ROOFING TODAY

The trade magazine for UK roofing, cladding and insulation professionals

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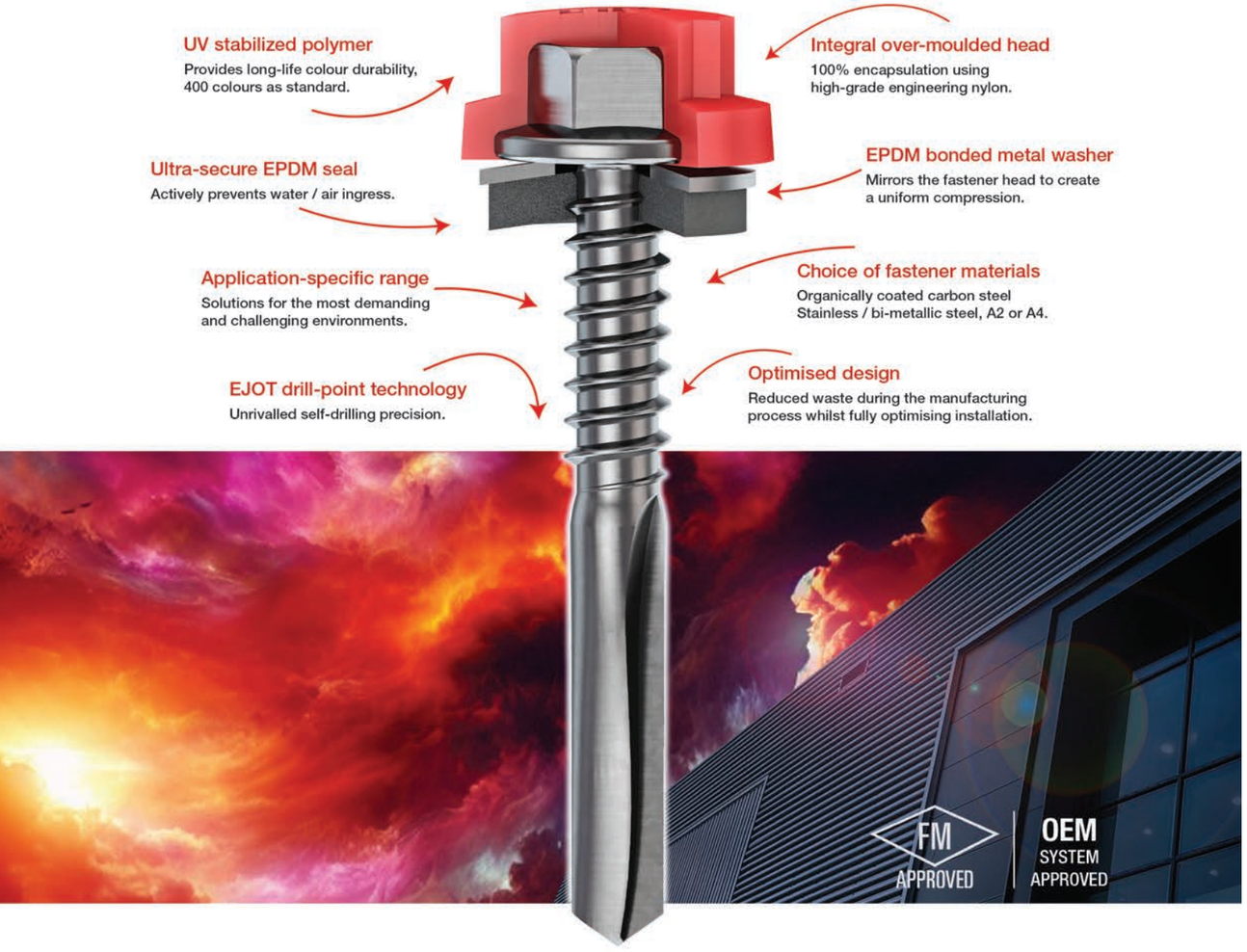


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Cornwall College Launches Roofing Apprenticeship Training

Cornwall College St Austell has officially launched new roofing apprenticeship training at its expanding Roofing Academy.

