most fuel cells being developed for micro CHP applications use a carbon based fuel as the supply of hydrogen, mostly commonly gas. The waste heat can be used to heat water for space heating or domestic hot water, or to serve swimming pools.

Stirling engines use the principle that heated air expands and cooled air contracts. The engine comprises a sealed cylinder with a hot end, heated externally, and a cold end, typically water-cooled. The working gas (typically helium, nitrogen or hydrogen) is moved

between the hot and the cold ends, expanding when at the hot end and pushing on a power piston, and contracting when at the cold end.

Micro CHP promises to be a viable solution for reducing domestic carbon emissions and fuel usage and costs. To encourage homeowners to invest in CHP technology, there is a reduced rate of VAT for most types of micro CHP units of five per cent (compared to 17.5 per cent for boilers) and, under the Energy Efficiency Commitment, micro CHP can be installed by utilities to secure credits.

In addition, in April 2006, the government published its Microgeneration Strategy, which laid out actions that may help remove barriers and support market development. OFGEM, the electricity and gas market regulator, has also announced the formation of a microgeneration working group.

REVOLUTIONARY

Baxi is engaged in the development of a wide range of micro CHP technologies, including fuel cells, rankine cycles, Stirling engines and internal combustion engines, with a view to bringing a micro CHP product into the domestic arena within the next two years. These products should revolutionise the way we provide heat and power for our homes and have the potential to help create a cleaner and more efficient future.

For more details on the activity of Baxi within the arena of Micro CHP, email Ciaran Murphy at ciaran.murphy@baxi.co.uk.

SAFETY BENEFITING ALL

BOC is a major provider of packaged chemicals and propellants to UK industry. Here, *LP Gas* takes a look at BOC's propellant business and speaks to BOC's Martin Teller.

So big was the explosion at the Buncefield oil depot in 2005 that one fire chief at the scene was prompted to describe it as the "biggest fire in peacetime Europe". The ensuing disruption to business and damage to property and reputation highlighted that safety with flammable and toxic chemicals at every stage of the supply chain – from transport to storage – requires rigorous process and constant vigilance.

Buncefield will have prompted producers, distributors and major users of flammable propellant to look to their own safety processes. But, well before Buncefield, BOC had decided to take safety to another level, concerning itself not just with safety at BOC sites and distribution across the UK, but also with the safe storage and handling of propellants at customer sites.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

The concept of product stewardship was introduced to BOC packaged chemical customers nearly three years ago. At its core, it is about passing on safety best practice developed within the business to customers. BOC has clear and measurable standards for all BOC employees, plants, depots and distributors to follow, all of which is embedded in the company's safety management programme.

"Safety is the bedrock of BOC's reputation," said BOC business manager, Martin Teller. "But all is at risk should a customer not apply the same rigour to the safe storage and handling of propellant on their site. Being focused on meeting customer needs is not just about supplying product – it is also about disseminating best practice with regards to safe



handling and storage, and ensuring customer facilities are safe and meet the highest of safety standards."

For BOC's propellant customers, product stewardship on the ground includes access to advice for new storage installations, as well as auditing of storage and offloading facilities, ensuring offloading areas and access to storage are safe, storage facilities are regularly maintained, and safety mechanisms – valves, alarm systems, fire fighting facilities – are adequate. Should there be any question about the safety of a customer site, BOC drivers will return their load of propellant to the depot.

Such rigour is valued by UK manufacturers says Martin, especially those in the personal care sector, such as Unilever and Procter & Gamble.

"Because propellants are unstenched, it means they are more hazardous to store. That's why BOC will inspect facilities to make sure they are safe and propellants are stored to the highest standard."

But concern for customer site safety is not simply altruistic. For BOC, there is real commercial benefit to be gained.

"The propellants market in the UK is recognised as being a mature market. In such a tough environment, product stewardship is one of the key differentiators for BOC – it has helped us win distributorships

from the major chemical producers, as well as cement existing relationships with our major customers."

ACQUISITION BROADENS RANGE

In the last three years, BOC has strengthened its offer to propellants customers. The acquisition of the Calor CAP business in 2005 raised the company's visibility by broadening BOC's offer in terms of types of gas BOC was able to provide, and the range of packages.

BOC now provides a full range of propellant gases – HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons), DMEs (dimethyl ethers) and pentanes to the automotive, home and personal care and other markets, in packages from 5kg cylinders all the way to 21 tonne tankers.

"Prior to the acquisition, we didn't have a bulk hydrocarbon proposition, and the advantage of a bulk proposition is that it allows the customer to scale up from pilot to full production, crucial where a customer is investing in new product development," said Martin.

"Acquisition has improved flexibility. There are customers who want smaller loads and we can tailor a package for them. If needs be, we can package propellant into a two tonne load, and where major producers provide only hydrocarbons, BOC can provide every kind of propellant."

BRANCHING OUT

Always on the lookout for new uses, BOC has recently moved into providing propellant to the pharma market in the UK – where the company's attention to quality and safety comes into play.

"We source pharma grade propellant from specialist producers, which conforms to US pharmacopeia standards," said

Martin. "BOC tests and analyzes to this standard, which means we analyze every cylinder to ensure it conforms and issue each with a certificate of analysis."

Another opportunity is the number of pharma companies looking to move inhalers for asthma and other respiratory ailments away from HCFC or CFC propellants towards hydrocarbons.

