June 2020

water matters

FOR MERCHANTS, CONTRACTORS AND DEVELOPERS WHO EXPECT THE BEST FROM THEIR SUPPLIERS



We love rain

Did you make the most of the sunniest calendar month on record?

Hasn't it been perfect 'beer garden' weather?! What a time for them to be closed! 😢

I hope you've made the most of it nonetheless. The Met Office confirmed on the 1st June that May 2020 was the sunniest calendar month on record. ➤

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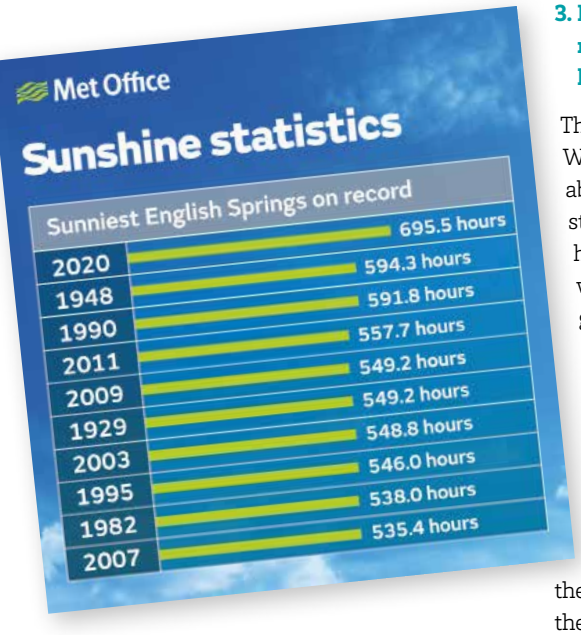
626 hours of bright sunshine were recorded in Spring 2020 for the UK, which exceeded the previous high (555 hours, set in 1948) by over 70 hours.



Spring 2020 also exceeds the sunshine amount for most summer seasons, with only three summers being sunnier (in 1976, 1995 & 1989).

The figure for England is even higher. Spring 2020 recorded 696 hours of sunshine, exceeding the previous record set of 594.3 hours.

All UK countries have recorded their sunniest spring on record in series stretching back to 1929. It has been the eighth warmest spring on record for the UK, with both England and Wales having their fifth warmest spring on record. It has also been the fifth driest spring for the UK overall, but some counties in north east England and eastern Scotland have recorded their driest spring in a rainfall series from 1862.

It has been the driest May in England and second driest in Wales with 9.6mm and 14.3mm respectively, which are both just 17% of the average rainfall for May.

What does this all mean? It means we should all be thinking wisely about water use.

Are you?

Do you ever?

If you've visited our website recently, you'll know that we have a very clear manifesto when it comes to our top priorities around water, which are...

1. **Preventing flooding in increasingly extreme weather conditions, through stormwater management.**
2. **Preventing sewage being discharged into water courses.**
3. **Putting the precious resource of rainwater to good use through rainwater harvesting.**

Those 3 things are what we're all about. Which is why when we see stats like the above being issued by the Met Office, we start to think. We start to wonder about how much people actually care about water use. How much thought actually goes into turning on your tap?

Especially over recent weeks. Paddling pools have been filled, new lawns have been laid and irrigated, new flower beds are being watered, vegetable patches have been planted and watered, the only saving grace throughout lockdown is that people probably weren't washing their cars because they weren't using them! Aside from that, water use, especially domestically, is up. Through the roof in many cases.

So, what will it mean? Will it lead to a drought? Will there be hosepipe bans this summer? Will the dry weather continue or will it turn to an equally long period of rain?

Who knows?! Certainly not me. But regardless of what might happen, we can all take personal responsibility for our part in the big picture.

One of the first things you can do, if you don't have one already, is buy a water butt for your garden! (yep, you guessed it - we can sell you one!)

