



The situation in the UK

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Topic: [Supply/Production](#)

Tags: [peak gas](#), [peak oil](#), [united kingdom](#) [[list all tags](#)]

As [Stuart](#) and [Prof G](#) have pointed out, the situation in the UK seems to be growing somewhat worse. Unfortunately the industrial [solution](#) which is to call for a moratorium on further price increases, is unlikely to be a realistic development. The Guardian article notes:

The Association of United Kingdom Oil Independents has told the government that its members had never experienced such protracted and widespread problems. The Russian gas stand-off with Ukraine and other factors leading to soaring prices have encouraged power stations and other gas users to switch to oil.

Meanwhile, the Buncefield oil depot fire, the run on oil and other fuels due to cold weather, and a faster than expected rundown of North Sea supplies have caused chaos across the energy sector.

It is a measure of the invisibility of the topic that I have had conversations with several folk at a relatively senior level here this week, talking about the energy situation, and almost none of them are aware of the problems that arose over Russian gas delivery to Western Europe, or have any inkling of this developing story.

The article concludes with

Statistics released by the Department of Trade and Industry yesterday underlined the fast rundown of local energy supplies, with imports of gas up by 80% in the third quarter, compared with the same period in 2004.

Meanwhile, the fragility of the oil and gas supply infrastructure was highlighted by a problem reducing output from Shell's Pernis plant in Rotterdam, Europe's largest refinery.

While it is clear from these type of reports that there is growing problem, it is not yet very visible on this side of the Atlantic. Thus, when seeking to increase awareness of the need for research to look for answers, it is not that easy to be able to generate a sense of urgency in the need to find an alternative approach.

And the underlying story perhaps to the UK situation is that complacency generated by those who said "there is always the back-up alternative" which in this case was to switch from gas to oil, had never checked to see the reliability of the back-up. And now that there is the move to the

alternative, it is becoming evident that plan B is not working. And we may soon find out that there was no plan C.

On the other hand, the Russian gas flow was relatively quickly restored, and it may be that those who switched out of gas might have done so prematurely, without complete evidence that plan A had failed. As the article notes, the situation is somewhat chaotic at present, but those of us who are following the story may also note that the article also suggests that the topic is becoming sexy! Ah!



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