"While the use of these ozone depleting or global warming propellant gases is permitted under the F-gas regulations, there is no guarantee that, in the future, such use will not be restricted."

BIRMINGHAM TO BOGOTA

Demand for propellants for use in aerosols has been relatively steady in the UK over recent years. The real growth is in BOC's global propellants business.

"BOC's global business is experiencing significant growth in South America and in South Africa, where there are opportunities to add value. So, for example, in South Africa, BOC not only sources propellant, but will also purify to aerosol propellant grade."

This global focus is further underlined by last year's takeover by BOC's German competitor, Linde, an opportunity for the new global team to review opportunities for packaged propellants in the UK and emerging regions – Russia, eastern Europe and China.

"The advantage of BOC's global approach to propellants is learning from different regions what can be applied to the benefit of customers in the UK. By doing so, we ensure that BOC is well positioned to meet their needs now, and well into the future."

**Contact BOC on 0800 111333
www.boc.uk**

GETTING IT RIGHT AT THE START

When BOC acquired Calor's aerosol propellant business in 2005, the decision was made to outsource the distribution of these bulk hydrocarbon blends in the UK to supply chain specialist, TDG European Chemicals. Two years on, *LP Gas* takes a look at how the business is progressing.



Whilst in property circles the cry is 'location, location, location', in the supply chain world of tight customer deadlines and first-rate safety and customer service criteria, the chant is more appropriately 'location, implementation, implementation', and this has certainly been the case with BOC's propane and butane propellant gas business.

"When we acquired the business, we did initially consider running the supply chain ourselves," explained Bob Girvan, BOC's supply chain manager. "But the timescale for implementation was tight and we wanted to look for a partner with even better logistics locations for this particular operation."

TOTAL PACKAGE

Even at that stage, BOC wanted a supplier that understood the commercial issues as well as having the right infrastructure. Five companies participated in a rigorous tender process, resulting in the recruitment of TDG European Chemicals.

"TDG were by far the most innovative in their total package, and we also felt that TDG and BOC held common cultural aspirations regarding the

companies we want to be, which was important to us," said Bob.

And that was when the implementation truly started.

The aerosol propellant market seems highly driven by service, particularly in this case, as BOC's hydrocarbon customers are predominantly in the personal care business. Non-contamination of the product is vital, as are the timed deliveries – some with just 30-minute window slots. In order to maintain its market share, BOC needed a partner that could deliver a high quality service.

"It's not just about deliveries on time," said Bob. "Excellent service for us includes safety performance, quality of maintenance of BOC's assets and providing a flexible charging structure – and, of course, exemplary levels of service to our customers."

Colin Sinclair, TDG sector operations director, is a firm believer in getting the process right from the start.

"We were delighted to be able to work closely with BOC to deliver extremely good implementation, even prior to the business start up. Drivers, traffic team and planning and scheduling groups have been involved all the way through, and

this has created an excellent sense of ownership, with everyone determined to make it a success right from the outset."

TRAINING

All the drivers, in particular, had additional training on top of their vocational ADR qualifications, including hazard perception awareness training and analysis, and security training, necessary in these days of heightened terrorist alerts, as well as two weeks of specialist on-the-road tuition. Unusually in this sector, BOC provided specific customer care guidance to TDG's drivers, based on material used with BOC's own drivers, to ensure its customers get the very best service levels at their premises.

This approach seems to be paying off, with an on time delivery performance in excess of 99 per cent, and an excellent safety record. In fact, as part of the contract, TDG had mechanisms for rewards across a range of service driven performance indicators, including time measures, which were segregated by different types of time parameters (specific time, specific day delivery and short notice orders), and rewards for incident free operations and equipment

maintenance standards.

TDG manages the stocks of aerosol propellant, which allows for improved responsiveness in the marketplace and enables BOC to position material closer to the end user, as deliveries are often called for at short notice.

The distribution operation utilises extensive double shifted operations, with around 60% of the annual mileage travelled at night. This not only offers more cost efficiency over daytime only operations, but also recognises the environmental considerations associated with LGV operations.

PARTNERSHIP

"We have a very strong partnership with TDG," said Bob Girvan. "Any problems get dealt with honestly and promptly, and we're delighted with how the operation is progressing."

Colin Sinclair confirms this view: "It was the thorough implementation, with input from BOC as well as ourselves, that has made the contract such a success. When you deal with a potentially hazardous product like this, attention to detail is paramount."

Contact TDG European Chemicals on 08000 288834 www.tdg.eu.com

MELLER INTRODUCES FLOWCOM

Meller Flowtrans has been supplying product-handling solutions to the UK transport industry for over 28 years. A supplier of bulk discharge solutions to the lpg market, the company is an authorised UK distributor for industry-leading products, including Blackmer cargo pumps and compressors, Actaris Neptune meters and PZB power off equipment.



FlowCom display and printer.

Originally formed by George Meller, Meller Flowtrans is now owned by the Vado family, the original owners of DAF trucks.

"After many successful years of trading, the Vado family were keen to add Meller to their already impressive portfolio of companies," said Mark Allcock, engineering manager at Meller Flowtrans. "Since the takeover in 2005, managing director, Rob Veenbergen, has further strengthened the operating structure of the company, as well as introducing a new

corporate image."

