

# ignite

issue 5



I seem to have begun every Ignite with how fast time is passing, and yet again here we are approaching Easter and the end of the first quarter. It has been a mixed quarter; we continue to experience strong order input, which is great news and, again, a credit to our sales / customer service teams, but we continue to struggle to keep up with demand and therefore are still struggling to deliver on time. As communicated in the round tables, we have a clear set of priorities to address this and I am hugely pleased and proud of the team working on our assembly relocation project, detailed overleaf. Everyone involved is fully engaged and pushing in the same direction – a special mention must go to David Mardon and his teams without whose efforts we would not be on track. Thanks to you all!

I would like to congratulate Ian Kingscott on his appointment to Group Technical Director and to wish him every success in his new position – I have every confidence that Ian will bring his proven

track record and energy to make this a success. We continue to invest in training our people, with several accredited training programmes having already taken place amounting to 85+ training days. With Caroline facilitating management training for 17 members of our team, I am confident that we are seeing significant improvements in 'investing in our people'.

Training has been largely focused on lean process, eliminating waste and constant improvement, which will ensure we all understand the toolset required to enable optimisation of our new manufacturing footprint, driving for on-time customer delivery. I am excited by, and cannot wait to see, our manufacturing investment paying off. On this note, I would like to thank you for all of your efforts, and hope you and your families enjoyed the Easter break - Alistair.



## Lined up and ready to go

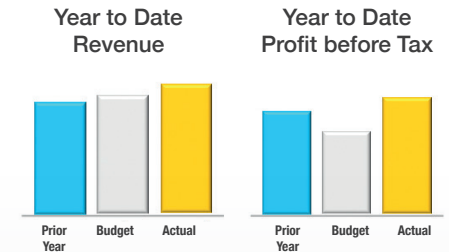
The gas Vogue Midi T Highline is soon ready to leave the warehouse and make its way into people's homes. It's so easy to get used to seeing brochure images or products in the showroom, but there's something quite fascinating about seeing them on the production line or boxed and ready in the warehouse!



## The Figures

Group sales were up by 7% against last year to £4.1m only slightly behind January's figures. Orders in also increased by a similar percentage.

Strong growth continued in Gazco, offsetting a small decline in Stovax. The level of back orders rose slightly during the month and our order book remains a third higher than last year. Margins have stabilised, at a similar level to last year, but the currency markets remain volatile. Our overheads are virtually on budget, as the foreign exchange losses made in January reversed in February, whilst other costs remain under control.



The major focus is now on clearing the existing back orders and on having the right stock in place for the next season.

The introduction of new planning software is continuing and managing our purchasing using the SIA software has commenced in Gazco.

Work on the move of the assembly lines to the D units continues and the warehouse teams have put in an enormous effort to clear the warehouses in preparation.

**HOG ROAST**

With our order book significantly higher than expected at Gazco, and indeed across the whole Group we have achieved some record-breaking numbers that we should all be very proud of. For all our hard work, we'll be celebrating with a lunchtime Hog Roast shortly after Easter. Details to be announced soon.

Veggies, Vegans & Gluten free Catered for!

## Relocating & improving our assembly lines & metal shop facilities



An £800,000 investment is currently underway, expanding the Gazco production facilities, in particular the assembly lines and metal fabrication shop, increasing our production capacity by 50% and decreasing lead times on customer orders.

The assembly lines will move from their current location to our nearby Centurion Mill site, where the additional space as well as new automated scheduling software will boost our capacity to produce final products. To ensure that there will be no impact on our current production times, our existing lines will remain active until the new assembly lines have been rigorously tested.

Relocation of the assembly lines will in turn allow us to expand our metal shop at Gazco, increasing our capacity for component fabrication. New tooling will also be introduced, including cutting-edge press brakes and advanced software that will significantly increase efficiency. We hope to be up and running sometime in May!

## Oscar winner chooses Stovax!



Double Oscar winner, Cate Blanchett, bought a stunning Victorian house near Crowborough, East Sussex, for £3.25m back in 2016. The latest addition to the seven-bedroom 13-acre property, as shown through building control documents, was a Stovax woodburner, The Times reported.