Cornwall College is the only facility in the area offering roofing apprenticeship training and has a large catchment area driving demand.

The Roofing Academy started taking apprentices in September 2024 and the college says demand and uptake has been so positive it has just started a second cohort.

Planning to grow further by September 2025, the St Austell facility, is still undergoing expansion with new roofing rigs planned to enhance the learner experience.



The roofing apprenticeship, offered to level 2, is following a block week format which sees the learners spending three weeks onsite and one week in college.

Roofing training is led by Jack Newton who has worked in industry for a number of years and continues as a part time self-employed slater and tiler. This allows Jack to continue to carry out CPD to keep his skill set up to date.

Solar Roofing

Collaborating with its Green Construction Skills Academy Cornwall College also teaches students the installation of solar roofing preparing them for the growing renewables sector.

Head of Cornwall College St Austell, David Atkinson-Beaumont, said: "As a community-focused college, we're dedicated to meeting the needs of our local area through strong partnerships with leading employers and our investment in modern facilities."

IoR Dissolves as Members Invited to Transition to CIOB

The Institute of Roofing (IoR) will now close after members voted to dissolve it by the majority vote at an Extraordinary General Meeting on 14 February 2025.

Under an agreement, former IoR members can join the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) at a discounted rate with the opportunity to gain chartered status.

IoR members who were fully subscribed on 31 December 2024 have been contacted by CIOB, with membership determined by expertise and qualifications.

Depending on their background, IoR members may join as a Technical Member (TechCIOB), Chartered Member (MCIOB), or Chartered Fellow (FCIOB), with opportunities to progress through CIOB's membership framework.

CIOB says it is committed to ensuring that roofing professionals have a strong voice in the organisation, integrating their expertise into its governance and policy work to strengthen industry connections and enhance knowledge-sharing across the built environment.

The IoR Board will now begin the formal process of dissolving the organisation. The Institute is no longer accepting new members.

Tata Steel UK Latest New MCRMA Member

Tata Steel UK, and Building Systems UK, the construction product manufacturer of Tata Steel UK, has renewed its membership of the MCRMA – the industry association which represents metal cladding and roofing manufacturers.

The company took the decision to rejoin the MCRMA to help support raising standards at all stages of the design, construction, installation and maintenance of metal building envelopes.

Tata Steel UK joins an expanding MCRMA membership of major systems manufacturers, component suppliers and installers, and industry professionals.



The company's operations are closely aligned with the technical aims and objectives of the MCRMA. Widely used systems include Trisomet and Trimapanel insulated composite panels and Trisobuild site assembled systems.

Jo Evans, MD at Building Systems UK said: "Re-joining the MCRMA will be important for increasing our engagement with key stakeholders in the supply chain and enable us to play an active role within a well-respected industry association. We are keen to support the MCRMA's objectives of fostering knowledge sharing and technical improvements across the sector.

Carlton Jones, Director of the MCRMA added: "We are delighted to have Tata Steel and Building Systems UK once again as members of our association. As one of the industry's major product and systems manufacturers, the whole team has a wealth of knowledge and experience that will be extremely beneficial to the association - including the development of best practice and technical guidance documents."

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Excitement Building for the MAC Awards 2025



Excitement is building for the MAC Awards and Luncheon taking place on Friday 6th June 2025 at the prestigious Royal Horseguards Hotel in London - an ideal venue for MAC members to proudly celebrate their achievements and network with fellow professionals.

AccuRoof, part of SIG Roofing, is Headline Sponsor for the MAC Awards 2025 and a new awards category is being introduced, known as the AccuRoof/MAC Contract of the Year.

The overall Contract of the Year accolade will be chosen from the winners of the four existing awards categories - namely the Car Decks and Paving Project of the Year; General Works, Development and Hybrid Project of the Year; Heritage Project of the Year; and Small Works Project of the Year.