Meller is based in Bradford, West Yorkshire, but also has offices and workshops in The Netherlands and Germany.

Meller says it has introduced a new product to take truck based metering equipment to the next level – FlowCom. FlowCom is a metering system designed for use with aerosol propellants, propane and butane, as well as specialist cryogenic gases.

Based on the measurement of differential pressure across a stainless steel metering section,

FlowCom has no moving parts and will display delivered quantities of gas in either volume or mass. The FlowCom system can be tailored to suit customers' specific requirements, but typically includes a 1" metering section capable of flow rates in excess of 800 Lpm.

The system comprises a digital display and ticket printer, and temperature compensation and air elimination devices.

Meller says its key benefits are:

- Lifetime warranty on meter section, regardless of volumes

measured

- Digital display shows deliveries in volume or mass
- 1" meter will comfortably handle flow rates to 800 Lpm
- Highly accurate metering with full German PTB approval, which exceeds UK requirements
- A fit and forget metering device offering complete piece of mind.

Contact Meller Flowtrans on 01274 687687 www.mellerflowtrans.com

Left Handed Connecting

ReManufacturing Services Ltd (RMS) has found that most people transferring and transporting aerosol propellants prefer to use left-handed ACME connectors to prevent cross contamination with stented products that can ruin a storage facility.

RMS holds a range of left handed ACME fittings as standard stock items. The

company says that demand does not justify the manufacture of valves with soft-seated back checks, but the use of straight through LH fittings with hard seated back checks and ball valves will allow for safe connection and transfer.

In addition, RMS supplies a wide range of other equipment to facilitate

product storage and transfer, including flexible hoses, Corken pumps and RegO container valves.

"Corken supplies pumps with various seal materials to suit every gas that may be used as a propellant and has become the world wide standard for this application," said Peter Roberts of RMS. "Of special

interest may be the small low speed pump adapted for emptying drums that can be a particularly difficult operation. Their oil free compressors are also widely used in the recovery of vapour and liquid transfer."

For more information contact ReManufacturing Services Ltd on 01792 224000 www.rmsgaseng.com

Wincanton Delivers for Shell

Shell Gas has awarded supply chain solutions company, Wincanton, a three-year contract to distribute its aerosol propellant gas to 28 of its manufacturing customers in the UK.

The contract utilises 13 lpg tankers and 11 new DAF tractor units and moves around 900 tonnes of lpg per week. In order to manage the complex distribution process, 18 drivers work on the contract to cover the driving shift patterns and ensure that the product reaches its destination on schedule.

Wincanton worked closely with Shell to implement a routing system that involves collecting

from the Shell terminal in Fife, trunking to Preston and delivering from there, as well as introducing a new driver shift rota in order to comply with Working Time Directive guidelines and to meet customers' specific delivery windows.

TWO PART OPERATION

The operation is split into two parts – an overnight trunking operation to Preston where drivers then deliver direct to the customer or to storage tanks at the Stanlow depot, and a second operation run as a four-day rotating shift system that sees the drivers and vehicles

making numerous deliveries and reloading from the Stanlow site before returning to Scotland.

"The main challenge of this contract is the location of the loading terminal in relation to Shell's customer base," explained Gordon Scott, managing director for industrial at Wincanton. "This has resulted in many delivery destinations being too far away to reach in a driver shift, hence having to work closely with Shell to meet its customer requirements and maximise vehicle utilisation."

Chris Ridal at Shell Gas said: "Wincanton was selected to manage this contract due to its

capabilities in handling and distributing hazardous substances, as well as its ability to devise cost effective methods of distribution. This was particularly important on this contract as the product needs to reach our customers based throughout the country from a relatively remote terminal, whilst incurring as little cost as possible."

The new contract builds on an existing relationship between Wincanton and Shell and results from Shell's increases in volume and supply demand.

**Contact Wincanton on
01249 710000
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MAKING WEBSITES WORK

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the practice of improving internal and external qualities of a website to increase its search engine results. SEO strategies improve your website's search engine ranking position. However, these strategies not only improve your rankings but also, in the process of defining and structuring your content, will ultimately improve your business profile, says PRG Publicity Ltd.

While at work in your office, someone asks a simple question, e.g. "Where is the best place to get Bic pens?" Or "What's the address of the ***** agency?"

What do nine out of 10 of us now do when asked such a question? We search for the information on the net.

Five years ago, what did we do? Websites then were not designed to ensure that search engines placed them at the top of search results.

Most marketing initiatives are developed with the intention of enhancing the chances of capturing business. The desire to inform potential customers of products and services has always been paramount.

The internet has allowed companies to provide the specific information people are looking for as and when they want it. No other medium exists that is able to do this.

WHY SEO?

Nearly 85% of web traffic is driven by five major search engines – Google, Yahoo!, MSN, AskJeeves and AOL. If a search engine cannot find your site or your content cannot be put into their databases, you miss out on opportunities.

Whether your site provides content, services, products or information, search engines are the primary method for contact for nearly all web users.

Estimates are that, of the approximately 20 billion existing pages in the world today, search engines have "crawled" roughly half of these. Search engines run programs called "bots" or "spiders" that crawl websites. Once crawled, a page's content is stored in a giant database that makes up a search engine's "index".

