



Salt Union Ltd.
A Compass Minerals Company

See us at
Cold Comfort,
Ricoh Arena,
Coventry.
Sept 20/21.
Stand C12

grippingstuff

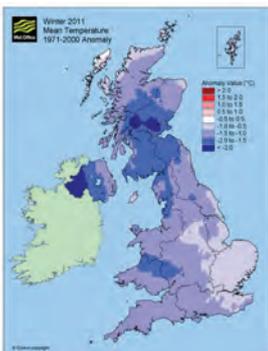
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The latest views, news and issues affecting the de-icing industry

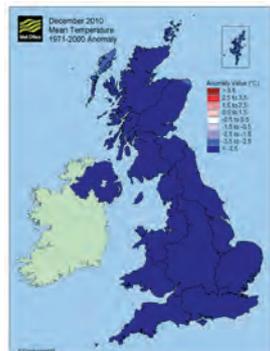
The BIG freeze 2010/11

ON 20 DECEMBER 2010 Met Office web pages were viewed around **13,000,000** times. This incredible figure shows how more people than ever are relying on the Met Office to provide them with the most accurate forecast possible, especially during periods of severe winter weather. The Met Office has now produced a report on last winter, which summarises the dramatic extremes which areas of the UK experienced.

From late November to Boxing Day 2010 the UK experienced two spells of severe winter weather with very low temperatures and significant snowfalls.



Dec 2010-Jan 2011 - everywhere
1° C to -1.5° C below normal



December 2010 - everywhere (except
Outer Hebrides) 5-7° C below normal

The first of these spells lasted for two weeks from Thursday 25 November to Thursday 9 December and saw persistent easterly or north-easterly winds bringing bitterly cold air from northern Europe and Siberia, accompanied by snow. Eastern Scotland and north-east England saw the most persistent and heaviest snow, which accumulated to depths of 50 cm or more across the higher ground by the end of the spell. However, lower lying areas were also affected and the snow increasingly spread to other parts of the UK, so that by early December many areas of the UK were under lying snow. Temperatures struggled to rise above freezing during the day and there were very severe frosts at night. Temperatures widely fell below -10 °C on several nights and on occasion below -20 °C in northern Scotland.

This spell of snow and freezing temperatures occurred unusually early in the winter, with the snowfalls judged as the most significant and widespread in late November and early December since late November 1965.

The period from 9 to 15 December saw milder and quieter conditions with a gradual thaw of lying snow. However, a second spell of severe weather began on Thursday 16 December as very cold Arctic air pushed down across the UK from the north. Snow showers affected the north and west on Friday 17 December, while there was heavier snow across southern England and Wales on Saturday 18 December. Further heavy snow affected south-west England on Monday 20 December. The UK remained under bitterly cold Arctic air until Boxing Day, with day time temperatures again failing to rise above freezing and very severe frosts. While there was little further snowfall, lying snow remained until 26 to 27 December.

The second spell of snow and freezing temperatures has been judged the most significant such spell in December since 1981, although late December 2009 to mid-January 2010 (the previous winter) were also broadly comparable to both these spells.

Overall, the prolonged freezing conditions resulted in an exceptionally cold December across the UK: the coldest December in the last 100 years and the coldest across central England since 1890. Indeed, this was the coldest month in the UK since February 1986, and in Northern Ireland, the coldest individual month of the last 100 years. Despite a mild first half, the UK also experienced the coldest November since 1993 as a result of the very cold last few days.



NEW FACE AT SALT UNION

EARLIER THIS YEAR COMPASS MINERALS appointed a new CMP UK Group Commercial Manager for Salt Union and DeepStore. Originally from East Yorkshire but North West based since the early 1990s, Mike Broughton has joined the company following three years as Operations and Sales Director at national property management company Spicerhaart. He also has extensive experience of finance, having worked as Operations Director in the fields of banking and leasing. Based at Winsford, he is now responsible for sales, marketing and all commercial aspects of the business. Gary Neiles, CMP UK Supply Chain Manager, works closely with Mike, as does the customer service and sales team of Carole Gallimore, Joanne Whiston, Kay Blanks, Dawn McQuillan and Clive Hulse.