In the Garantia UK division of our business, we've had many conversations recently with keen gardeners about their need for more rainwater. So many people have taken to growing their own fruit & vegetables this spring and they've all been starved of natural rainwater in these dry months. It's not often in the UK that we're hoping for rain! But that's been the case recently.

Of course, as soon as it comes, we'll forget all about the previous 2 months of nothing but sun! A Spring that was sunnier than all but three summers on record!

Whatever weather comes in June, the best thing you can do is make the most of it. If it rains... collect it! If it's sunny... enjoy it! But be careful how much mains water you use.

As we approach the half-way point of 2020,



we're looking back on the strangest second quarter we've ever had in our business and we're looking forward to moving onto what we hope will be better times in Q3. This month's edition of *Water Matters* is made up of some of our highlights from '**Q2 in lockdown**', as well as our first steps at returning to some kind of normality, which we're doing with a spring in our step.

I hope you enjoy the following stories & have yourself a great month.

Thanks,

Matthew

Making the most of your garden



And here's our GRAF UK Garden now, after our 10X effort...



Here's our GRAF UK Garden before our 10X effort...

For a while now, our strap-line for our Garantia UK division (our garden products) has been; ***"Making the most of your garden"***.

As you'll know if you're a regular reader of *Water Matters*, we've seen an exponential increase in our Garden products business over the past few months. In fact, so much so that our Q2 2020 figure will be close to more than we achieved in the whole of 2019 - now that's some increase in 3 months!

So, as you'd imagine, we've turned a big part of our focus to this division within our business. This has been true across the board, within each team. Operations, Finance, Order Processing and most-definitely Marketing. Just like anyone in business in the current climate, we're trying to maximise opportunities where we can find them. I'm sure the same is true in your business - if you can find some potential, you go all-in on making the most of it.

With such potential in this garden products market, we've been encouraging our followers to grow their own fruit & vegetables, to compost their own garden waste, to collect rainwater from their sheds & homes, all using the various products we sell for such things, of course. The take-up has been big too! We're engaging with over 200 more people now compared with before lockdown, on our Garantia UK Instagram page. The stories, photos and videos of what people have been growing in their gardens has been an inspiration!

Such an inspiration in fact, that we've spent hours towards the end of May & early June, working on our own GRAF UK Garden at our HQ in Banbury.

We want to lead by example and show people what can be achieved using our garden products. Step 1 though, required making a garden! Which is exactly what we've done. And the reason it's the topic of our 10X column this month, is because we've definitely spent more than 10x the time & effort to make this happen than we ever have before. And like anything you focus **The 10X Rule** on, it leads to serious results, in a very short amount of time.

The raised beds are ready to be planted. The turf has been laid, which instantly makes it appealing. Our Edgar edging board has been used to create a nice gravel area which is soon to include some picnic benches for seating (after all, we need a beer garden for The Watering Hole!). The next steps are to fit one of our water butts to the downpipe to start collecting valuable rainwater for us to use in the garden. We also need to fill the pond, set up the fountain that will cascade down the side of our Wave planter as a central feature. Then we'll add our compost bin, some Urban Balcony Raised Beds, and then quickly get some seeds planted before it's too late.

We'll showcase our products and prove what can be achieved using them. We'll share our progress with our customers and followers online and do our bit to inspire others to make the most of their garden, just like we've been inspired by others who have shared their garden stories with us recently.

We're excited to share our progress with you from our GRAF UK Garden, so watch this space for more updates and be sure to follow @GarantiaUK and @GrafUK on Instagram for real-time updates.

What's happening @ GRAF UK in June 2020

Take part in our VIRTUAL GARDEN FESTIVAL 2020 and enter our weekly competitions throughout June, July & August...

Garantia Virtual Garden Festival & A Summer of Bloomin' Marvellous Competitions to Launch Awareness for #H2OSAFE

When the country is in lock-down and all gardening events are cancelled, there's only one thing for it... take them online!