Search engines rely on the terms queried by users to determine which results to put through their algorithms. Rather than simply recognising and retrieving exact matches for search terms, search engines use their knowledge of semantics (the science of language) to construct matches for queries.

This knowledge of language and its usage gives them the ability to determine which pages in a site are topically related, what the topic of a page or site is, and much more.

Search engines' growing intelligence in language means that queries will increasingly return more evolved results.

When deciding what is to be returned to the user, search engines also evaluate:

- Document analysis – whether the search terms are found in important areas of the document. They also attempt to automatically measure the quality of the document.
- Link analysis – not only who is linking to a site or page, but also what they are saying about that page/site and the trustworthiness of these links.
- Global popularity of the site – more popular sites provide more powerful links.
- Popularity of the site in relevant communities – sites on the same subject that often interlink with one another.
- Text of a link and that surrounding it – a link from inside a topical paragraph carries greater weight.
- Search engines rely on the architecture of links to find new documents and revised documents.

Some technologies make a "spider's" crawl stop and give way, others reach a dead end.

TARGETED KEYWORD RESEARCH

The use of keywords has seen an explosion of growth in the business of "paid placements", such as Google Adwords, Overture Search Marketing, MSN Live Search, etc.

The ability to analyse search terminology enables the clarification of targeted terms that can then be used to create a site's content.

For example, a fancy dress hire shop is failing in many areas. However, researching some specific terms using search marketing technology showed many people had searched for a given term in one month. The term researched was "fancy dress".

Count	Search Term
90000	fancy dress
28852	fancy dress costume
2902	fancy dress shop
2266	fancy dress hire
1600	70s fancy dress
1395	child fancy dress
1334	fancy dress idea
1296	80s fancy dress

At the top of this list, we see there were 90,000 searches for the term "fancy dress". Fantastic, but how many websites is this term listed on? – 3.5 million!

Further down the list is the term "70s fancy dress" with 1600 searches, and this term is listed on 6,000 sites.

What does this tell us? In simple terms, a page aimed at "70s fancy dress" is ten times more relevant to a search than one for "fancy dress".

Using this scenario, the creation of a page within the site targeted at "70s fancy dress" would mean developing a section aimed, targeted, marketed and frequently updated to provide the maximum delivery to a specific

audience, one we know is being searched for, and one we can adjust accordingly over time.

Search engines' goals are to rank the best, most usable, functional and informative sites first.

The ease-of-use in your site's design, navigation, architecture and functionality is vital in achieving this. Again, there are many features that figure in ensuring the success of a website.

DESIGN

The graphical elements and layout of the website have a strong influence on how easily usable the site is. Standards, underlined links, top and side menu bars, and logos in the top, left-hand corner will help to make a site usable.

The organisation of a site can also strongly affect usability. Topics and categorisation impact on how users can find information.

A navigation system that guides users easily through both top-level and deep pages and makes a high percentage of the site easily accessible is critical to good usability.

To create compelling use, ensure that images, links, tools, scripts, etc, all function as they are intended to and don't provide errors across all browsers, alternative operating systems or uninformed users – the ones who often don't know what or where to click.

Accessibility refers to the technical ability of users to access and move through your site, as well as the ability of the site to serve disabled or impaired users.

- Laws have been introduced that make it compulsory to make a website accessible to disabled people.
- 65% of the population suffers from some form of disability.
- Most accessibility adoptions

benefit everyone, not just people with disabilities.

- It makes good business sense. Rather than shopping in the High Street, people with disabilities use the web more and more, and they are often high spenders on e-tailing sites.

All are valid – but the most important factor when building accessible sites is that search engine spiders love sites built with functionality and accessibility in mind, and will rank them higher than ones that aren't.

AVERAGE WEB USER?

The average web user doesn't exist – web users will try and navigate around the web in different ways.

A quick fire use has spread into how we absorb information. Web users don't read content on initial visits to a site, they have learnt to scan pages very quickly and usually muddle through. Rarely do they read instructions and, if they don't find what they want, they move to another site – quickly.

The usability of content itself is often overlooked, but its importance cannot be overstated. The descriptive nature of headlines, the accuracy of information and the quality of content all factor highly into a site's likelihood of retaining visitors and gaining links.

Writing well for search engines is both an art and a science, and one that, once harnessed, will achieve better rankings.

Key to success with SEO is the creation of great content, and with this comes great links and, ultimately, high rankings. In delivering the content that users need, search engines will reward your site. Simple.

One great page is worth a thousand good pages.

On corporate image or branding sites for small companies, a single, exciting piece of content that gets picked up by the web community is worth a small fortune in public relations and exposure. Better still, the links

you earn with a release stay with your site for a long time.

- Research – forums, blogs and communities where people in any industry spend their online discussion time. Target the most frequently asked questions, allowing the creation of high quality content that directly addresses your market's needs.
- Consult and publish – industry specialists, publicly prominent experts, as well as "well-known" figures. In targeting either of these groups for collaborative articles, make content both link and visitor-worthy.
- Provide unique information – ensure that, when designing the content outline, unique information that can't be found elsewhere is included.

Any statistics available via website tracking and measuring programs are priceless. A good analytical program can provide an incredible amount of data that can be used to track visitors and make decisions about who to target in the future and how to do it.

Using these methods, you can discover which terms, visitors, referrers, etc, are most valuable to the site, enabling you to make the best possible decisions about how, where and what to target.

