

# Can cooling meet the challenge of collaboration?



Last month when I acknowledged our Gold Award for Graeme Fox and that people who ruffle feathers are always welcome at RAC, I wasn't necessarily expecting to continue the theme quite so soon. But as you will see from the front of the magazine, this month welcomes another influential figure who has chosen to speak out.

This time it is Asda's Brian Churchyard, who in the space of three pages (p10-14) pretty much sets out his manifesto for the development of cooling technology. The fact that Brian has set out his hopes and fears at the beginning of 2021 is an acknowledgement that the cooling industry is facing up to a perfect storm of challenges.

I have just finished a lockdown marathon viewing of *Game of Thrones* and there is something of the John Snow about Brian Churchyard – you feel he has seen something that many in the rest of the industry has not grasped yet. OK, it isn't the inexorable march south of the Army of the Dead (if you haven't watched it, you'll have to Google it), but it is an inexorable march nonetheless – because the industry needs to prepare for the relentless reduction of F-Gas quota and apparent acceleration in climate change.

By saying 'apparent' about climate change acceleration, I am aware I am also hedging my bets a bit, but Brian points out that in short bursts at least, record temperatures are very provable – "in your face right now" in his words – given Asda recorded ambients of 44 deg C in one of its

stores last summer. That the store was in Barnsley should be the clincher for us southerners, who see it very much as the frozen North, that the UK is really heating up. Whereas John Snow was often banging on about "winter is coming", the reality that we face appears to be the opposite – we need to all be designing for higher temperature extremes.

The interview with Brian Churchyard can be divided effectively into two overarching themes: the first is that, as an industry, we need to be prepared to come up with simple, rapidly implementable lower-GWP solutions to meet the twin advancing threats; the second is that the supply chain, as it is currently set up, is relying too heavily on the major retailers to drive change.

Now this is a theme we have heard from other retailers in the past – in fact, it is a clarion cry that

## The supply chain is relying heavily on the retailers to drive change

appears to have echoed through our Question Time events every time a new refrigerant was introduced – but still the problem persists. Is it an endemic problem with the cooling supply chain because the suppliers are relatively small and thus are likely to be risk-averse.

Well, Brian has some views on this that are quite forthright, but he also has some concrete suggestions about how the industry should move forward, so I urge you to read the interview.

Those who made it to the end of *Game of Thrones* will know that by preparing well, thinking outside the box and collaborating – even to the extent of joining forces with rivals – is the path to a hard-fought victory. Those three themes should not be far from our own thinking as cooling faces up to its own challenges. We need to act now though. Summer is coming.

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