As we slowly head out of lock-down, but with many summer gardening and outdoor events cancelled or postponed, Garantia UK is bringing back the feel-good factor, by staging a virtual garden festival on the August bank holiday weekend. With weekly competitions for budding garden enthusiasts to show off their creations and a chance to be a winner in class and win fantastic prizes throughout - this turns our 'cancelled' summer into a major opportunity to GROW AND WIN BIG!

Who is judging the final entries?

With weekly entries eligible for consideration in 5 categories plus weekly prizes for the best pics sent in and tagged by you, the final set of category winners will be judged by a Mystery Guest Judge from the Garden products industry, who is perfectly qualified to choose the winners. What a wonderful opportunity for everyday gardeners to get recognised like professional growers and bloomers throughout the UK, plus this is a great opportunity to teach your children about the benefits of water conservation.

We're getting attention for #H2OSAFE

Garantia are launching this competition in association with Graf UK to bring attention to the rising issues in water conservation and the potential for a water crisis in the UK by:

1. Preventing flooding in increasingly extreme weather conditions, through storm-water management

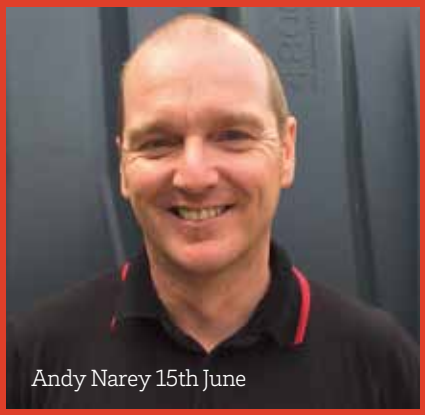
2. Preventing sewage being discharged into watercourses

3. Putting the precious resource of rainwater to good use through rainwater harvesting

Staff Birthdays


Alice Robinson 2nd June


Lisa Rossi 9th June


Andy Narey 15th June



What prizes are on offer for the finalists?

Get involved today! Get your phone out, get in your garden and go and take some snaps of your prized plants and bloomin' marvellous creations in the following categories: * Fruit and Veg / * BBQ area or Sanctuary / * Family-friendly / * Window box/container / * General floral * [Allotments are allowed to enter]

Upload your pics to your favourite social media platform from June 8th until the closing date of August 21st and tag @ GarantiaUK – but be sure to mention #bloominmarvellous for your chance to win a £50 voucher to spend on your garden every week. All weekly winners will be entered into the garden festival and the final round of judging with category prizes of £100 vouchers plus the overall winner can choose any item from the Garantia UK Website up to a value of £500!



Staff Anniversaries


Alicia Bennett 3rd June


Charli Wakelin 13th June


Ana Paez 21st June


Jack Green 24th June

Several steps (12 to be precise) in the right direction

Officially, our installation team didn't stop at all throughout lockdown. However, of course, there were plenty of weeks where we found ourselves only installing one, or two, or perhaps three days out of five. With so many sites closed across the UK, we weren't fitting attenuation tanks every day of the week as we usually would.

Even though we'd worked out a way to operate in line with the guidelines and make sure we were able to install in accordance with social distancing, only a small number of sites remained open so we certainly weren't installing every day.

However, since the Prime Minister spoke directly to the Construction Industry back on Sunday 10th May, urging us all to get back to work, more and more construction sites have opened meaning our installation teams have been building back up to their usual workload and travelling all over the place to get our stormwater attenuation tanks & soakaways installed.

Here's a selection of projects we've installed over the past 6 weeks...



Project in Solihull Section A) 18.4m x 12.8m, Section B) 10.4m x 6.4m, Section C) 6.4m x 4m. All x 1.09m deep = 357m3 EcoBloc maxx



New School, Banbury 27.2m x 3.2m x 1.44m deep = 125m3 EcoBloc maxx



School in Oxford 8.8m x 4.8m x 1.09m deep = 46m3 EcoBloc maxx



New Development in Hove 8m x 4.8m x 1.44m deep = 55m3 EcoBloc maxx

Graf UK
Glasgow



Distribution Warehouse, Glasgow 59.2m x 1.6m x 1.79m deep = 169m3 EcoBloc maxx



Project in York 20m x 9.6m x 1.79m deep = 343m3 EcoBloc maxx with EcoBloc flex inspect row



Project in York 14.4m x 10.4m x 1.44m deep = 215m3 EcoBloc maxx with EcoBloc flex inspect row.