A common misconception when contemplating making a site achieve higher rankings is that it will need redeveloping from the ground up. In our experience, 90 per cent of sites can be easily adjusted without any redevelopment to benefit from good SEO practices.

The value of a website grows every day. In 2000, there were 15,400,000 users of the internet in the UK. By 2005, this figure had grown to 35,800,000.

If practised, all of these factors will make a site better – and will, in the long term, create a site that can take advantage of the way people now source information in their everyday lives...

...and remember, we are all going to have to learn to love spiders.

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So if you've got what it takes, please send your CV together with a covering letter to Adriana Taylor, Shell Gas (LPG), Po Box 1100, Chesterfield, S44 5YQ. Alternatively email your CV to adriana.taylor@shell.com closing date: 19th February 2007.

www.shellgas.co.uk



RAISING AWARENESS OF THE LPG REVOLUTION

Tony Pile, market development manager, Royal Mail

The lpg gas market is staging something of a quiet revolution around the UK at the moment, as the public becomes ever more concerned with green issues. However, many of the column inches are geared towards autogas, its eco-friendliness and cost-efficiency against spiralling petrol costs, rather than the benefits of lpg for home, or even business, use.



Tony Pile

So how can the industry better communicate with those potentially open to switching over? And how can those who have already made the switch learn more about the benefits and potential additional uses for the fuel?

Firstly, it is important for lpg providers to effectively identify potential customers. Any of the UK's many data organisations will be able to provide the starting point, identifying eco-conscious consumers throughout the nation and providing name and address details, possibly other information on preferences and habits as well, which can help shape communications.

TRENDS

This can be matched against existing lpg customer records, whether from delivery details or a more formal database, which will also flag up other trends to identify potential users – perhaps they tend to be young couples seeking to save money, regular organic food shoppers, or larger families wanting to minimise their carbon footprint?

Lpg providers could also utilise any information they hold on autogas car drivers to widen the list of potential prospects, as having already made the switch in one area of their lives, they may also be open to trying the

fuel at home. Once this database has been checked to ensure address details are up-to-date and accurate, the communication can begin.

From here, it is worth examining motives for the communication. If an organisation is looking to raise awareness of the fuel among non-users, direct mail can be very cost-effective and productive, particularly for smaller suppliers. A direct mailshot can be retained, compared against other fuel information, and read at a recipient's leisure. Mail can also communicate complicated messages – such as the average amount saved by switching to lpg – without the restrictions of airtime limits.

It can be easily integrated into a wider campaign, directing recipients to a website for example, or used to follow up a local or national radio campaign to strengthen the message. Direct mail is also highly measurable as a response mechanism, and it is worth keeping track of those who have responded to the campaign for future communication.

RELATIONSHIP

Once contact has been made, it is essential an organisation maintain a relationship with consumers. Many customers today, particularly in the highly competitive utilities marketplace,

have become used to switching providers in the quest for low price, and this will be no different for lpg. Therefore, regular communication can help an organisation to differentiate itself on service, rather than price, and build longer-term relationships with customers.

Here, organisations may find a customer magazine or newsletter to be beneficial, to talk about company developments, latest news in the lpg sector, suggestions for system set up and even other 'green' topics of interest to customers.

Recent research has shown that recipients of customer magazines value these communications very highly, and can be an important aspect in driving loyalty to a brand or company. In the utilities sector, for example, British Gas runs a regular customer communication to help it stand out from other natural gas providers and build knowledge of added-value services. Customer magazines are useful tools for 'soft-selling', as they build on the engagement and entertainment of magazines.

When sent to readers through the post, magazines can even be segmented to send different messages to appeal to the interests of different groups – for example, a magazine targeting business audiences could include details on the benefits of

switching company cars to lpg, while a publication for home users could talk about green issues for the home, even growing organic vegetables, to provide information likely to appeal.

RELEVANCE

The key to success in all of these communications is relevance of the message. For promotional activity to work, especially in an increasingly digital age and when most people's time is increasingly precious, the messages need to be right to appeal to different consumer groups – whether this appeals to them through special offers for regular customers to reward them for their loyalty, or the communication comes to people just after they have moved house when they might be looking at installing new heating systems and saving money in the long run.

It is also worth paying attention to accuracy of name and address details and noting those customers who do not respond – they might wish to be communicated with another way or not be interested in the proposition. As the country becomes ever more interested in alternative and renewable energy sources, now is the perfect time to spread the message and talk to current and potential customers about the advantages of making the switch to cheaper, greener forms of energy.

Feeling the EcoForce

Lochinvar has announced the launch of its new EcoForce+ range of high efficiency, gas-fired condensing water heaters.

The EcoForce+ range is comprised of three models that feature a stainless steel heat exchanger and a stainless steel water tank, giving durability and resistance to corrosion caused by electrolytic action. Interconnecting pipework and a shunt pump are also included as standard.

Lochinvar says one significant feature of EcoForce+ is the patented cold-water injection system that enables almost



EcoForce+

continual condensing mode operation, providing maximum performance for the user and up to 108 per cent net thermal efficiency.

Storage capacities are 150 and 230 litres and hot water recovery rates run from 628 to 950 litres per hour,

based on a temperature rise of 44 deg C.

