

Demonisation of diesel has to stop

SMMT calls for clarity on diesel as media labels it 'dirty'

IN RECENT months, the diesel has been the subject of discussion as to its damaging emissions. Although considered cleaner with CO output, the need to regulate NOx emissions and the problems early in 2014 with 'smog' attributed to the rise in diesel sales, has pushed the fuel to the fore. Calls for 'diesel charges' similar to the congestion charge in cities, increases in tax rates and media misunderstandings have caused the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders to act.

The SMMT has launched a new website, dieselfacts.co.uk, as well as a leaflet via vehicle manufacturers and dealers, in an effort to inform the public about the benefits of the fuel while dispelling the myths that have been created along the way. It comes as new consumer research reveals widespread confusion about diesel

technology that, if uncorrected, could limit adoption of the latest low emission vehicles and undermine the UK's efforts to meet strict air quality and climate change obligations.

Responding to a YouGov poll, 87% of UK adults said they were unaware of the latest Euro-6 vehicle emission technology, while 54% incorrectly blamed cars and commercial vehicles as the biggest cause of air pollution in the UK. Just under one in five (19%) of people surveyed correctly identified power stations as the biggest contributors of nitrogen oxides (NOx). In fact, it would take 42 million Euro-6 diesel cars (almost four times the number on the roads) to generate the same amount of NOx as one UK coal-fired power station.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief



COMMITTED: Mike Hawes highlights the potential of diesel engines

Executive, comments: "Today's diesel engines are the cleanest ever, and the culmination of billions of pounds of investment by manufacturers to improve air quality. Bans and parking taxes on diesel vehicles therefore make no sense from an environmental point of view. We need to avoid penalising one vehicle technology over another and instead encourage the uptake of the latest low emission vehicles by consumers. The allegations against diesel cars made in recent months threaten to misguide policy making and undermine public confidence in diesel. It's time to put the record straight."

From 1 September 2015, all new cars must meet the new Euro-6 emissions standard making them the cleanest in history. Almost nine out of 10 people surveyed (87%),

however, confirmed they have never heard of the term. This is of particular concern given the recent decisions by some local authorities in London to charge diesel-owning residents more to park outside their homes. Some local councils are imposing surcharges based on a vehicle's Euro Standard rating; others are imposing penalties regardless of their performance. This is despite almost three quarters (72%) of motorists opposing penalties for the UK's cleanest cars. Of these, 16% think some diesel cars should incur a parking surcharge and others shouldn't, according to their Euro standard emissions, while 56% believe diesel cars should not incur a surcharge at all, regardless of their rating.

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IMI calls for apprentice pay increase

IN A SPEECH at the recent IMI Dinner, Chief Executive Steve Nash called on the government to entice more people into becoming apprentices by increasing the hourly pay rate by 70%.

The call, made before the Chancellor's budget where the rate was increased by 20% to £3.30 per hour, would have seen the level move from £2.73 to £4.73 per hour giving apprentices more opportunity to see through a three-year course in the automotive industry with better career prospects at the end.

Steve Nash explains: "The industry is telling us they struggle to attract the highest quality school leavers into training, that they need to help them overcome the technological challenges they face over the next decade. This demand cannot be met while the industry continues to pay apprentices the

legal minimum of £2.73 per hour across the board.

"The education system is now totally geared up to keep young people in school until they're 18 and push them toward university. Meanwhile, young people no longer have access to careers advisors who might send them down a vocational route since the service was reorganised in 2012. This puts industry at a disadvantage."

Speaking after the chancellor's announcement, he added: "20% on top of today's apprentice minimum wage is a great step forward; it should help business attract talented youngsters into vocational training as a viable alternative to university. However, the IMI is recommending that businesses in the motor industry go further and offer up to £4 an hour to first year apprentices, to attract



TRAINING: More is needed to bring young people into apprenticeships

the brightest students into our branch of engineering apprenticeships."

The move comes as the body warns that poor provision of careers advice is a road block to economic growth. The warning follows IMI sponsored research from the Industry Apprentice Council, which showed that 45% of current industry apprentices had

received poor or no guidance on their career choice. Meanwhile, less than 10% said a careers advisor or teacher had helped them find out about apprenticeships. There is currently no statutory requirement for young people to have access to face-to-face careers advice.