Project in Sindlesham 10.4m x 8.8m x 0.39m deep = 35m3 EcoBloc light

Graf UK
Banbury



Hotel in Sandwich 15.2m x 9.6m x 1.09m deep = 159m3 EcoBloc maxx



Project in Eastbourne 17.6m x 4.8m x 0.68m deep = 57m3 EcoBloc flex inspect



Project in Brighton 9.6m x 7.2m x 2.14m deep = 147m3 EcoBloc maxx with EcoBloc flex inspect row



Project in Newhaven 60m x 10.4m x 0.74m deep = 461m3 EcoBloc maxx with 2x rows of EcoBloc flex inspect inspect row

Meet our Daily IMployees from April & May



Between Tuesday 14th April and Friday 15th May, we introduced an Internal Daily Email Newsletter which was sent to all staff members in the form of our 'GRAF UK Afternoon Announcements' email.

It was an idea we stole from Marcus Sheridan (Author of 'They Ask You Answer') when he shared this suggestion in a post on LinkedIn. We even copied a few of his suggestions on what to include.

So, each 'Afternoon Announcement' email comprised of the following;

Daily IMployee
recognising a member of the team for some special contribution

Making WFH more enjoyable
ideas for making working from home more enjoyable

Ideas for your free time whilst WFH
ideas for how to use your free time whilst working from home

Company updates
any relevant company updates that all staff should be aware of

COVID-19 updates
any relevant COVID-19 updates that effect us

Stay inspired to be the best you
videos, short stories, quotes that inspire

The best part of this daily communication was getting the chance to highlight members of our team for their contribution during what was a very challenging time. They've been highlighted internally within our business, but in order to give them the special recognition that they deserve, it's only fair we share publicly how great they are and why they were chosen for our Daily IMployee nominations.

Here's who got nominated during the 24 days of this 'Communicating through the Coronavirus' newsletter...



Alicia Bennett - for setting a new record for total number of individual orders processed in 1 day



Ryan Brogan - for stepping up and doing extra work when it was needed in our Glasgow branch



Patrick Thick - for acting on his gut-feeling and checking if there was a problem with orders not being received from a customer. There was & thankfully he picked it up in time and got it sorted.



Lisa Rossi - for offering to help process orders when help was needed



Charli Wakelin - for offering to help where help was desperately required! Even though it wasn't her job.



Charlotte Hucklesby & Jade Taylor - for making the effort to drop in care-packages to our warehouse teams, even whilst they were furloughed.



Tom & Kam - for keeping up with the number of orders we were sending out for our garden products



Michael Connolly & Neville White - for agreeing to become delivery drivers on a temporary basis to help get all our garden product orders delivered to customers



Gemma Mellowship – for helping every other staff member with their finance requirements. Pushing for credit insurance, standing in long queues to deposit cheques in the bank, etc.



Jack Green – nothing is ever too much trouble, Jack just gets it done



Callum Vallance-Poole – for keeping the communication going. Marketing, both internally & externally was so important during this time, and Callum organised every communication.



Lorraine Watts – always smiling, always positive and always there to help.



Debra Butler – getting involved in everything! Helping everyone, well beyond her normal workload. Deb has been involved with so many things during lockdown and it's really helped.



Danielle Sutton – for keeping up with enquiries and getting back to customers quickly



Charlotte Sutton – for keeping our SWM Team focused, positive, together and working well.



