

Paraguayans graduate from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

World news story

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) graduation ceremony for the 2019 class will take place next Friday 14 August, 2020.



President Mario Abdo Benítez awards medals to RMAS graduates from the 1993 to 2002 period.

RMAS is an elite institution, recognized worldwide as a leader in military training. Among the graduates are Paraguay nationals Officer Cadet Osvaldo Solís and the Officer Cadet Susy Carolina Benítez Giménez. Both Solís and Benítez Giménez are the first Paraguayan students at the Royal Academy after seventeen years, and Benítez Giménez is the first Paraguayan woman in its entire history.

New student for Class 2020

Cooperation in education and defence will continue with Paraguayan Cadet Matías González, who is already at RMAS and soon begins his studies for the period 2020/2021.

Ambassador Hedges and Deputy Head of Mission John Davie took part in a call with the Paraguayan students last Monday 10 August. During this call, Ambassador Hedges praised the dedication of both graduates and the new student, conveying his sincere congratulations to them.

Officer cadets Susy Benítez, Osvaldo Solís, and Cadet Matías González share a video call with Ambassador Matthew Hedges and Second Head of Mission John Davie.

The UK Defence Attaché (Non-Resident) for Paraguay, Major Ben Watson, will accompany the Paraguayan graduates during the event this coming Friday.

Paraguayan awarded the King Hussain Award

In addition to being the first Paraguayan woman to study at RMAS, Officer Cadet Susy Benítez Giménez was awarded the King Hussain Award, as the most improved International Cadet of the intake on the Regular Commissioning Course.

Officer Cadet Susy Benítez Giménez

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PM's meeting with Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin: 13 August 2020

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin.



The Prime Minister met the Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin today in Belfast.

The leaders discussed the importance of working together as neighbours to defeat coronavirus, including through close collaboration between Ireland, the UK Government and the Northern Irish Executive. They agreed on the need for the international community to work together on developing rapid tests, therapeutics and vaccines.

The Prime Minister and Taoiseach also agreed on the importance of a sustainable, green recovery from the economic impact of coronavirus. The Prime Minister stressed the opportunity that lies ahead for international governments, including the UK and Ireland, to promote free trade and invest in environmentally friendly technology.

The Prime Minister updated the Taoiseach on his assessment of the state of play in the UK / EU negotiations, and reiterated the UK's determination to reach a deal. He stressed that the UK would continue to take pride in high environmental, animal welfare and labour standards outside the European Union. He underlined however that the UK was not willing to make level playing field commitments that went beyond those normally found in a Free Trade Agreement, such as the EU's agreement with Canada.

The Prime Minister also underscored the UK's commitment to meet our obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol, as set out in the paper published in May. Our priority remains protecting Northern Ireland's place in our United Kingdom and preserving the huge gains from the peace process.

The leaders looked forward to working together over the coming years to improve the connectivity between our countries, strengthen our relationship outside of the EU and promote the UK and Ireland's shared values alongside likeminded democracies.

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£8 million boost for low carbon heat projects in south Wales

- UK Government-funded heat networks to supply affordable low-carbon heat to public buildings such as leisure centres and local council offices in South Wales
- Making buildings greener is the next step in government plans to reach net zero emissions by 2050
- Bridgend and Cardiff networks could help hundreds of homes and buildings cut emissions by up to 80% – the equivalent of planting 7,000 trees

Hundreds of homes and buildings across Cardiff and Bridgend will receive low-carbon energy from new heat network projects thanks to a £8 million boost announced by the UK Government today (12 August) The funding will develop a new system of distribution pipes taking excess heat from a central source such as energy generated from waste in Cardiff, and a Combined Heat and Power plant with thermal storage facility in Bridgend. These sources will then supply heat to public buildings within the town and city centre, and can easily connect to new, lower carbon heat sources in the future.

Heat networks are a proven, cost-effective way of providing reliable low carbon heat at a fair price to consumers. The new networks in Cardiff and Bridgend will be future-proofed to ensure that businesses and households across South Wales can connect to the system in years to come, helping to provide cheaper and greener energy.

The new projects are part of the UK Government's Heat Networks Investment Project, a £320 million fund to support the construction of heat networks across England and Wales.

Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth Kwasi Kwarteng said:

These projects in Bridgend and Cardiff will help connect as many local homes and businesses as possible to low-carbon affordable heating, helping people save money on energy bills.

By connecting public buildings up to heat networks, councils and leisure centres can reinvest the money saved on energy bills into frontline services in a way that achieves our goal of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

Heat networks form an important part of the UK Government's plan to reduce carbon emissions and cut heating bills for consumers.

This £8 million investment will help heat hundreds of homes and buildings using cheaper, greener energy across Bridgend and Cardiff. It also marks another step forward for our ambitious Clean Growth Strategy and moves us closer to our target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

With 9% of emissions in Wales coming from homes and buildings, the projects in Bridgend and Cardiff will be a further step towards greener heating and lower bills across the UK. By reusing heat from a local waste plant, those connected to the Cardiff network could reduce their carbon emissions by up to 80%. This could save 18,000 tonnes of CO₂ over the next ten years – the equivalent of planting 7,000 trees.