The installation could not have come at a better time, being fitted just before the arrival of the *Beast from the East* earlier in March. Although the model isn't known to us, it's great to see celebrities engaging with our products – all we need now is a testimonial from Cate herself!



## Safety Matters



**Eye protection  
must be worn**

Eye protection is now mandatory for all staff in the main factory at Gazco, with the exception of the green walkways. Safety footwear must also be worn in these areas.

Dispensers containing eye wear will be placed at the entrances to the factory which staff can pick up to wear as they enter and dispense with when they leave.

## Beast from the East!

We'll all remember how the 'Beast from the East' came roaring in earlier this month with a red warning, causing widespread snow, ice, and freezing rain. Many of us walked, spent hours in traffic or abandoned cars to get home – and the following day was no exception.

The weather was so severe that the vast majority of staff were unable to make it into work, calling for a company closure at about midday. Despite the havoc caused by the cold snap, good news for the woodburning industry emerged. The plummeting temperatures prompted the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to call for an awareness across London for cleaner wood burning – urging homeowners to consider Ecodesign Ready stoves to make a huge difference to air quality. The Mayor urged London residents to be more aware of what they were burning, and on what appliance, investing £20,000 on an information campaign to encourage a switch from old stoves and open fires to modern, clean-burning Ecodesign Ready stoves. This was a positive step for the woodburning industry, improving public perception, as much in the press previously had been negative.

Our Social Media guru, Camille Harman, was even lucky enough to get herself a cameo across this campaign in the Evening Standard – perched on a window seat by our very own Ecodesign Ready Stovax Vogue Midi.



**woodsure  
READY TO BURN**

SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**

**If you're planning a home improvement project this spring now could be the perfect time to replace your open fire place with a less polluting wood-burning stove.**

The greenest stoves – those marked DEFRA exempt and SIA Ecodesign Ready – have been designed to minimise pollution.

Burning fuel approved by Woodsure's Ready to Burn scheme will also help you minimise pollution.

For more information and for a list of approved appliances visit:  
[www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)  
[www.stoveindustryalliance.com](http://www.stoveindustryalliance.com)

For more information on the Ready to Burn scheme visit:  
[www.readytoburn.org](http://www.readytoburn.org)

## Five mins with... Annabelle Carvell Public Relations Officer

### How long have you worked here?

I've been here for 1 whole year now – time flies... but I absolutely love it!

### Describe your average working day.

My average working day depends on the time of year really, as I work seasonally with magazines. At the moment, it involves writing and arranging a lot of real life case studies and projects for our website, and talking to various national mags, convincing them to include us in their editorial for the year ahead. During the heating season, it'll be packed with deadlines!



### What are your biggest work goals this year?

The biggest challenge, as ever, is getting lots of editorial and features... I'd also like to get us more TV spots, and would love to work towards winning us the Build It 'Best Heating Product' this year.

### If you were marooned on a desert island which one thing would you take?

A piano! Unlimited music and it's not going to run out of battery.

### What's your favourite pastime?

I'd probably have to go with singing – can't go a day without it!

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Ian Kingscott for his appointment to the position of Group Technical Director, assuming overall responsibility for both Gazco and Stovax development teams, and to Nicolae Saulea who has been promoted to Metal Shop Team Leader (late shift) for Gazco. We wish them both every success.

Also congratulations to Technical & Standards Manager, David Saunders, who is soon to be celebrating 20 years at Stovax, and to Pat Coggins, Lucy Cadbury, Matt Beckenham, Philip Hunter, Emma Wills, Lionel Mathe, and Luke Deller who have all just celebrated 10 years of service.

Congratulations also to Geoff Braggins, Technical Administrator, who met 15 years of service during March.



