



COMMISSIONING

We present the second of our two features this year in partnership with the Commissioning Specialists Association to promote the importance of commissioning and stimulate better practice

It's got to be clean!

Just as we appreciate that building-services systems must be commissioned to operate effectively, so appreciation is growing of the need for hydronic systems to be thoroughly cleaned before they are commissioned. **Neil White** takes up the story.

The profile of commissioning within the building services industry has, arguably, never been higher. Changes to Part L of the Building Regulations, BREEAM and LEED accreditation schemes have elevated the commissioning process to the forefront of the minds of building owners, developers and designers. The continued efforts of the Commissioning Specialists Association (CSA), now in its 21st year, have also continued to amplify the importance of correct commissioning.

However, there is another discipline, unequivocally linked to the commissioning process that is becoming ever more important. That process is pre-commission cleaning (PCC), and it is absolutely vital that it is carried out correctly to enable successful commission of hydronic systems. Energy-efficient components, control valves with miniscule orifices and the tiny flow rates demanded by the latest energy-saving design criteria have made the PCC process into something of a black art.

Millions, if not tens of millions of pounds have been spent on litigation costs, additional flushing works, protracted commissioning works etc., and this nearly always has a detrimental effect on the membership of the Commissioning Specialists Association.

It is a common occurrence these days for commissioning and water-treatment packages to be purchased under one order. Most commissioning companies have embraced this approach and either have an integral water-treatment arm or partner with a specialist water-treatment company.

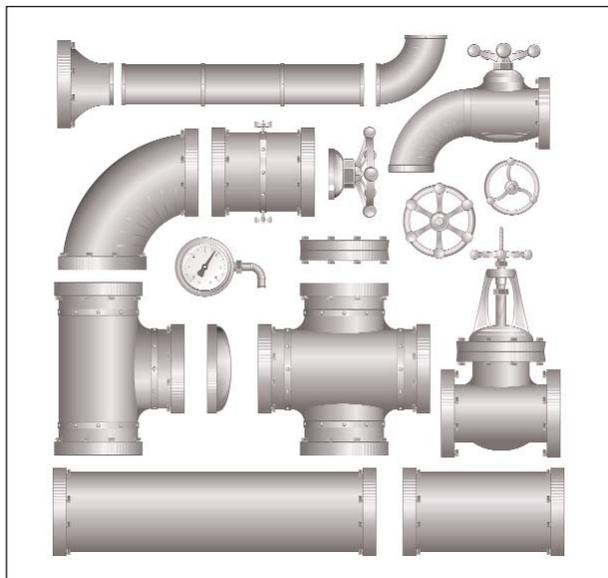
The continuing importance of pre-

commission cleaning and the issues that were being created led the main committee of the Commissioning Specialists Association to take a good look at this specialism, and a meeting was held in September 2009 to discuss what we at the Commissioning Specialists Association could, should or would offer in the way of support and possible regulation to the PCC industry. The meeting was chaired by Roger Carlin former chairman of the CSA and was extremely well supported by the commissioning and PCC industry, along with BSRIA and the HVCA. There was much lively

cleaning of pipework systems' has long been held, and rightly so, as the bible of all things PCC. This document would have been reviewed at some stage, but the CSA's focus on this subject accelerated this process, and we are represented on the steering committee for this guide by Roger Carlin. My current understanding is that this revised guide will be published later this Summer.

2. It became apparent both during and after this initial meeting that many of the companies within the PCC industry would relish a trade association like the CSA but to date they have been unable to get one off the ground. Perhaps they haven't had the strength in numbers or the financial backing to establish a permanent organisation. The founder members of the CSA will remember how difficult it was to establish and maintain the CSA, with companies having to finance the organisation via interest-free loans through its formative years. Just look how far we have come.

These experiences led the main committee of CSA to investigate the formation of a new membership category for the pre-commission cleaning industry, to give it a representative body and a cogent voice. We at the CSA have already been through the painful learning curve of forming and running a trade association. We have excellent training and registration schemes in place, which would undoubtedly give the PCC industry a head start. Major input would, of course, be required to adapt our training schemes, but, as we in the commissioning



The debris and other foreign matter that inevitably remains in pipework after installation must be removed by thorough cleaning before the system is commissioned.

debate and team workshops undertaken — but for me the two main points that arose were as follows.

1. BSRIA's guide 'AG1/2001-1 Pre-commission

industry know, such efforts produce dividends down the line with regard to well trained and competent engineers.

There would undoubtedly be benefits to the CSA in facilitating this new membership category. Putting aside a new revenue stream, it would enable individuals and companies of both disciplines to integrate more and to have a mutual respect for the requirements and issues of each discipline.

Consequently an informal vote was held at our AGM in April regarding the formation of this new membership category, and the response was unanimously positive. We are therefore going to hold a formal vote, fully in accordance with the association's constitution, later this Summer. Watch this space!

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The CSA is also actively involved in the new British Standard 'BS 8552 Water sampling in buildings'; once again, we are represented by Roger Carlin.

To summarise it is absolutely paramount that the consideration we are now given as commissioning specialists with regard to programming, design input and integration into the project team is applied to those involved in pre-commission cleaning and overall water-treatment process.

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