

Application Story

Boiler Manufacturer Chooses “Quality” Flowmeter for Customer Problem Solving

When one of Britain’s oldest and most reputable boiler companies was looking for a portable flowmeter to aid with the evaluation of site related problems with their products, they turned to Katronic Technologies to supply the solution.

Potterton was founded in 1850 when Thomas Potterton started a boiler company in Balham, London. The company grew and in 1902 Potterton became the first in the UK to install a gas-fired boiler. Since this date Potterton have remained at the forefront of commercial boiler design and now have a range of products covering an output of 24 kW to 3,500 kW.

In order to assist customers’ with site related issues and boiler replacement programs, Potterton identified the need for a method of accurately measuring flow on those sites where no alternative measuring facilities were provided. It has always been possible to benchmark boiler operation against the installed temperature and pressure gauges, however flow measurement is a problem if pressure tapped valves or similar measuring stations are not installed. As Gary Stoddart Technical Services Manager for Potterton Commercial explains the flowmeter is required “to accurately record and monitor the flow through various points on the heating pipework services associated with our boilers”. Without water flow data it is very difficult to accurately manage boiler output and efficiency.

Mr. Stoddart goes on to explain that the flow information provided is important for a number of reasons including, “checking flow rates on new installations, problem sites and balancing system flow through multiple boiler installations”. Where there is a concern regarding the performance of a particular boiler the flowmeter can be vital in locating the problem, “in order to ensure reliability of the product and eliminate stresses which could result in premature failure of the individual boiler waterway sections”. By using the portable flowmeter it is possible to ensure correct flow rates thus assisting Potterton Commercial customers with the distribution of the system flow through multiple boiler installations.

According to the engineers at Potterton, the flowmeter from Katronic is the ideal tool for the job. “Quick to fit, no purpose made test points, no draining system, you can show the flow rate to the client immediately”. It also enables the customer to see every stage of the process and have confidence in the boilers and engineering staff.

Having made the decision to purchase an ultrasonic flowmeter Potterton went through a detailed evaluation process before choosing the Katronic device. “Price was not the major influence. We looked at two other suppliers and although cheaper it soon became apparent that the meter was not manufactured to the same standard as the Katronic model and that the





Q3N ultrasonic sensors installed on pipeline

accuracy and range of the units were not to the standard we needed". Mr. Stoddart goes on to point out that it was not just the quality of the Katronic flowmeter that impressed but also the customer service, "also Katronic's were local, offered a free loan unit whilst ours was in for service and assisted us with jobs prior to us purchasing a unit".

Since deciding to choose the clamp-on flowmeter the team at Potterton have been impressed with the instrument describing it as "easy to install, set up, and use. Very robust and has a 'quality' feel about it". Furthermore, according to

Mr. Stoddart the meter has proved its measurement accuracy too "we actually tested it against a water gauge flow meter fixed with test points directly into the system and the readings were identical". It was possible for the engineers to gain confidence in the non-invasive meter by comparing it against an in-line one in order to verify the performance under real operating conditions.

Since implementing the use of the portable flowmeter Potterton have been able to improve the quality of service they offer to their customers. "We can prove either way if the site water flow is up to specification for the product or not. This takes all the guesswork out of site commissioning and allows us to assist our clients in evaluation of water flow rates on site". As Gary explains, one of the key limiting factors to boiler efficiency is the water flow from the customers' own site. This is something that Potterton have no immediate control over but which is crucial to the performance and longevity of their boilers. Therefore by highlighting this issue with the customer they can make recommendations for the required plant modifications that will improve flow, increase efficiency and save the customer money.

In spite of the fact that the Potterton only took delivery of their own flowmeter in April 2006 Gary explains that it has already proved itself. "Although we haven't had it very long it has proved worthy of the investment and I'm sure it will be a good tool to have at our disposal for future site assessments". Since they have started working with the flowmeter, Potterton have made the device an integral part of their customer support, commissioning and maintenance package and plan to continue using the flowmeter wherever it is required.

For more information on this application, or any other details on the KATflow range of flowmeters, please contact Katronic Technologies on 01926 882954, e-mail mail@katronic.co.uk or visit www.katronic.co.uk.