Individual awards include Apprentice of the Year and an additional new awards category for Outstanding Contribution Towards Sustainability. This award recognises the contribution mastic asphalt has made to a project's sustainability and could be a green roof project or an example showing where mastic asphalt's carbon zero credentials were a valuable asset to the overall brief. The guest speaker at the event will be Alan Brazil, a football broadcaster and former Spurs and Manchester United player.

Apart from Headline Sponsors AccuRoof , BriggsAmasco, W J Horrod, IKO and John Fetherston Roofing are sponsoring the event once again in 2025.

The MAC Awards and Luncheon 2025 will be a landmark event for MAC Director Malcolm Grinstead, who is officially leaving the mastic asphalt industry after a sterling 55 years' service.

Game Changing Investment to Support Tek Clad Expansion



From left to right: Craig Parkes – Merlo UK, Craig Boxall – Southwest Handling Sales Manager, Ian Hambidge, Tek Clad Ltd Manager Director, Tom Banbury, Southwest Handling Manager Director.

Tek Clad, a Dorset-based specialist in roofing and cladding for commercial and industrial buildings, has invested £340,000 in two state-of-the-art telescopic handlers.

Operated by Tek Clad's trained team, the new machines will enhance speed, safety and precision on projects, supporting their goals of business expansion.

Tek Clad Managing Director Ian Hambidge said: "This investment is a game-changer for us. With these additions, Tek Clad can now carry out all lifting operations in-house without the need to hire equipment or subcontractors – something rare in our industry.

Opening the Door to Expansion

"This is an exciting time for the business. We're setting a new benchmark for professionalism, efficiency and in-house capability, opening the door to more clients and larger projects."

Two advanced Merlo machines, selected for their robust lifting capabilities and precision handling, were delivered to Tek Clad's Weymouth headquarters in early February.

The Merlo 40:13 Plus Telehandler is a compact machine with a 12.5m reach and a 4 tonne capacity. The Merlo 50:30 Plus Rotating Telehandler is a larger model with a 30m reach and 360° rotation. It is equipped with a fly winch, man basket, and remote controls, for operational flexibility and safety.

Founded in 2010, Tek Clad celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. The company specialises in commercial roofs and cladding.

Dan Anstey Appointed Divisional Managing Director at SIG Roofing

SIG Roofing has appointed Dan Anstey as Divisional Managing Director for the Northern region of the business. He will succeed Graham Jennings, who held the position for the past four years and has chosen to transition to a consultancy role.

Dan joined the SIG Roofing business at their Eastbourne branch when he was 19 years old. Fast forward 28 years, and he has held various roles within the company, including Branch Manager, Area Sales Manager, Sales Director, Key Account Director, and Business Development Director. This extensive experience has provided him with a deep understanding of the customer needs and the business from the ground up, equipping him well to take on this challenging new role.

"I'm thrilled to have been appointed to this role, and I feel fortunate to have the mentorship and support of Graham Jennings to help me succeed. Graham is a highly regarded figure in the industry and has achieved



impressive results for the North over the past four years. I aim to continue developing the region and to uphold his legacy," said Dan Anstey.

Dan is tasked with delivering the SIG Roofing strategy in the Northern region with a key focus on strengthening customer relationships, understanding their needs and delivering best-in-class service.

Taking on the Competition

SIG Roofing says Dan will now be supporting the Northern team to take on the competition by having the right branch locations, accessible stock, and the best products. Dan will be based in the Leeds branch of SIG Roofing.





GRP Rooflights Confirmed for use Under New Fire Classifications for England

The Rooflight Association (RA) has successfully campaigned to address a potential barrier to the specification of Glass Reinforced Polymer (GRP) rooflights on metal or fibre cement clad industrial buildings resulting from the withdrawal of the BS476 series of national fire classifications, to allow only the EN13501 standard – two days before the publication of the Final Grenfell Report on 2 September 2024.