Flavia Urso – for keeping up with all WWT & RWH enquiries and helping our team prioritise customer enquiries



Patrick & Neville – for becoming delivery drivers to help make sure our customers receive their compost bins, planters and garden products on time



Mark Caswell – for keeping up with drawing requirements and helping with all technical queries



Alice Robinson – for helping our Ops team with invoices and delivery note matching



Lorraine & Sarah – for sending out some cards to staff to help keep them motivated, upbeat and have a giggle



David Stagg – for asking great questions and stepping out of his comfort zone to use video emails!

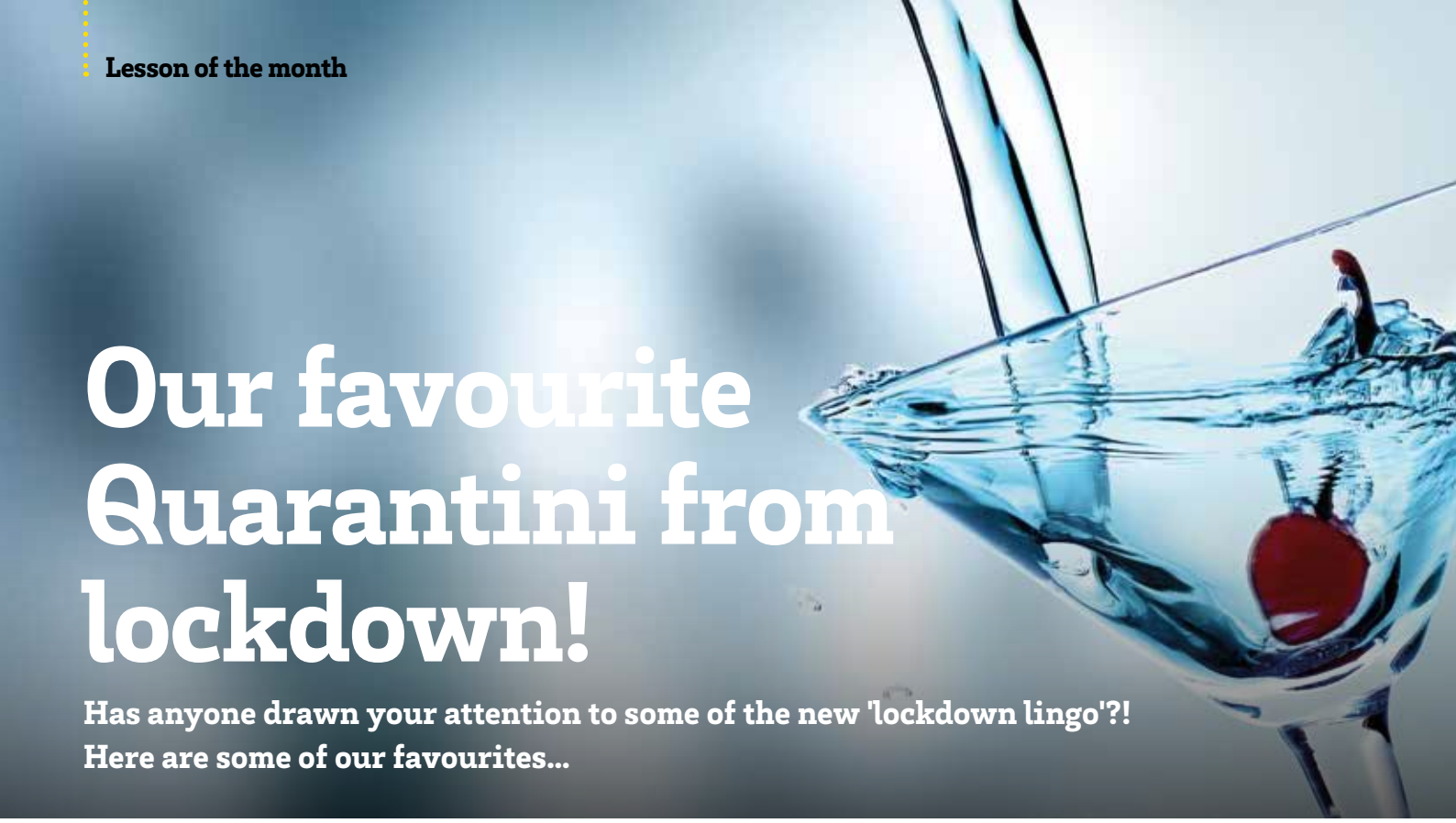


Debra Butler – this time for securing some great orders for our SWM team, whilst also helping with loads of other stuff!