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Garages must continue MOT quality control on their own

THE RGA has highlighted that MOT stations will have to look at changing and possibly enhancing how they manage test quality as DVSA announce that the new MOT computer system will not record QC checks. Authorised Examiners (AEs) however will need to provide evidence to DVSA in the future as to how they are managing test quality.

The DVSA acknowledges that some AEs are using trade associations to advise them. The RMI MOTQC Scheme has been providing this additional support for many years. RMI Director Stuart James commented, "We are already working closely with the DVSA to assist garages and

enhance their internal QC procedures. Our own dedicated MOT operations team conducts site assessments, including all the areas that the DVSA focuses on during its own site assessments, including observing an MOT. At the end of every visit, we provide garages with both a verbal and written report, together with recommendations on how to remain compliant and reduce risk. By working closely with the DVSA and following their standards, we are able to provide thorough QC checks, which can improve our members' compliance and risk score."

The announcement from the DVSA comes at a time when the garage trade is already anticipating

a switch to a new web-based MOT testing system, which is due to be completed by September 2015. Bringing MOT testing online is part of the wider government MOT modernisation project, which aims to improve road safety and test quality by simplifying MOT policies and processes.

The RMI has long been working with the DVSA to help MOT stations engage with the project, and welcomed the department to its member events last year, which it opened up to all MOT stations.

Meanwhile, the association has also been liaising with the Department for Transport in a project to reassess statutory MOT test fees.

The DfT is analysing garage running costs to validate the justification for an increase in MOT test fees to present to the next government, but to make this happen they need financial costings for MOT test stations as a starting point to the project.

Stuart James adds: "MOT pricing has been a long-running issue with independent garages. The fact that there is no minimum price forces garages to compete on what is an already small profit margin. The IGA continues to campaign for the introduction of a minimum mandated fee, as well as an increase in the maximum fee."

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Automotive Brands buys BTCC team

AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCT supplier and manufacturer Automotive Brands has purchased the BTC Racing team which it title-sponsored in the 2014 British Touring Car Championship.

The team competed under the name Power Maxed Racing and will continue in this guise under its new ownership. Previous owner Chris Stockton was also the team's driver in 2014 and has relinquished his role to focus on other business commitments. The team will run two Chevrolet Cruzes this year for drivers Dave Newsham and Josh Cook.

Chris Stockton comments: "I'm sad to be taking a back seat just as things are coming together. The old adage is true, you wait for a bus and two come along at once. My pallet distribution business is growing phenomenally and opportunities that just cannot be passed up on have been presented. It is just not possible to run a BTCC team, grow my business and race, and do all entities justice, unfortunately."

Adam Weaver, managing Director of Automotive Brands adds: "Having been involved in the BTCC for the past three seasons,

owning a BTCC team is a great strategic move for Automotive Brands. The team not only provides an ideal R&D platform for our premium range of products but the marketing benefit of being involved in such an iconic racing series is huge.

"We're involved in many types of motorsport through our sponsorship development program



OWNERSHIP: The team will run two cars for this season

however, the BTCC is the pinnacle and will support our strategic marketing plans and further development of our premium products."

Alliance Automotive increase purchasing power with UAN acquisition

THE ALLIANCE Automotive Group has acquired the United Aftermarket Network (UAN) from the current shareholders Andrew and Rachael Dickinson, creating a combined purchasing power greater than £300 million per annum with member sell out value exceeding £500 million.

Andrew Dickinson commented: "Rachael and I realised that for UAN to continue to progress as it has over the last eleven years, we needed to become part of a larger, European wide organisation. It is our opinion that joining forces

with GROUPAUTO will enable this process."

The UAN and GROUPAUTO will continue to operate as separate networks playing to the strengths of the respective brands.

Andrew and Rachael will stay with the business to ensure an effective transfer of ownership and Phil Dodd, will immediately fill the Managing Director's position at UAN.

Jim Mazza, current MD of GROUPAUTO, will become Managing Director of Alliance Automotive Group UK trading

groups and a Managing Director of GROUPAUTO will be recruited.

He comments: "The independent motor factor is faced with a fast-changing market environment with different competitors seeking to position themselves for advantage. We are in a world where size increasingly matters and it is vital that our members are part of a group which has the resources and purchasing power to enable them to compete on a level playing field.

"This initiative is the product of considerable thought and

effort as all had to be satisfied that joining forces was in the best interest of the members and employees of the respective groups. When we had the opportunity to look at what such a combination could offer it became a question of 'when' it would happen and not 'if'. The two groups will have the resources and expertise to enhance their offer to members.