MIKE BROUGHTON

MIKE SAID:

“It is a great thrill to be working for such an established and respected company, which has dynamic and ambitious plans for the future. The secret to the company’s success, both on the salt supply side and DeepStore, is undoubtedly the teams of people we have working here. We really pride ourselves on the relationships we build up with our clients and genuinely enjoy working together. I am looking forward to making contact with and meeting as many customers as possible over the next few months.”

For further information on salt products or DeepStore services, Mike Broughton can be contacted on **01606 596 527** or email: michaelbroughton@compassminerals.co.uk

TAKING STOCK OF SALT



stock are remaining. Stock level reports can easily be produced as well as a graph report where actual usage is plotted against the minimum and maximum levels of the agreed stock profile for a selected depot.

Plus points: The system reduces the risk of stock out and also ensures better management of stock profiles as well as better rotation of the salt and more consistent salt quality due to regular deliveries. Current stock levels and planned deliveries can be viewed online, ensuring customers maintain as much control as possible over their stock management and keep tighter control over their budgets. Customers with long term contracts can have their stock measured at the end of the winter season. A summary report and annual review is provided to customers every year.

Gary Neiles, UK CMP Supply Chain Manager says:

“80% of our customers use our unique Salt Stocks system. It is a good way of keeping on top of stock management and assisting us in providing the best possible service. Customers need to be aware that forward planning remains crucial as supplying salt unfortunately cannot operate on a ‘just in time’ basis.”

“Clearly the demands of the last two winters were such that the system did not work as we would have liked. Going forward we really want to get everyone’s efforts behind it to get it back on track and working as effectively as possible.”

For more information on Salt Stocks, please contact Salt Union on 01606 596524 or go to www.saltunion.com.

Salt Stocks is Salt Union’s unique entirely web-based system for customers to keep track of their stock levels throughout the winter season.

Every user just requires a user name, password and internet access in order to log into the system safely and securely whether they are in the office or at home. We agree a profile for each depot, based on past usage figures under various different winter conditions. Customers can then view stock usage figures and stock levels, see the status of any orders pending and see how many days of

WINTER SALT CELL NETWORK 2010/11 A CHANGE IN STRATEGY

LAST WINTER saw Winter Salt Cell Network (formerly Salt Cell) in action once more as exceptional circumstances again made its activation necessary. It was still made up of Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Department for Transport (DfT), Department for Communities and Local Government, Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, National Assembly for Wales and Local Government Association (LGA). However, there were key differences between Winter Salt Cell Network’s activities last winter as opposed to winter 2009/10. It still recorded the salt stock position at the start of each week from information provided by each local authority via a portal and assessed how many ‘snow days’ stock was available for each council but it did not provide an advisory list to salt suppliers on where deliveries were most needed as it had done before. Salt suppliers, including Salt Union, were empowered to make the decisions about how, where and when the stock was delivered.

GARY NEILES, CMP SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER, SAID:

“Government policy had changed, mainly due to the Government itself changing half way through last year. The Coalition government is keen for decisions to be taken at a more local level wherever possible. In terms of salt supply, I think this worked well for our customers as by and large we are better placed to assess the needs of individual areas. However, throughout the winter I worked very closely with DfT, LGA, Transport Scotland, Highways Agency and National Assembly for Wales ensuring no end users stocked out. The support from all these government bodies was very much appreciated by Salt Union.”

THAWROX ICE-A-WAY HAS BAGS OF POTENTIAL

Salt Union has announced it will be providing bagged rock salt from its site at Winsford. Brand named Thawrox Ice-A-Way, 10, 20, 25kg and large bulk (up to one tonne) bags of salt will be available from this winter. Details on order placement by customers will be advised in due course. In the meantime you can order bags of Ice-A-Way via the usual channels, alongside orders of bulk rock salt.

“It has become clear to us, especially over the last two winters, that the demand for bagged salt is there and for many of our customers it will be a convenient add-on to their usual order. We think this market has great potential.” said Mike Broughton, CMP UK Group Commercial Manager.

MULTI MILLION POUND UPGRADE CONTINUES

Since last year Salt Union has been making a multi million pound investment at the Winsford mine to upgrade the equipment in order to increase output and reliability as far as possible. This included the delivery last summer of a new 138 tonne JOY Continuous Mining Machine. Already this year has seen the upgrade of the surface conveyor system that brings the salt up to the surface via No. 5 shaft to the dome. Further work is also being undertaken on improvements to the crushing and screening plant that crushes and then grades the salt into the correct size of either 6mm or 10mm and investment is being made in the hoisting capability to deliver product from underground via No. 5 shaft.