GRP rooflights are, in most cases, the only method of introducing natural daylight into these buildings, in a sector worth circa £6 billion and with an annual new build and refurbishment footprint of around 24 million m², so swift and decisive action was required.

The BS476 series are the fire standards that have for many decades been the established method of demonstrating compliance with the Approved Document B.

Unintended Consequences

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (MHCLG), was not aware of the unintended negative consequences affecting the industrial building sector, and particularly GRP rooflights, despite this being included in several responses to the public consultation on the proposed changes to Approved Document B.

The situation was compounded by only allowing a six month transition period for most parts of the Standards, particularly the internal spread of flame test, where a suitable European test method for GRP does not exist.

The potential consequence would have been to outlaw the use of GRP rooflights where there has been no increased fire risk to the building or the building occupiers.

Immediately, RA pulled together a response team and garnered support from other trade associations, culminating in a round of meetings with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to explain the potential crisis and the urgent need for action to provide certainty in the supply chain.

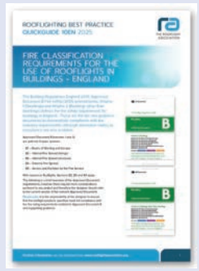
The BSR, together with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), were very keen to engage with the Rooflight Association to maintain the sustainability of large shed construction types, so that over the following months of intense communication, a solution was reached.

The result is the publication of two Frequently Asked Questions that sit alongside Approved Document B. The most pertinent for GRP rooflights is FAQ 8 which confirms that when tested to BS 2782-0, Method 508A, GRP that achieves a TP(a) rating, can continue to be used as a rooflight material in industrial and storage buildings. For more information see:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/approved-document-b-fire-safety-frequently-asked-questions#requirement-b2-internal-fire-spread-linings:~:text=8.%20For%20plastic,builders%20and%20installers.

The Rooflight Association's revised QuickGuide 10EN explains the new requirements for fire performance compliance and can be downloaded here:

https://rooflightassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/QUICKGUIDE_10EN_updated_Feb_2025.pdf



Suspended Sentence for Roofer

Iain Smith, 36, fell over 7 metres, suffering substantial injuries on 13 June 2023, while working for Hooper Roofing.

Iain was carrying old roof slates down a ladder attached to a scaffold platform at a property in Honiton, Devon, when he fell suffering serious injury, including five broken vertebrae, as well as skull and rib fractures.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Daniel Hooper, trading as Hooper Roofing, failed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of his employee. He failed to undertake any planning or appropriately supervise the work at height or supply suitable equipment to do the task safely.

HSE inspectors found that ladders were used to transfer heavy slates to and from the scaffolding platform and this was unsafe.

Daniel Hooper, 28, pleaded guilty to breaching the Work at Height Regulations 2005. He was sentenced to 16 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months and ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work in the community at Exeter Magistrates Court on 6 February 2025. He was also ordered to pay costs of £10,875.

Saint-Gobain Set For its First Stone Wool Production Line in Spain

Saint-Gobain is to launch a €40 million stone wool production line at its insulation plant in Azuqueca, near Madrid, Spain.



The investment will expand and decarbonize the stone wool production line at the factory. The upgrade will include the installation of an electric furnace to replace the current fossil fuelled ones.

The Azuqueca plant will be Saint-Gobain Group's first facility to feature an electric stone wool production line. The new installations are expected to be operational in the first half of 2026.

The modernization will increase stone wool production capacity by around 40%, meeting growing Spanish demand for sustainable construction materials. At the same time, the project will enable the plant to reduce its CO2 emissions by 70% (scope 1 and 2) compared to 2017 levels.



Impact of Installing Inline Solar on Roof Ventilation Being Tested

The impact of installing inline rooftop solar PV systems on ventilation is being measured as part of a project partnership between Wienerberger and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

At a presentation event held at LJMU on 21 February, Manuela Fazzan, Head of Commercial Propositions at Wienerberger, explained how the project, called Renatus ('born again' in Latin), stemmed from the need to research retrofitting solutions to provide evidence on how to best upgrade energy efficiency in homes.