"I am relishing the opportunity to work with the GROUPAUTO and UAN teams to ensure the members of both groups achieve tangible benefits."

Protecting people

Andrew Page has signed up with Peoplesafe to provide 100 of its staff with devices that can raise the alarm if they need help. The Identicom and Twig protectors are being used at the company's distribution centre and in its 114-strong branch network and will allow staff members to be monitored and indicate they are in trouble at the push of a button.

Rallying call

Morris Lubricants will be the official lubricant partner and supplier to the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy throughout the 2015 series, which takes place over five rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship starting in May in Portugal. The company is also sponsoring British truck racing ace Dave Jenkins, who is gunning for glory in the British Truck Racing Association Championship.



Award winning

Jubilee Clips is celebrating after winning the Medway Business Manufacturing Award at the first time of entering. Targeted export growth in recent years and the wide spread of export markets, proving that Jubilee Clips is a global player, caught the attention of the judges with 12% growth to European markets in 2014 and an impressive 20% growth to markets further afield.

Lifetime achievement

NGK's Brian Childs has been recognised for his work in bringing the spark plug manufacturer to the fore by winning the CAT Magazine Lifetime Achievement award. Brian started as an apprentice at Ford in Dunton, Essex, before joining NGK as a regional sales representative in 1975. He retired from his role as Deputy Managing Director in 2013, although he remains on the board in an advisory capacity.



EXHIBITION: Autopromotec has already increased exhibitor numbers for 2015

Autopromotec grows exhibitor and delegation numbers

WITH REGISTRATIONS still in progress, the Autopromotec 2015 figures gathered so far witness a 10% increase in exhibitors over 2013, with a large share of foreign companies taking part.

Thanks to targeted and well-conducted international promotion activities that have been undertaken over the years and have intensified over the past few months, Autopromotec has now become a must-see event for the commercial activities of Italian and international exhibitors and visitors alike. In order to offer the best demand and supply solutions for each country, and to confirm the

increasing international orientation of the show, many international exhibitors will be grouped in country pavilions, wide exhibiting spaces hosting leading countries of the international automotive scene, such as Argentina and Brazil. Moreover, an area devoted to Turkish exhibiting companies will be featured for the first time ever, an important project developed in collaboration with OIB-Uludag Automotive Industry Exporters' Association – that will involve 11 companies and will be hosted in **Hall 21**.

Due to agreements signed with several institutional and private

partners, the number of international groups visiting the show has more than doubled over 2013, with 24 confirmed delegations coming from all continents. In detail, thanks to a renewed agreement with ICE – the Italian Trade Promotion Agency – delegations from the USA, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, UAE, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, North Korea and Japan will be visiting the event.

Autopromotec will take place on 20-24 May in Bologna, Italy. You can read a preview in the May issue of Aftermarket magazine, out on April 24th.

New appointments

MAHLE AFTERMARKET has recruited experienced aftermarket professional Phil Ramsay to the position of technical sales support, to develop its 'man with a van' concept and promote the breadth and quality of the entire MAHLE aftermarket product range.

Phil has a broad range of aftermarket experience, most recently with IFA member Leamoco, where he was warehouse manager and parts advisor providing technical support to the sales team. He was previously a co-owner of an independent workshop, so has practical knowledge from both a distribution and installation perspective.

"The idea behind the 'man with a van' programme is to take MAHLE – and everything its brands

stand for – directly to the technicians who are actually undertaking the service and repair work," explains MAHLE Aftermarket managing director, Jonathan Walker. "However, to really connect with those technicians, you need someone who understands the realities and challenges of the installation process, not just a knowledge of replacement components.

Servicesure Autocentres, the national garage programme developed by The Parts Alliance, has appointed its first National Sales Manager as it gears up for a period of rapid growth.

Jason McCreaney currently works as a business project manager for Car Parts & Accessories (CPA), the Sussex motor factor acquired by The Parts



ROLE: Jason McCreaney joins Parts Alliance

Alliance in September last year. He officially takes up his new role on April 1. Jason has been with CPA for two years, before that running his own businesses during a 30-year career in sales.

One of his first duties as National Sales Manager is to mentor around 50 Servicesure Autocentre development teams, who are employed either by the owned businesses within The Parts Alliance or by the group's associate members.