Jack & Kam – for getting in early to assemble more and more WWT systems to keep up with orders

What a team! In challenging times you need to come together and help one-another. That's exactly what this lot did & that's why they all deserve the recognition they got!



Our favourite Quarantini from lockdown!

Has anyone drawn your attention to some of the new 'lockdown lingo'?! Here are some of our favourites...

Coronacoaster the ups & downs of your mood during the pandemic

Coronials as opposed to millennials, this refers to the future generation of babies conceived or born during coronavirus quarantine

Furlough Merlot wine consumed in an attempt to relieve the frustration of not working

Coronadose an overdose of bad news from consuming too much media during a time of crisis

The elephant in the Zoom the glaring issue during a videoconferencing call that nobody feels able to mention

Quarantinis experimental cocktails mixed from whatever random ingredients you have left in the house

One of our favourites is the Quarantini! And many times through Zoom calls and virtual drinks evenings our choice of Quarantini has been a hot topic of discussion. So much so, we've got so proficient at mastering the art of making these cocktails we now feel qualified to share our recipes for our 2 favourite lockdown cocktails that we've perfected over the past 2 months! (please note; we're in no way qualified to be giving out cocktail making advice so please take this with a pinch of salt (not literally, a pinch of salt would not be wise), but we've tasted plenty and we can confirm these are real good!)

What's this got to do with stormwater or rainwater or work in general, you may ask? Well, like 50% of the articles in Water Matters, absolutely nothing! Apart from the tenuous link that water might be involved as one of the ingredients of these drinks - in the form of ice cubes - there's absolutely nothing to do with water management or the construction industry in anything on this page. If you're purely reading for work-related content then you picked up the wrong magazine.

Quarantini #1

Tequila Margerita

Take a normal size cocktail shaker

Add 3 cubes of ice

Pour in your Blanco Tequila (we use Don Julio, 'cos it's awesome - other brands are available) just up to the top of the ice cubes

Squeeze in 2 squirts of Agave Syrup - if, like us, you didn't have this in the cupboard, your new Besty from Amazon can drop it off next day (you know you know that delivery driver like a friend at this stage! after all, you've seen him/her more than your own family over the past 2 months!)

Cut a lime in quarters and squeeze in 3 of the 4 lime wedges (save the fourth wedge to add to your glass)

Pour in some fresh pineapple juice, enough to bring you up to about 3/4 full in your cocktail shaker

Put the lid on and shake your heart out!

Add 2 or 3 ice cubes to your glass, plus the spare quarter of lime, and then pour on in after a good shake.

Then... Enjoy!

Quarantini #2

Tequila Old-Fashioned

Add 3 ice cubes to a tall tumbler, or a pint glass

Pour in your Anejo Tequila (we use Don Julio, because before 'The Rock' made his own it's what he used to drink) just below the top of the ice cubes

Squeeze in 1 squirt of Agave Syrup (you bought it for the margerita so may as well make use of it)

Pour in 2-3 shakes of some Angostura Bitters - if you don't have a bottle of this, your cocktail game must be off, but your Besty from Amazon can rescue you, again.

Then stir.

And keep stirring.

And when you think you've stirred for ages, stir some more.

Nice gentle stirring.

Enjoying the aroma. Stirring, more and a bit more.

Add 3 ice cubes, or 1 massive ice cube if you have any, to a glass tumbler.

Pour in the well-stirred Tequila Old-Fashioned and...

Enjoy!