Project managed by Wienerberger's Ryan Atkinson, the company's inline solar system was fitted as part of three types of roof buildup, in November 2024 at LJMU.



Lab Houses

The roofs, constructed on three real-life 'lab' houses modelled from the 1920s, 1970s and 2010, are sited at the Liverpool University's School of Civil Engineering and Built Environment and are being monitored, with the resulting data collected over a period of five years.

The Wienerberger inline solar panels were fitted above three types of roofing membrane:

- vapour permeable (LR – Glidevale's Protect VP300)
- air and vapour permeable (LR – Glidevale's Protect Viking Air)
- and non-permeable (HR - Glidevale's Protect A1 Solar).

Frankie Fletcher, Technical Compliance Manager for Roof & Façade at Wienerberger, explains, "Inline solar systems are classed as airtight when they are installed to perform as part of the roof, so we need to understand if the space underneath the solar array will be ventilated and whether there is any impact from the buildup on condensation. Inline solar panels are also fitted alongside tiles that are air open, but don't usually cover the whole roof, for example on the north side of a roof. At the moment, the understanding is that inline solar panels perform in the same way as fibre cement tiles, but we need the data to back that up."

Airtight Space

Frankie continues, "Inline solar arrays are not air permeable so the space between a non-permeable underlay and the solar panels should be sufficiently airtight to not allow moisture to build up. That's why we recommend using Glidevale's Protect A1 Solar, to prevent moist air coming into that space. Now, with the data coming from the Renatus project we'll have the evidence to support that understanding."

Review of BS5250

Ben Rowlands, NFRC Technical Manager for Slating and Tiling and the Chair of NFRC Pitched Roof Solar Committee, explained how the evidence and conclusions from Renatus will also feed into the review of British Standard 5250 *Management of Moisture in Buildings*, due to start next year.

He commented "This information will be really valuable for the industry. It will help provide clear guidance on how these retrofit and new build solar roof solutions should be installed, backed up with clear data to ensure that all roofs are fitted according to the Standards."

Dr Hu Du, senior lecturer in Building Services and Architectural Engineering who is leading the Renatus project, explained how 24 sensors were calibrated and fitted in September 2024 across the three roof build ups to collect the data, with four sensors sitting under the solar PV panels, and four underneath the roof tiles on each of the three houses.

The first set of results will be analysed in May this year, with a phase one report being published in September 2025.

Industry Training Boards Need Fundamental Reset says Farmer

Calling for a "fundamental reset" of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), a report by Mark Farmer, *Transforming the Construction Workforce 2023 Industry Training Boards (ITB) Review* was published in January by the Department for Education.

The review, by the author of the 2016 *Modernise or Die*, looked at CITB's effectiveness as well as that of twin organisation, the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB).

In a withering conclusion, Farmer says, on the face of it, the current impact of CITB does not justify their existence. He says there is a "need for a fundamental reset with activities, key capabilities, and leadership all 'root and branch' reviewed with a ruthless focus turned purely to addressing the future workforce resiliency and quantum challenge."

Keeping the Boards is recommended but a "wholesale transformation", is also needed, the report says. It suggests merging the two boards and that models applied in the engineering sectors could be duplicated in construction sectors. A new body is envisaged, acting as a workforce development agency to improve training with specialist, sub-sector-specific teams.

Farmer adds the training boards should comply with spending rules as they are part of government, as Arms Length Bodies. Funding should be made more accountable, with key performance indicators linked to all objectives. Farmer says, "Poor performance going forward should not have the protection of another full ITB review cycle period but instead should be subject to early intervention by government and industry."



Farmer criticises the ability of CITB to help retain workers and suggests ending ringfencing the Apprenticeship Levy (now called the Growth & Skills fund) and using the money more flexibly for training and upskilling. A modular approach would train and upskill construction workers faster and help retention, he adds. Farmer recommends training trainers and assessors as a priority.

