

Solid fuel stove fails

David Fletcher looks at the safety of this ubiquitous appliance

The failure of a solid fuel stove was reported at a recent BSS meeting. The base-plate of the stove had cracked badly on three sides and allowed air into the stove under the ash-pan. The stove went into thermal runaway because of the extra air getting in, but fortunately the owner was present and able to monitor events until the fuel burnt out.

The maker of the stove has said this is not a unique event, and that there are several reported every year. It is reported that the cause is corrosion in the joint gaps around the base plate. The 'rust' swells, putting tension into the castings. Subsequent heat from the fire cracks the cast iron material. The corrosion comes from dampness in the acidic

ash, either from rain or condensation, when the stove has not been in use. Stoves that are not in regular use are obviously vulnerable.

Now the end of the fire season is coming, it is obviously a good time to have a good clean out and make

The advice for when when a stove is not in use is:

- Clean out the bottom of the stove;
- Do not leave the chimney open to rain;
- Leave the ash-pan door open so that there is a flow of air.

sure that rain and condensation are not getting in. If you have had a similar experience, please let us know.

Failure crack in stove base
Photo: David Fletcher