Remember! If you give either of these a try, PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Water & Oranges

Are you excited about the future? Or anxious and apprehensive? Are you worried about the economy? Or do you feel confident in your position & your ability to succeed?

As we approach the half-way point of 2020, I'm encouraging my team to think about their current position, and reflect on it, as if they would if they were playing a match. It doesn't matter which sport, simply choose one that works for you. It could be rugby, football, netball, hockey, basketball, basically any team sport. Then imagine you've only got 5 minutes to go until the half-time whistle.

You've had a tough first half. I think it's fair to say we've all had a tough first-half. We're looking forward to some water & oranges at half-time.

We need to quench our thirst and regain some energy.

But what else do we need to do before we start the second-half?

Do we need a rousing team talk by our coach or manager?

Do we need the leaders within our team, not just the captain, but also the natural leaders in the team, to address some issues and encourage us to raise our game?

Do we need to change our strategy altogether and rethink how we play in the second-half?

Have we got to make changes to our team and bring in replacement players? Do some players need a longer rest? Or do they just need a change of focus?

We need a clear game plan. One that the whole team are on-board with. With clear benchmarks and targets/goals in place. Where do you want to be 5 minutes into the second-half? Then 10 minutes in? Then at the half-way point of the second half. What does success look like? Can all your team members describe it? Are they all on the same page? Are they all working toward the same outcome?

How do you want Q3 to go for you, in your business? Are you clear? Do you have a goal in mind? Are you clear on the steps necessary that you have to make, in order to reach your targets?

As we approach the end of June, now's the time to consider these things. We find that using this metaphor of the half-time whistle approaching, helps us to focus on our current position. If you're 3-0 down at half-time and you're on the losing team, you don't give up. You know you've still got the whole of the second-half to fight back! You know what can happen. You've seen so many comebacks, you know it's possible.

"It's a game of two-halves" wouldn't be a saying if it weren't for one half being completely different to the other half. Whatever's happened in the first-half, does not have to effect what's going to happen in the second-half. Yes, there's a lot of uncertainties right now, but that's why in business we have to get clear on what we're doing and how we're doing it. We have to act on purpose. We have to remain disciplined and take action.

No team ever won the game in the second-half by coming out onto the field and reading the news and talking to their teammates about what might happen. Teams that win the second-half come out onto the field and start playing instantly. They take charge, they get momentum, and then they keep-pushing, all the way to the final whistle.

I know what my team are going to be ready to do come 1st July 2020. So, what about you?

Make the most of your half-time, enjoy your water & oranges, but make sure you use this time wisely, so you & your team are ready to come out and win the second-half. Because you can.

And that's the final word.

Matthew





Graf UK team Q&A

Your chance to get to know our team a little bit better – this issue, Steve Righton.

What's your nickname people call you?
Reggie

What is your favourite food?
Chilli & Curry



What is your favourite TV show?
Line of Duty

Who is your favourite singer/band?
Tough one so many, currently Matchbox 20, Stereophonics & Gin Blossoms + Chilli Peppers

What is your favourite holiday destination?
Currently Snowdonia renting a house in the middle of the Coed y Brenin forest walking & cooking with a glass of wine listening to good music



Who is your idol?
When I was young Phil Bennet, stand off for Wales & Viv Richards West Indies cricketer

What is your best achievement?
Mainly team sports but I was the number 1 badminton player in Warwickshire in my early teens



What is your favourite animal?
Wolf

What was your dream job when you were younger?
Professional cricketer

What is your biggest pet hate?
People who ask for advice & then do the complete opposite – what was the point?



Contact us:

We'd love to hear your feedback on this issue of *Water Matters*, and the sort of things you'd like to see in future issues, so drop **Callum** a note at *callum@grafuk.co.uk*.
We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Graf UK Ltd
Regen House | Beaumont Road | Banbury | Oxfordshire OX16 1RH
T: **01608 661500** | E: **info@grafuk.co.uk**

Visit us on the web at www.grafuk.co.uk