David Pepper, managing director for Lochinvar, said: "As well as offering the benefits of stainless steel construction and the patented cold water injection system, EcoForce+ also utilises

the proven principle of low storage and fast hot water recovery, but with the added benefit of condensing technology."

Available for use on lpg or natural gas, EcoForce+ is suitable for room sealed or open flue installation. Horizontal and vertical balanced flue assemblies together with 45 and 90-degree bends are available, offering flexibility for the specifier and installer.

Other features include unvented installation, an anti legionella function and purpose designed water heater controller option.

Contact Lochinvar Ltd on 01295 269981

www.lochinvar.com

Caravanners Becoming Light

Truma UK, a manufacturer of appliances and equipment for the caravan and leisure markets, and BP LPG UK have announced that all major UK caravan manufacturers will be reconfiguring gas lockers in their products to fit BP's slightly larger composite cylinder, BP Gas Light, for 2007 season models.

Caravanners have taken to the composite cylinders for the savings in noseweight they make possible, as the bottles are 5kg in weight rather than 6kg. BP Gas Light bottles can also be exchanged in Austria, Benelux, Denmark and Poland, with Germany, France and Spain expected soon or already rolling out.

The composite cylinders can be connected to both bulkhead and clip on regulator systems and different styles of clip on regulator are available from Truma. Truma hopes that as many as 300 of its 550 UK dealers will stock gas refills for the cylinders.

Contact Truma UK on 01283 586050
www.trumauk.com

Hazchem Focusing on Risk Management

Specialist insurance broker, Hazchem Insurance Solutions, has announced the launch of its Hazchem Risk Management division. As a separate department of Hazchem, its main focus will be to assess individual companies and provide risk management and training programmes. Training will include site assessments, driver training, including ADR, manual handling and spill prevention.

Unlike most brokers that only offer an insurance product, Hazchem believes that offering risk management

will help companies achieve further premium savings, as well as better productivity. Hazchem says that companies should already be aware that claims history is a major factor in influencing premium levels, but is confident that it will be able to achieve greater reductions for those companies that take risk management and training seriously.

Hazchem will offer risk management and training in conjunction with its insurance products, but they will also be offered as stand-alone options. Companies that use Hazchem

as their insurance provider will benefit from subsidised rates on risk management programmes, it says.

Hazchem's account director, Scott Dyte, said: "With the success of our Hazchem insurance product over the last 12 months, we have demonstrated that we deliver high quality insurance products at sensible rates. We believe that Hazchem Risk Management will play a crucial part in our ongoing commitment to the hazchem industry."

Contact Hazchem Insurance Solutions on 08450 725756

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- Tank & Equipment Manufacturing

& many more.....



Greenfuel Scheme Offsetting Emissions

Greenfuel (Monkton Combe) Ltd has picked up the environmental gauntlet recently thrown down by Sir Nicholas Stern by promising to offset the carbon emissions of all its customers over the next year.

With unleaded petrol usage said to make almost ten pence worth of damage to the environment per litre, it is estimated that the scheme will save in excess of £100,000 of damage done by motorists to the environment – or six tonnes of carbon emissions per vehicle. The initiative will see the company become completely carbon neutral by calculating the remaining emissions of the vehicles it converts and working with Climate Care to offset these.

Offsetting a carbon footprint involves putting the same amount of money back into the

promotion and development of low-carbon technologies as carbon emissions cost the environment. Drivers that use Greenfuel to convert to lpg will benefit from:

- A clean fuel – helping to reduce the number of deaths caused by road traffic pollution, which is more than the fatalities caused by road accidents in the UK
- Carbon neutral driving
- Half price fuel.

Noel Lock and Ingram Legge set up bath-based Greenfuel four years ago. The long-term objective of the business is to make substantial reductions in harmful pollutants and emissions across the UK through the provision of cost effective ways of making vehicles cleaner.

Noel Lock, director of

Greenfuel, is adamant that all consumers should be doing more to aid the objectives of the recently published Stern report.

Commenting on Greenfuel's new initiative, he said: "For the rest of 2006, we'll donate an amount from each conversion to Climate Care to offset the reduced carbon emissions from an lpg vehicle.

"Realistically, as a society, we're going to continue to drive, but this is a major opportunity to meet the reality of carbon emissions. With the mass provision of bio-fuels still a very long way off, our option is the only readily available way to be a carbon neutral driver now and do your bit to save the planet!"

Contact Greenfuel (Monkton Combe) Ltd on 01225 722610 www.greenfuel.org.uk

ELVs Require Purging

The End of Life Vehicle (ELV) regulations came into force on January 1 2007 and the LPGA is seeking companies to add to its register of businesses that can provide a vehicle tank emptying service. The regulations state that a vehicle has to be de-polluted and 85 per cent of the vehicle must be recycled at the end its life.

Car manufacturers have established national networks that will accept their own models when they reach the end of their lives involving around 300 vehicle dismantlers known as Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATF). ATFs are provided with guidance from the DTI on removing lpg tanks from vehicles and storing them for emptying, purging and scrapping. Guidance on how to deal with the tanks following their removal is available on the LPGA's website at www.lpga.co.uk.

Mike Chapman, autogas manager at the LPGA, said: "At present, volumes have been low but, as numbers increase, we see the demand rising for the provision of services for emptying, purging and possibly scrapping where the ATFs are unable to deal with the tanks under waste regulations. At present, we are only aware of a small number of companies who can provide an emptying service and I would be grateful if any company that wishes to provide emptying, purging or scrapping services could let me know as soon as possible so that their details may be added to the register of services on our website."