GETTING STRATEGIC WITH SALT...

Last year it was recognised across the board that it was very unlikely that salt suppliers would have enough stock to get their customers through another severe winter, particularly if the bad weather was to come in November/ December. This was as a result of local contractors and Local Authorities uplifting their stock levels significantly after the severe winter of 2009/10.

In order to meet the anticipated shortfall, Secretary of State for Transport Phillip Hammond sanctioned the delivery of 300,000 tonnes of salt from overseas stocks from countries that included Australia, Canada, India, Egypt and Chile. Following the dramatically cold start to winter 2010/11 and forecasts of more cold weather to come, he gave the go-ahead to the delivery of a further 280,000 tonnes in early January.

The Winter Salt Cell Network released some of this ‘strategic stock’ in December, January and February and advised where it should go. Salt Union managed the transport of some of this stock to customers along the west and south coasts of England. In the early part of 2011 we did not see the same level of anxiety over stock levels as we did at the same time last year as February and March were both relatively mild. This means that the surplus left over stock has now gone to storage as strategic stock at eight port locations around England.

Q&A



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DR NEIL ROSENBURGH, OUR TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ANSWERS SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF SALT

Q. I can import white rock salt which is 97-99% sodium chloride. That must make it a more efficient de-icer, so why should I go on buying brown rock salt?

A. Brown rock salt does have a slightly lower sodium chloride content but it is still high - between 92 and 94% - certainly high enough to make it an extremely efficient de-icer. It is important to bear in mind that white rock salt is not indigenous to the UK and has to be imported from Europe, South America, or even Australia. Importing salt over those distances is expensive, not to mention the environmental impact of shipping it such a distance.

Q. Marine salt is good at de-icing – why shouldn't I buy that?

A. Like white rock salt, although marine salt is an effective de-icer, we can't produce it in this country. It has to be imported thousands of miles from countries around the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Q. How bad is the environmental impact of importing salt?

Many ships carrying the salt are old, with comparatively inefficient

and polluting engines. In contrast, you would struggle to find HGVs from a modern haulage company on our roads with cabs over five years old. Cleaner, greener engine design has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years. Buying salt from abroad costs more and importing it is environmentally damaging. Buying British salt clearly makes economic and environmental sense.

Q. How about liquid brine? I've heard that performs well.

A. Liquid brine works well as a precautionary treatment but there is a big question mark over its efficiency in snow, where it tends to sit on the top and just melt the surface rather than effectively breaking up the snow which has frozen to the road surface. What's more, to help reduce the extra corrosivity, further additives can be added, which really ramps the cost up. It also needs huge amounts of water, which is fast becoming a commodity that needs careful management.

The most compelling argument against the use of liquid brine is that this country just does not have the infrastructure and funding in place to support it. New vehicle fleets, saturators and storage tanks would have to be acquired and maintained. In these harsh economic times, local authorities just do not have the funds available to make such expensive purchases. Choosing a de-icer has to be not only about what is most effective but also about what is practically possible and economically realistic.

GOING UNDERGROUND! WINSFORD HOSTS MINE RESCUE COMPETITION

THE ANNUAL UK AND IRELAND Mines Rescue Competition was held at Winsford Salt Mine this year, hosted by Deepstore and Salt Union. Six teams from mines around the UK and Ireland took part in the event, which was organised jointly by the UK's Health and Safety Executive Mines Inspectorate, Irish Mines Rescue Committee and Mines Rescue Service.

The aim of the competition, which took place on 17th and 18th June, is for the teams to learn and share best practice in mine rescue. The tests included search and rescue, physical fitness and First Aid. 135 people attended the competition this year with Deepstore and Salt Union providing 26 marshalls and a competing team. The other teams came from Lisheen Mine, Tara Mines, Kilroot Mine, Cleveland Potash Mine and Maltby Colliery.

After a closely fought competition, Cleveland Potash emerged as overall winners with Winsford coming a very respectable third.

Winsford Mine Manager Gordon Dunn, said:

"The event was a great success and everyone who took part had a great time. Safety is paramount for everyone involved in the mining industry and this event is always a very useful opportunity to get together with personnel from other mines and pool ideas to improve all of our safety practices as far as possible."



PHOTOS © PAUL DEAKIN