Both projects will be awarded funding through Triple Point Heat Networks Investment Management, the UK Government's delivery partner who have successfully awarded funding to 18 projects in total as part of the Heat Networks Investment Project.

Ken Hunnisett, Project Director at Triple Point Heat Networks Investment Management, said:

One of the aims of HNIP is to deliver affordable and dependable low-carbon heat, and so the announcement of the first HNIP-funded heat networks in Wales is a significant milestone. The projects will deliver significant benefit to both consumers and the environment and will demonstrate the role heat network schemes can

play in meeting carbon targets by reducing emissions from buildings.

At present less than 5% of energy used for heating homes and buildings comes from low-carbon sources. Increasing the number of homes and businesses on heat networks is an important part of the UK Government's plans to improve take-up of low-carbon heat as the UK seeks to end its contribution towards climate change entirely by 2050.

Heat networks are one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing carbon emissions from heating, and their efficiency and carbon-saving potential increases as they grow and connect to each other. The Committee on Climate Change estimates that around 18% of UK heat will need to come from heat networks by 2050 if the UK is to meet its net zero target.

ENDS

Notes to editors

About the Heat Networks Investment Project

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is investing £320 million into heat networks in England and Wales up to March 2022 through the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), designed to accelerate the growth of the market.
- Triple Point Heat Network Investment Management is running HNIP under contract.
- A list of successful projects can be found [here](#).
- Heat network projects looking to apply for funding can do so [here](#).
- [Find out more](#) about the Heat Networks Investment Project.

Details of the successful HNIP projects

Bridgend Town Heat Network: £1,241,000 commercialisation and construction grant

Initially, the scheme will serve public sector buildings in the town centre, including Bowls Hall, Civic Centre offices, Bridgend Life Centre (leisure centre) and a new residential development. The network will allow for the expansion to other buildings in the immediate vicinity including local business and residential units. The energy centre will be based at the Bridgend Life Centre and initially use gas fired Combined Heat and Power (CHP) with back-up gas boilers. These will be replaced with a larger CHP unit and new backup/peak boilers with the addition of thermal storage tank at the rear of Bridgend Life Centre as the scheme develops. Key objectives for the scheme are to continue to provide reduced energy costs for customers, provide carbon emissions savings compared to alternative strategies and, over time, further decarbonise heat supplies.

Cardiff Heat Network: £6,628,000 construction grant

The proposed Cardiff Heat Network will begin at Trident Park Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) plant in Cardiff Bay, spreading across the Bay area before crossing the main Cardiff to London railway line, as part of a later phase. Funding from Heat Network Investment Project will support Phase 1 of the network which will reach to the area immediately south of the railway line. Utilising the ERF plant will allow the network to meet the 12 GWh per annum of Phase 1 customer heat demand, whilst a separate energy centre containing back-up gas boilers will provide further capacity, ensuring resilience to the network. Once fully built out (phase 1 and 2), connections will have a combined annual heat demand of 34 GWh with adjacent private sector buildings having a combined annual heat demand of approximately 22 GWh. Part of the HNIP funding will support the costs of future proofing the network to accommodate for this potential future growth.

Civil news: updates to electronic handbook

We have updated the civil finance electronic handbook which is used by our caseworkers when processing your claims.

What has changed?

We have revised the guidance as a result of:

- transfer of court assessed claims to the LAA
- changes in relation to payments on account

How to use the handbook

The civil finance electronic handbook contains our operational requirements and guidance.

It should be used together with the cost assessment guidance and also the relevant contracts.

Further information

[Funding and costs assessment for civil and crime matters](#) – to access the updated 'civil finance electronic handbook'

[Speedier payments on way for court assessed bills](#) – news article on transfer

of court assessed claims

[Further changes to increase payments on account applications](#) – news article on changes to POA rules

Change of British High Commissioner to Fiji – August 2020

News story

Mr George Edgar OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Fiji in succession to Melanie Hopkins.



Mr George Edgar OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Fiji in succession to Melanie Hopkins who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Edgar will take up his appointment in August 2020.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Christopher George Edgar

Married to: Elena Ryurikovna Edgar

Children: Two daughters

2020 FCO, Deputy Director, FCO Coronavirus Task Force
2015 to 2019 Phnom Penh, European Union Ambassador to Cambodia
2012 to 2015 Tashkent, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2011 to 2012 FCO, Additional Director – 2012 Olympics, Protocol Directorate
2007 to 2010 FCO, Head of Consular Assistance Group, Consular Directorate
2006 to 2007 FCO, Envoy for Climate Security in Africa
2004 to 2006 St Petersburg, Consul General

2001 to 2004 Skopje, Her Majesty's Ambassador
1997 to 2000 Phnom Penh, Her Majesty's Ambassador
1995 to 1997 FC0, Head of South Africa Section, Africa Department (Southern)
1992 – 1995 Moscow, Consultant to EU-Tacis technical assistance programme
1988 – 1991 FC0, Head of Policy and Analysis Section, Soviet Department
1986 – 1988 Lagos, Second Secretary – Chancery
1985 – 1986 FC0, Internal and bilateral section, Soviet Department
1984 – 1985 Moscow, Third then Second Secretary – Chancery
1982 – 1983 Full-time Language Training – Russian
1981 – 1982 FC0, Hong Kong Desk Officer, Hong Kong and General Department

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