

Professional Information

Stephen Benton FInstR

Director / Owner - Cool Concerns Ltd

Stephen Benton has worked in the RAC Industry since 1985. He is a time served engineer and has had a variety of technical roles in companies including controls, manufacturing and service-based organisations. Stephen entered senior management for a large commercial London based contractor at 26 and progressed to service director before leaving employment and setting up his own contracting and subsequently a training business.

He incorporated Cool Concerns Ltd in 2003 following a long association with Jane Gartshore who since her retirement works for the business as a Projects Consultant. He has successfully grown the business, with increased diversity and a focus on practical training and consultancy especially in the natural refrigerants sector including Hydrocarbons and Carbon Dioxide.

In October 2007 Cool Concerns Ltd opened a brand new, purpose built, training facility in the West Midlands to deliver the new F Gas qualifications and develop natural refrigerants training. Stephen was responsible for the purchase, project management and conversion of the facility including building the F Gas assessment rigs and is responsible for day to day financial and operational aspects of the business including IT and general management. The facility has been continually updated hosting some of the latest technologies including 5 R744 systems (a full dual temp booster pack) and 2 A2L systems.

Contact Details

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Professional Affiliations & Qualifications

- Fellow of The Institute of Refrigeration - FInstR
- Company membership of British Refrigeration Association (technical contributor to the cabinet and cold store section and adhoc groups as required)
- City & Guilds 207 Part 2 – Refrigeration & Air Conditioning (Distinctions)
- City & Guilds 2079 Refrigerant Handling, categories 11, 12, 13 & 14
- City & Guilds 6127 RAC Technical Certificate Levels 2 and 3
- City & Guilds 6187-21 Unit 232 / 532 Level 2 - Understand and apply hydrocarbon RAC system installation, testing, servicing and maintenance techniques
- BRA CO₂ Short Course (originally written for BRA)
- BRA Level 2 & 3 Brazer Qualification (authored and maintained for BRA)

- Construction Skills – Essential Electricians
- Construction Skills - Refrigeration Electricians
- City & Guilds 6317-31 Units Level 3 301 & 302 - Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment

Stephen is currently a guest committee member and former chair of the IoR Service Engineer Section; he is also a current and active member of the IoR technical committee. He provides practical guidance and material to help further the education and development of refrigeration engineers and is an active participant in several BRA committees including the Cabinet & Cold Store section also contributing to other sections.

He is a member of the below BSi and CEN committees, actively working on standard revisions including EN 378, IEC 60335-2-89 and IEC 60335-2-40:

- Committee member BSi WEE/19
- Committee member BSi RHE/18
- Committee member BSi RHE/19
- Committee member CEN TC 182 WG 06 (Revision of EN 378)
- Committee member IEC SC 61C WG 4 (Revision of EN 60335-2-89)
- Committee member IEC CPL 61 4 (Revision of EN 60335-2-40)

He is committed to best practice and education at all levels in the refrigeration & air conditioning industry. The business he runs is committed to providing accurate high quality training & consultancy, equipping engineers to deal with the constantly changing environmental, operational and developmental challenges, giving a balanced approach to commercial and environmental considerations.

Specialist Areas of Expertise

Stephen has extensive experience in refrigeration, with in depth expertise of the following:

- Commissioning of large commercial installations
- Commercial refrigeration - practical consulting and troubleshooting (plug-in to central plant systems)
- Re commissioning of central plant systems
- Service management systems selection and implementation
- Service management & strategic planning / direction
- Project management
- Product / manufacturing development support
- Preparation of specifications for service & maintenance contracts
- Evaluation and selection of tools & equipment (service & installation)
- Practical & theoretical training for engineers & technicians
- Safe & efficient application of Hydrocarbons in new and existing systems
- Hydrocarbon application and applicable standards
- A2L refrigerant application and applicable standards
- Practical Health & Safety training
- Standards & Codes - interpretation and application

- C&G NVQ course development & moderation
- Engineer development & mentoring
- Change management advice & implementation
- Refrigerant application – suitability, selection, and application training
- NVQ Apprenticeship training
- European Standards compliance