There's also a recommendation to focus more on competency, introducing a digital passport to track the competencies of workers – which Farmer acknowledges is a step towards licensing in anything but name.



NBP New Hemel Hempstead Super Depot Opens



Northern Building Plastics (NBP) has opened a fifth new super depot serving the South of England.

The depot, in Hemel Hempstead, marks NBP's first physical presence in the South of England and aims to repeat the success of its existing Bolton, Leeds, Birtley and Hinckley super depots.

A 25,000 sq ft facility, situated just off Junction 8 of the M1, has the capacity to hold a range of products on site and key product lines include fascia, soffit, guttering, drainage and cladding. It will operate a fleet of up to 20 vehicles to service deliveries across the south of England, with London, the South-East and as far down as Cornwall, all part of the new expanded territory.

Growth Strategy

NBP's Chief Executive Officer Judah Wilson attended the official opening on 17 February. He said: "The opening of Hemel Hempstead marks a significant milestone in the nationwide growth strategy of Northern Building Plastics.

"It's perfect timing to extend NBP's service right across the south of England and the new location has been strategically selected to allow us to deliver to London and the surrounding areas with deliveries from 6.30am.

"We've seen demand grow from our existing customers in the South East who we were delivering to from the Midlands. The new depot will enable us to get their materials on site quicker, enabling them to stay on site and get on with the job."

Super Depot

The new super depot will enable NBP to continue its growth, take on more customers and has created 22 new jobs.

NBP says it is already planning the roll-out of further super depots, with a number of suitable locations under consideration across the UK.

Applications Open for BMI's Apprentice of the Year Contest



Applications are open for the 2025 BMI Apprentice of the Year competition. Now in its eighth year, the competition offers a chance for roofing apprentices to show off their skills and passion for the industry, as well as meet industry experts, and be in with the chance to win an impressive £1000 cash prize and three years' worth of training opportunities.

Up to 20 apprentices will be chosen to take part in the BMI Apprentice of the Year final which will be held 23rd and 24th July 2025 at the BMI Academy in Gloucestershire, hosted by BMI UK & Ireland, manufacturer of roofing brands Redland and Icopal.

Over two days, pitched and flat roofing apprentices will be challenged to show off the skills needed to excel in a career in roofing. This covers technical ability, but also teamwork, presentation skills, marketing and commercial acumen.

Two winners will be chosen: one in flat roofing and one in pitched roofing. The judging panel will be made up of industry leaders who will assess the apprentices' skills on the day and provide coaching to improve their abilities.

Fraser Biles, Commercial Director at BMI said: "The BMI Apprentice of the Year competition is a highlight in our calendar because we get to meet the best of the UK's future roofers. We're looking for the whole package: someone who will be a great representative for the industry in the future.

"The average age of people in the construction industry is on the rise, amplifying the skills shortage that is going to start hampering economic growth. So it's more important than ever that we encourage new people to join and excel in roofing."

The deadline for entries is 14 April 2025, with the shortlist announced in May. Find out more and apply: bmigroup.com/uk/aoty

MCRMA Membership Expands with Four More New Members

The industry association representing the metal building envelope sector, the MCRMA, has announced four new members. The association has welcomed two companies to its system manufacturers category – Bailey Total Building Envelope, a company which designs and manufactures architectural facades and roofing systems, and GL Profiles, a manufacturer of roofing and cladding profiles and flashings, rainwater goods and bespoke architectural fabrications.

Joining the MCRMA's component manufacturers membership group is metal roof and gutter refurbishments systems specialist Sharmans. And the fourth new member is UKWS, a roofing and cladding contractor specialising in the industrial, retail and commercial sectors.

All four companies add to the strength and breadth of the MCRMA's membership base. The addition of four new members increases the MCRMA's membership to 55 businesses. These operate at all stages of the metal cladding and roofing supply chain, including systems manufacturers, component manufacturers, design and testing specialists and installers.