Commercials Now CC Exempt

Yuejin (UK) Ltd has announced that its range of lpg/ petrol 3.5 tonne tippers, dropsides and box vans now includes certified vehicles that meet the criteria for congestion charge exemption.

Yuejin says it is the first manufacturer to achieve the low carbon emissions in a commercially acceptable vehicle. The trucks run dual fuel systems utilising the PRINS VSI system.

Steve Kusytsch, business development manager at Yuejin, said: "With the backdrop of the expansion of congestion charge zones and increasing annual charges, our vehicles provide an excellent solution for saving LCV operators thousands of pounds every year. Not only are the trucks the most cost effective to buy and run, they are now very environmentally friendly, with emission levels over 40 per cent below the current Euro 4 standard. We are dedicated to providing the



Yuejin single cab dropside.

best value commercial vehicles money can buy."

The major vehicle manufacturers have largely shunned lpg fuel technology but Yuejin has proved the benefits, says the company.

The Yuejin range of trucks is built based on licensed Japanese technology designs. The company's manufacturing facilities in China are jointly owned by Nanjing Autos, the fourth biggest company in China, and IVECO, the Italian truck giant. Yuejin's trucks come

with a three-year, 60,000-mile warranty.

"The actual word 'yuejin' translates as 'a great leap forward'", said Steve, "and with the starting price of the class leading low emission trucks at £9,995 plus vat, there is no one near them in the race for value."

To coordinate demand, Yuejin is currently embarking on a dealer recruitment campaign.

Contact Yuejin (UK) Ltd on 08452 572007 www.yuejin.co.uk

Green Message Gets Sticky

Are you driving lean, green and carbon clean? That is the question environmentally conscious drivers who have converted to lpg are now asking their fellow motorists, according to Autogas 2000. The company has a new rear windscreen sticker available for autogas drivers, enabling them to display their improved carbon 'wheel print'.



Rear windscreen sticker from Autogas 2000.

Autogas 2000 hopes to raise awareness that there is a viable and affordable choice available to clean up existing vehicles, as autogas provides as much as 20% improvement on carbon dioxide emissions over petrol, and far greater benefits to local air quality compared to diesel alternatives.

The need to highlight driver's 'green' credentials has been

heightened by recent campaigns in Edinburgh and other areas of the UK, where environmental activists are targeting what they perceive to be the most damaging vehicles to the environment.

In response, Autogas 2000 believes that autogas drivers want to announce that they are taking action at their own cost, making a worthy contribution to the environment.

Autogas drivers will be

lobbying London Mayor, Ken Livingstone, and his colleagues at Transport for London following the announcement to that the London congestion charge will rise to £25, affecting many family sized vehicles that are currently listed as group G by the vehicle certification authority.

Contact Autogas 2000 on 01845 523213 www.autogas.co.uk

Awareness Day Targets Fleets

Arun Autogas in Littlehampton, West Sussex, will be holding an lpg awareness day at the Shoreham Airport campus of Northbrook College Sussex in Shoreham by sea on March 1.

The event, targeted at fleet operators, such as local authorities, couriers, taxi companies, etc, aims to raise awareness of lpg as an alternative fuel, emphasising the financial and environmental benefits of the gas. Speakers will include representatives from Arun Autogas, its suppliers, Ricardo Engineering and environmental groups.

"We will have a number of converted vehicles there for people to test drive and have representatives from main vehicle suppliers attending," said Marie Harding of Arun Autogas. "We believe we are going to have a very large turnout and are very excited about it. We have had a very positive response from all the people we have invited so far."

Arun Autogas has been converting vehicles to lpg since 1998 and is an Approved LPG Installer. The company also offers mobile servicing and repairs all over the south, including Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, London and Berkshire.

Contact Arun Autogas on 01903 715715 www.arunautogas.co.uk

Signing Against Road Tax

An e-petition calling for the Government to reduce or abolish road tax on lpg and electric powered vehicles has been created on Downing Street's website.

The petition's creator, David Webber, states on the site: "Lpg and other green powered vehicles emit significantly lower emissions when compared with a petrol powered vehicle. The current road tax system allows for newer green cars to be road

tax exempt but older lpg converted cars are not included in this scheme. If the government really are interested in decreasing emissions from transportation then it should encourage the public to spend the money on the lpg conversion for their car and as a reward make them road tax exempt."

Mike Chapman, autogas manager at the LPGA, said: "It's an issue we will be

raising in our lobbying this year."

Steve Sparrow of Go LPG! said: "When I signed it, there were 95 names on it. Lets make it 95,000!"

At the time of writing, there were over 1,300 signatures attached to the petition, and the number has been rising steadily.

The deadline for signing up to the petition is March 8 2007.

www.number10.gov.uk

Concessions Fiasco in Fiji

Taxi operators in Fiji have hit out at the interim government's withdrawal of tax concessions on lpg. The decision has affected hundreds of taxi proprietors who had opted for lpg after the previous government introduced the concessions in 2006.

Fiji Taxi Union president, Tauz Khan, said an increase in taxi fares was warranted in light of the decision. He said that the Government had introduced the concessions to help taxi operators buy the lpg vehicles instead of granting them an increase in taxi fares following the increase in fuel prices last year, and the concessions were

extended for a year in November.

