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Comment

This is the first issue of our newsletter from the new office in Snowdonia, the land of the narrow gauge railway! Historically, this is where the 60cm (2 ft) gauge railway was conceived by James Spooner, Chief Engineer of the Ffestiniog Railway, who cut out a daring, narrow ledge as the track bed, tight against the mountain sides, for the transportation of slate from the quarries down to the sea. This line proved beyond doubt that such a narrow track could carry passengers and freight (reasonably!) safely and became the progenitor of the 60cm gauge worldwide. Even today, the Welsh Highland Railway (WHR) is being re-built to run through the mountains of Snowdonia, to re-connect with the Ffestiniog Railway at Porthmadog, both railways relying heavily on steam power.

Importantly, these steam locomotives continue to require the excellent service and technology of the sealing industry to perform well. Consequently, I am delighted to include a photograph of one of the Garratt double engines now on the WHR. These articulated locomotives were built in Manchester at the Beyer Peacock works for the extensive 60cm gauge network in South Africa, where they were employed primarily on long freight trains carrying fruit (notably apples and oranges) down to the ports. Three of these locomotives, including the very last Garratt built by Beyer Peacock in 1958 (pictured below on the WHR at Waunfawr), have now been acquired by the WHR to haul their trains through the mountains.

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ESA-Environmental News is published by:

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European IPPC amendments

The Dutch Environment Ministry (VROM) has been investigating new approaches for the IPPC Directive, aimed at providing greater flexibility, and has organised 2 recent workshops in collaboration with other Member States.

The first workshop was held in London and explored the potential for industrial regulation via environmental management systems. The second was held in Prague and considered options for the regulation of industrial installations. A final conference is planned in October at den Haag, at which time it is hoped that a strong consensus proposal can be forwarded to the European Commission.

The VROM has suggested that permits for IPPC should be issued at corporate level (rather than at individual site level), to cover a number of sites operated by the company. This should allow more flexibility and encourage more voluntary agreements into the IPPC system.

This also reflects the complication where large petrochemical sites are now subdivided amongst several, independent operating companies. Permitting authorities have found this a particular challenge, such that there are now many different solutions in use. For example, negotiated agreements on these "industrial estates" have proved to be quite practicable in some Member States, but not in others.



As with many other items of EU legislation, the VROM has recognised a broad spectrum of IPPC approaches across the EU Member States. In addition, there appear to be a number of ambiguities in the wording of the Directive, such that interpretation of some of the terms varies widely. Consequently, VROM has proposed that the European Commission should issue some form of best practice guidance about IPPC terminology and implementation, which would help to direct discussions in the Member States.

Importantly, the Commission has indicated already that it plans to provide some amendments to the IPPC Directive in 2005, after a review of progress to date is published later this year.

One option which was proposed last year was the use of EU-wide emission limits, although there seems little support for this idea at present. In fact, it had been hoped that emission limits themselves should be derived from the BREF notes prepared by the industrial sectors covered by the IPPC Directive. However, this has proved to be a much more difficult challenge which needs further clarification before there can be any likelihood of consistent series of limits across the EU.

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Proposals for toluene restrictions

The European Commission has published draft legislation to restrict the marketing and use of toluene, as part of the 28th amendment to Directive 76/769/EEC. Primarily, this is in response to the differences in national legislation on the restrictions of the material, such that this new proposal is aimed at creating a more level "playing field" across the EU.

The draft follows a risk assessment which was concluded by Denmark in 2001, although it has taken a further 3 years to publish the proposal. The risk assessment clarifies a need to limit the environmental impact and protect the health of workers.

Apparently, the annual consumption of toluene in the EU is 2.75 million tonnes, of which around 20% is used as a solvent (the 80% majority is used as feedstock and hence should not be present in the final product).

The communication proposes an amendment to the existing Directive 76/769/EEC to include toluene, which "may not be placed on the market or used as a substance or constituent of preparations in a concentration equal to or higher than 0.1% by mass". At the present time, the restriction covers only the use of toluene in adhesives and spray paints, but this could well be the "thin end of the wedge"!

The legislation will take effect 18 months after it has been adopted, so the **earliest** date for it to come into force would be the beginning of 2006.

EU climate change developments

As part of the EU commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have reached agreement on the emissions trading scheme, which will allow EU industries to buy credits from overseas projects. Emissions trading will commence in the EU next January and follows from the clean development mechanism (CDM) and joint implementation (JI) initiatives under the Kyoto Protocol.

The EU emissions trading scheme allows CDM and JI credits to be used, regardless of whether the Kyoto Protocol comes into force, which requires the ratification of Russia.



Another part of the EU climate change programme has focused recently on national allocation plans, in which Member States have been required to notify the emission allowances granted to their industries. Only 5 Member States had submitted their data by the deadline of the end of March, but a further 4 had complied by the end of May. The Commission has instigated infringement proceedings against the remaining 6 of the original 15 EU Member States.

The 10 new accession countries were given until the beginning of May to provide their own plans, but only 3 have submitted so far. The Commission has given the remaining 7 new Member States a further opportunity before taking action.

The Commission has requested further clarification for **all** the plans submitted so far and has indicated that most of these plans are below their expectations:

- some of the notified plans provide a much higher quantity of emissions allowances than anticipated
- several Member States plan to allow their industries to **increase** emissions, even though they are already above their Kyoto targets
- some Member States are funding the purchase of emission credits themselves, under the Kyoto Protocol, which will allow their industries to continue to emit!

Fortunately, some new Member States (such as Hungary and Poland) have large surpluses against their Kyoto targets! In any case, the Commission is required to assess all of the plans against specific criteria and is empowered to reject plans completely if they fail to meet the standards agreed.

Relevant forthcoming meetings

♦ Centrifugal Pumps - state of the art

London (UK), 2004 September 22

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♦ ESA Autumn Meeting

Düsseldorf (D), 2004 September 22 - 24

European Sealing Association
(contact details on front page)

♦ Pump Users International Forum 2004

Karlsruhe (D), 2004 September 29 - 30

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♦ FSA Fall Meeting

Napa (California), 2004 October 13 - 15

Fluid Sealing Association

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Fax: +1 610 971 4859

e-mail: info@fluidsealing.com

♦ Isgatec 2004

Stuttgart (D), 2004 October 19 - 21

Isgatec GmbH

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♦ Valve World 2004

Maastricht (NL), 2004 November 9 - 11

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