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Shell image-making falls short on the forecourt

November 9, 2009 1:31pm by [Kate Mackenzie](#)

Shell is usually pretty pro-active in its approach to shaping its public image. It is eager to host and participate public discussions on climate change and CCS, and the company's climate change scientist David Hone writes what is, for a corporate-sponsored effort, [not a bad blog](#).

But those efforts tend to be focused on oil and gas production, or big-picture stuff such as the future of fossil fuels. They seem to be falling down a little, at least by comparison, when it comes to the somewhat more mundane downstream efforts.

First, the [poppy scandal](#). In the UK, Shell retailers are not allowing charities, including the Royal British Legion's ubiquitous poppy appeal, to put their fundraising boxes on its service station counters. It's easy to guess how that turned out: threats of boycotts from ex-servicemen and general accusations of heartlessness.

And in the US, Shell on Friday agreed to pay \$19.5m for "[numerous violations](#)" discovered in an investigation into 1,000 gasoline stations around California. "Many dealt with failure to properly monitor underground storage tanks and spill alarm systems," the AP reported.

(Incidentally, the rather eye-catching gas station pictured above is in neither California nor the UK.)

Update: Shell has changed its mind about the poppies and published a rather abject apology about the whole affair. [Royaldutchshellplc.com](#) - probably company's most eagle-eyed watchers - have [published the whole thing](#) and even gave them a pat on the back for it.

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An old Shell gas station in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Source: Flickr

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