Around 300 lpg cars will be affected by the withdrawal, while more vehicles are en route from Japan.

"Gas companies have gone the extra mile to put in place more gas stations for the purpose of catering to the large number of lpg cars that we were expecting," said Tauz. "What has happened was that taxi owners sold their old cars when its license expired and used the money raised from the sale as collateral for the purchase of lpg cars."

Fiji Motor Vehicle Dealers Association president, Ershad

Jan, said the concern was that most dealers were overstocked with lpg vehicles as buyers have had to wait since December for the finance ministry to grant approval for the concessions.

"The change of heart on the part of the government has landed 100 people in my experience alone in the middle of this fiasco," he said.

Mahendra Chaudhry, interim minister of finance, said: "We are reviewing all concessions and, for the time being, that means it's all on hold. Concessions have had grave implications on government revenue but, in cases where it is justified, we may bring it back."

Shell NZ Sells Commercial Business

BOC is to buy Shell New Zealand's commercial lpg business, including its shareholding in Liquigas. The purchase is subject to clearance by New Zealand's Commerce Commission, with a decision expected early this year.

"Lpg is a key part of BOC's business globally and is integral to our growth strategy," said Sue Dale, BOC's general manager in New Zealand. "This multimillion dollar acquisition represents a significant commitment to increase the BOC lpg business and its capabilities. It also increases BOC's market share and secures its position as a significant market player in New Zealand."

Mark Forsyth, retail general manager for Shell New Zealand, said: "The divestment of our lpg commercial and distributor business and the Liquigas shareholding will help Shell Retail focus on its core business. Lpg remains an important element of Shell's fuel portfolio and, for our retail customers, it will be business as usual.

"The divestment of the lpg business is consistent with Shell's strategy of managing its portfolio to deliver maximum value to customers and shareholders. While the lpg commercial and distributor business is robust with growth prospects, it is no longer considered core to Shell New Zealand's retail business."

Shell is also reported to be discussing the sale of its lpg businesses in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland, as well as other countries in western Europe.

Lpg Seminar Discusses Surplus

Purvin & Gertz is holding its 20th Annual International Lpg Seminar at the Intercontinental Houston Hotel in Houston, USA, on March 5-8 2007. An lpg workshop will be held March 5, with the international lpg seminar beginning the next day.

The agenda of the seminar will address "how will the lpg world manage the expected surge in world lpg supplies over the coming years?" Global lpg supplies are expected to grow faster than the base demand for lpg in traditional markets for several years.

"To work off the lpg supply surplus each year, we're expecting a significant rise in lpg imports and price sensitive petrochemical demand, both in the US and Europe," said Glenda Burres, the conference coordinator. "Hence, this major issues poses many questions centred around infrastructure and the ability of lpg markets in the west to absorb the rapid build up of new lpg supplies in the Middle East and Africa.

"Our forum speakers will cover the most pertinent issues surrounding our industry's ability to handle

the expected rise in surplus lpg supplies. This will include timely discussions on fractionation, storage, petrochemical feedstock capacities, shipping, terminaling capacity, supply/demand balances and much more."

An industry roundtable discussion will follow speeches on these subjects as panellists debate whether or not these goals and industry plans are plausible and sufficient to handle the build up in new lpg supplies. Contact Purvin & Gertz on +1 7132 360318 www.purvingertz.com

Lpg Helping Conserve Forests

The national environmental action plan support programme of the ministry of environment in Pakistan has launched a project aimed at improving the livelihoods and quality of life of people in Galiyat through socioeconomic development, ecosystem management and clean energy supplies.

The reduction of indoor pollution and conservation of forests

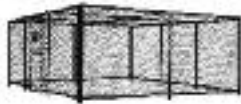
through the promotion of lpg, enhanced energy efficiency and resource management at Galiyat project will target the conservation of forests in the area by introducing alternative energy sources and promoting ecotourism.

At present, 40 community-based organisations are assisting in the area by introducing lpg cylinders, establishing biogas plants and

installing solar geysers.

"This project will not only play a vital role in uplifting the local community, but also provide essential means for long term socioeconomic viability and environmental sustainability," said Jan Vandemoortele, the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme, which is involved with the project.

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BPEC Relocating

BPEC Certification Ltd, a training provider in Coventry offering ACS instruction, has relocating with sister companies, BPEC Services Ltd and BPEC (Training) Ltd in Edinburgh, to centralised offices in Derby following a thorough business review.

The driving force behind the move is the desire to further improve efficiency and provide an even higher level of service to all its customers, says the company.

"The relocation means there will be some new friendly faces amongst the better known ones," said Paul Johnson, chief executive. "However, everyone will endeavour to make the transition as seamless as possible. We would like to ask for your continued support and understanding as we adjust to our new offices. Please rest assured

that we will try to resolve any issues that may arise as quickly and efficiently as possible."

BPEC Certification also runs Domestic and Industrial Gas Foundation Programmes for ACS Category 2 and 3 candidates and competent persons schemes. The company believes it was the first certification body in the UK to introduce a comprehensive range of industrial and commercial ACS reassessments. The reassessments have been designed to shorten the length of the assessment process, significantly reducing the time spent in the assessment centre.

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