

Power supply problems are a gas for Oceanair

Sanyo distributor offers LPG-powered ac and opens new training centre

SANYO air conditioning distributor Oceanair Distribution has teamed up with Calor Gas to roll-out the world's first LPG-powered heat pump VRF air conditioner.

Based on Sanyo's established GHP gas-powered heat pump system, the LPG-powered unit is designed for those areas of the UK without gas supplies and with limited three-phase power.

According to Oceanair Distribution md Bob Cowlard, some 40% of commercial buildings requiring air conditioning are at the limit on electrical power, and many don't have adequate mains gas supply – including a surprising proportion of buildings in inner-city areas.

"The option of upgrading the power supply to three-phase is expensive and



Above: an LPG-powered ac installation at Haringey Adult Education Centre has been running for three years

Right: Bob Cowlard

Below: the new Oceanair Bristol branch, site of the company's new training facility



an electrically-powered system.

Enhanced Capital Allowances are available for this system, covering both equipment and the cost of installation.

Backed by a number of successful applications already in the UK – an installation at Haringey Adult Education Centre has been running for three years – the technology is now being rolled out across the UK. Calor's network of field engineers will be helping existing customers evaluate the opportunity to install the new air conditioning. Oceanair will then follow up with detailed site assessments and project quotations.

Bob Cowlard says: "LPG-powered air conditioning

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disruptive – and is often not an attractive option for building owners," he added.

"The new LPG-powered Sanyo system opens up a big and important new market for air conditioning. It is a major step forward – in terms of both technology and market opportunity."

An added bonus is that the system also provides "free" hot water and generates its own electricity which can be used in the building for lighting and general domestic services.

Nissan engine

At the heart of the system is a modified two-litre Nissan engine, operating at between 800-2100 rpm. Importantly, the system only requires connection to a single-phase power supply to power start-up, control circuit, and inverter-driven fans.

The technology is highly efficient, ranging from between 1.4 (140%) to 1.6 (160%), when used as a heating or cooling system respectively and even offers a small running-cost saving over



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opens up a new frontier for the industry. Not only does it work, it delivers superbly in terms of efficiency and performance. It opens the door for a whole new generation of air conditioning installations around the country."

Training centre

More than 50 Calor Gas field engineers received first-hand knowledge of the technology when they became the first to benefit from Oceanair's new training facility in Bristol in March.

The training facility, part of the company's new Bristol office and distribution centre which opened at the beginning of the year, provides well-appointed workshop and classroom-based accommodation.

Said to be the largest Sanyo training facility to be established in the UK, it includes all 14 Sanyo indoor units. It will also offer training in Fujitsu and LG products.

Bob Cowlard said: "Distributors have to add value to the service they offer

customers. It is not enough to be just 'box shifters'. Training is an absolutely vital area for the air conditioning trade, and we want to help equip our customers to be the best of the best.

"We are at a crunch point in terms of the factors bearing down on the trade: new legislation, refrigerants, increased pressure to be environmentally responsible, the economic slowdown, new technologies – all these issues demand that we as an industry stay ahead of the game. It is essential that people are trained to the highest standards to enable us to 'stand our corner'. Our industry undersells itself. If we are not careful we will end up as the poor man of the construction industry."

Courses will be presented by independent trainers, supported by product experts from the air conditioning manufacturers. A training centre manager is currently being recruited.

Courses will cover controls, service and maintenance, commissioning and sales and



Oceanair's new training centre is already being put to good use

application. Not forgotten are courses for managers and company owners to cover legislation and business responsibilities.

Systems to be installed on-site, enabling hands-on training, include: Sanyo's GHP and carbon dioxide water heating, Fujitsu's J series air conditioning, and LG's multiple space system.

Bob Cowlard said: "Our new training centre represents a

major investment for the company but we feel that this is the kind of facility you should offer as a distributor anyway.

"You can't play the same games as Mitsubishi and Daikin without one of these," he added, referring to the market-leading position held by the two well-established air conditioning manufacturers.

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