

Very pleased to be back in the business – Simon's mum Lynda, Simon and Suzanne



A revelation for Lovell Fuels

LOVELL FUELS WAS SET UP TWO YEARS AGO ON THE SITE OF ITS FORMER FAMILY BUSINESS H W LOVELL & SON AT LONG CRENDON IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

“Having used old fashioned sight glass tube type gauges on our storage tanks in the old family business days, and having had a few spillages over the years, I was very keen to investigate the latest technology before setting up the new business,” explained Simon Lovell.

Although Simon had stayed connected to the fuel distribution industry delivering for Pace Fuelcare and working for himself, he discovered several former customers still hankered for the Lovell's days.

No regrets

“After H W Lovell & Son was sold to Total Butler in 1999, many of our old customers kept saying that they wished Lovells was back,” said Simon. “That really made me want to go back to running my own business. We still had the former site as it was owned by my mother so we decided to take the plunge.

“I have absolutely no regrets about starting again in this business, when our family business was sold in 1999 we had 11 trucks and 10,000 customers but I was in my twenties and too young to take it on when my father died 18 years ago.

Installing state of the art equipment

“Fuel Oil News was very helpful in giving general advice and I'm pleased to say that thanks to Kan'to Instruments Lovell Fuels now has state of the art gauging equipment with electronic gauges which has been a revelation!

“My father would have been very envious of the equipment and technology that is available today.

“We opted for the more cost effective pressure probes which give a more than adequate measurement to within 100 litres accuracy. Using the clear display unit in the office, tank levels are available at the touch of a button.

“I find the most useful aspect of viewing the stock is being able to use live data over the web. My stocks can be viewed on any PC anywhere in the world, and even on my iPhone. This is particularly useful if I'm away from work for a few days as stock can still be easily monitored.

“With overfill alarm protection, spillages are a thing of the past and if the alarm does go off, there's plenty of time and space to remedy the situation. Plus, the measurement

display also gives ullage space which is really useful.

“Having a complete stock history over a 12 month period is also another excellent function and, if necessary, it's even possible to drill down to a particular time in the day. On a couple of occasions where stocks have fluctuated, we've been able to look back in time and trace when a product delivery or withdrawal has taken place, and its quantity.

“Starting up again largely from scratch, we were keen to use modern up to date technology where possible, from our computer systems in the office to our in cab devices, and also our gauging systems. The gauging has certainly made life much easier.

“Dimitri is very knowledgeable, he's a great mathematician and I would highly recommend him. He's always ready and willing to assist when we've had questions and any problems we've experienced have been sorted with one solution.

“Having had horizontal cylindrical tanks installed which aren't the easiest to calibrate, the set up wasn't straight forward but various measurements were passed on to Dimitri who analysed the data and adjusted

the calibration figures from his office.

“Having electronic real time data is a huge step forward for us, and has revolutionised our stock management.”

Back in the business

Lovell Fuels supplies customers in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire within a 25-mile radius of its Long Crendon depot. Its four trucks will be joined by a fifth in September. Having worked for himself with his own tanker Simon is able to do all the tanker repairs himself.

“The industry has changed, people are now prepared to pay for a faster service. The 80s and 90s were very competitive and my father didn't charge enough. Around 90% of our business is domestic but we're also picking up some good regular commercial work.

“I know the business inside out, it's my passion. My wife Suzanne manages the office, and like me, loves being part of a family business. We put in the effort and we reap the rewards. I do wish we hadn't sold the business back in 1999 but now I am living the dream. We're doing alright and I'm very pleased to be back.”