## New 3D Printer opens exciting opportunities!

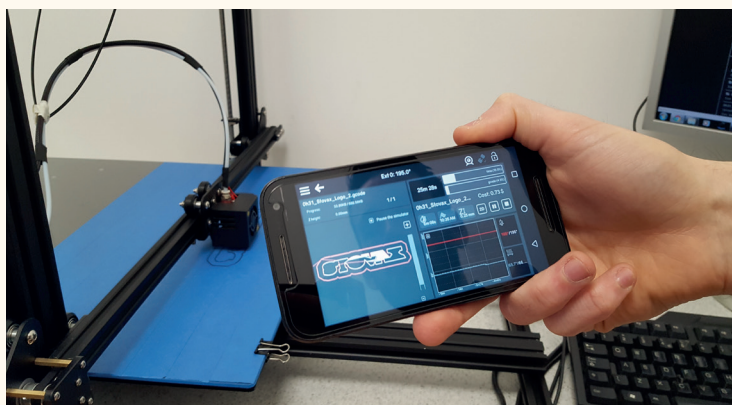
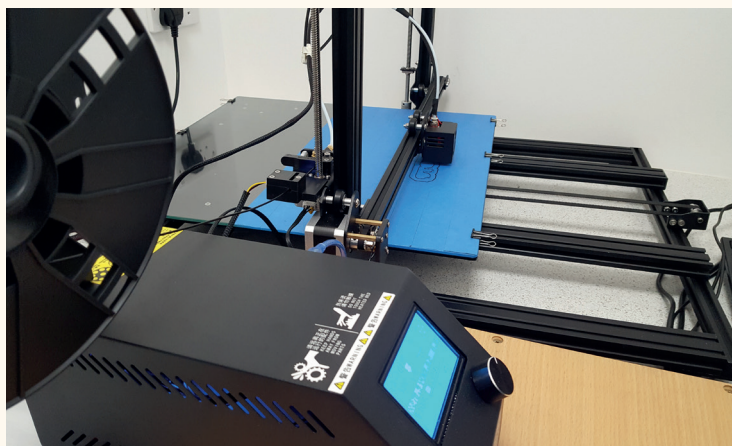
New to R&D is a 3D printer, which has opened exciting opportunities and benefits for the development phase of product design.

The printer is able to create working prototypes for testing of mechanisms, general aesthetics, fit checking parts and generally making anything needed in the development stage. This means that rather than producing a part in metal, a 3D print can be produced, reducing the time taken previously and opening the possibility to test several designs much earlier on.

Another of the many advantages is that scale models of upcoming new products can also be printed, showcasing the design intent beyond flat images on paper.

The printer is based in the Innovation Centre, and can print continuously for 200 hours if required, whilst also being monitored and controlled remotely through an app.

Having this app functionality means that the R&D team can check on the progress of a print at any time – whether this is in a meeting, another office, or even over a weekend!



## Beaking News... Budgie Rescued After Brutal Attack!

Around lunchtime on the 15th March, a budgie was spotted ducking and diving in an unprovoked attack from two characters dressed in black. The attackers had been seen loitering around the area before, having previously been reported to authorities for stealing shiny objects. Later identified as Mag and Pie of a Sowton Industrial Estate gang, these two individuals took flight at the scene of the crime as soon as a brave civilian came to the rescue of the frightened victim.

Speaking of the incident, a little bird told us: "I had seen the budgie earlier in the morning. I knew it didn't belong around here."

The budgie was rescued by Warehouse Supervisor Lee O Donnell, and taken into the warmth of a paper box by Amanda Severs and Linda Abbott from the HR department. Unable to secure him a spot there and then with the RSPCA, the budgie was kept safe in the

Marketing office where he was watched like a hawk and later admitted to a Veterinary Surgery, taken under the wing of Customer Service Manager, Emma Wills. Amanda commented: "The bird took shelter near our doorway, and luckily Lee picked him up in one fell swoop and brought him into HR."

Lee said that he did what anybody would do in these situations, and said: "the adrenalin kicks in and you just act. I have never been a hero before, but it's nice to put another feather in my cap!"

The police are urging the public to step forward with any further information on the thugs, with intent to arrest on suspicion of fowl play. They are described as wearing black, with a striking white belly. The budgie, meanwhile, was welcomed by the Vet and is making a good recovery.