Career History

Director, Cool Concerns Ltd, May 2003 to date

- Practical consultancy and trouble shooting
- Expert witness assignments
- OEM, wholesaler, supplier and end user support including A1, A2L and A3 refrigerants
- Training, both theoretical and practical on site and off
- Bespoke training course preparation & delivery
- NVQ Level 2 and 3 apprentice training
- City & Guilds 2079 - 11,12,13,14 training and assessment
- BRA L2 & L3 Brazer training & assessment
- Commissioning & re commissioning
- Natural Refrigerants consultancy & training (incl HC & CO₂)
- Refrigerant conversion training & consultancy
- Heat recovery technology evaluation and implementation
- Carbon emission reduction consultancy & training
- Project management
- NVQ course development and moderation
- OEM technical support, training & trouble shooting
- European standards & industry codes – development, interpretation, and application
- Authoring of technical documents for Institute of Refrigeration and the British Refrigeration Association
- Authoring of technical documents to support OEM's and wholesalers of refrigeration equipment
- Strategic business development, direction & planning
- Company finance & accounts
- Facilities maintenance and repair

Director, Cooling Matters Ltd, 2002

- Development of customer base from scratch
- Day to day running of business
- Provide technical consultancy to contractors and manufacturers
- Project management
- Service & installation of refrigerant plant & equipment
- Site trouble shooting
- Plant noise reduction consultancy
- Responsible for growth and direction of company

Service Director, Trembath Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Ltd, Oct 1997 to Jan 2002

- Provide senior level contact with major food retailing customers
- Responsible for strategic direction and growth of divisions including Installation, Service and maintenance and commissioning
- Undertake all maintenance contract pre-qualification and tendering through to contract award
- Provided day to day support and line management for five department managers
- Effectively manage between 40-60 operational engineers and admin staff
- Report monthly performance and progress to executive board of directors

Other roles include: -

Arctic Circle – Technical Services Manager

Trembath Group Ltd – Service Manager (later promotion to Service Director)

Elm Controls Ltd – Commissioning Engineer

Previous Projects

The following list highlights some of the work successfully carried out by Stephen and illustrates the range of work that can be undertaken.

- International standards development projects, member of several working groups
- Design and construction of 2 A2L training rigs to support practical flammable refrigerant training sessions
- Expert witness & fire investigation projects related to HFC & HC fires
- Design & build of new HFC training rig to promote use of braze free pipe joining systems
- Development of new R744 condensing unit short course including construction of 4 practical training rigs
- Compressor failure investigation resulting in significant savings for the client
- Field testing of new oil management device for an electronic controls company
- Undertaking CE electrical compliance work for a UK cabinet supplier
- Modification to the control systems on housed refrigeration plant for a UK manufacturer
- Implementation of service management and remote wireless communication system
- Development of in house training for service engineers working on retail central plant systems
- Helping companies resolve environmental noise issues
- Assisting contractors to run and commission central plant systems, including rectification of manufacturing defects
- Converting CFC and HCFC systems to run safely, efficiently and reliably on HC's
- Development work on water chillers
- Development of an engineering and administration team to provide effective service to large retailers
- Recruitment and selection of key engineering staff for major food retailer
- Skills auditing of site engineers, leading to training and development programmes for individuals
- Specialist commissioning and support services for large UK supplier of refrigerated cabinets

- Development and strategic planning for Eastern European manufacturer including working practices implementation and training
- NVQ Apprenticeship training and development and assessment
- Specialist technical support for UK based equipment manufacturer
- HC refrigerant application on chiller replacement project including risk assessment and site application advice
- HCFC to HC refrigerant conversion assessment and advice for water chiller applications
- HCFC Refrigerant phase out and replacement consultancy & training
- Natural refrigerant deployment – site investigations and advice, customer/engineer training and education seminars in Central and North America including Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica and numerous locations in the USA
- Working with OEM's and equipment suppliers to apply relevant EN standards
- Design and build of five FGas training and assessment systems
- Development and delivery of seminars on Natural Refrigerants
- HC on site trouble shooting and re-commissioning
- Developing the Hydrocarbon C&G's NVQ unit
- Involvement in the development of the Carbon Dioxide C&G's NVQ unit
- Assisting OEM's with European standards
- Development of industry 'Best Practice' guides including refrigerant leakage reduction guides and safe HC handling guides
- Extensive work with standards compliance including ATEX 95 and ATEX 137 DSEAR
- Forming and managing the Carbon Dioxide Alliance
- Expert witness work
- Development of 'Industry Standard' CO₂ training modules
- Development of new C&G NVQ Pathways units including Hydrocarbons & Carbon Dioxide
- Revision of BRA Brazer Specification for BRA
- Revision of HC Cabinet Code for BRA
- Technical articles on various subjects for leading trade press

Detailed descriptions of any of the above projects can be provided on request. The list is not exhaustive but is representative of the scope of projects undertaken and successfully completed. Stephen's background is both practical and theoretical so an emphasis is placed on providing hands on solutions that work.