Find out more on the MCRMA at www.mcrma.co.uk.

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Bitumen Flat Roofing Trade Association Launched



Key industry manufacturers and suppliers have founded and launched the Bitumen Flat Roofing Association (BFRA) to advance industry collaboration, stakeholder competency, quality standards and best practices.

Keen to provide a unified voice for the bitumen flat roofing sector and best represent the individuals and organisations across the industry, the 14 founding members are Alumasc, Axter, Bauder, BMI Group, Danosa, Garland, ICB, IKO, Langley Waterproofing Systems, Mapei, Moy Materials, Rose Roofing, Sika, and Soprema.

Unify Interests

BFRA is led by Chair Shaun Lotay, Technical Director at Langley Waterproofing Systems, Vice-Chair Richard Aldred, Head of Compliance and Technical Services at Sika, and Association Secretary Phillip Wilcox-Moore, Managing Director of Axter.

The association has established a technical working group to tackle issues and challenges impacting the bitumen flat roofing industry, such as British Standard updates to BS 8217 and BS 8747, in addition to the development of a comprehensive bitumen flat roofing technical guide.

BFRA Chair, Shaun Lotay, said: "RBMs account for more than 50% of flat roofing installations, yet, until now, there hasn't been a dedicated trade association representing this technology for well over 10 years.

"Our mission is to unite experts involved in manufacturing, designing, specifying, and installing RBMs. By bringing together stakeholders, the BFRA ensures that RBM systems are consistently chosen, installed, and maintained to the highest possible standards across manufacturing, certification, training, sustainability, and workmanship."

Best Practice

The drive for a unified voice was echoed by BFRA Vice Chair, Richard Aldred. He said: "The bitumen industry, until recently, has not been well represented in the UK. Whilst respected single ply, mastic asphalt, and liquid waterproofing trade associations have been active, the bitumen sector has not, which is unacceptable considering that bitumen waterproofing systems are extensively used.

"A key focus of the association will be to provide clear, up to date, and agreed best practice information to members so that they can reference quality standards in any work they do. I am very keen to ensure that our members feel the association is worthy of their time and investment, so I will be working hard to ensure that members' interests are served, and they feel they are getting value out of being a part of this association."

Compliance

BFRA Secretary, Phillip Wilcox-Moore, said: "A trade association solely representing the best interests of bitumen flat roofing technology is well overdue. Our inability to speak with one unified voice has been unfavourable over recent years. The BFRA is looking forward to deliver a consistent and compliant message, promote our technology, and ensure its sustainable future.

Kingspan Completes £44m Nordic Waterproofing Acquisition

Kingspan Holdings (IRL) Ltd completed a £44m cash buyout of Nordic Waterproofing Holding AB on 6 March.

Ireland-headquartered Kingspan bought all shares in Nordic Waterproofing for £13.30 in cash per share (SEK 182.50).

Founded in 2011 as a result of a merger between Swedish businesses Trelleborg and Lemminkäinen, Nordic Waterproofing is a major supplier of waterproofing in northern Europe and owns installer subsidiaries in Scandinavia.

No Changes

Kingspan says it "places great value" on Nordic Waterproofing's management and employees. There are currently no plans to make any changes that could affect Nordic Waterproofing's 1,200 employees, its organisation or operational sites.

The buyout is also not expected to result in any material changes for Kingspan's management, employees, organisation, or operational sites.



Paul Griffiths Appointed Regional Specification Manager at Accuroof

Accuroof has appointed Paul Griffiths as the new Regional Specification Manager for the Southwest of England. He joins the team with 40 years of experience mostly in roofing, and takes over from Ian Hayward who retired.



Paul is well-acquainted with the Accuroof business, having most recently worked at Recticel and Sika. Over the years, he has partnered with the Accuroof team on numerous projects.

"We are thrilled to appoint someone with the experience and calibre of Paul Griffiths to this role. His understanding of the market, our business, and our customer base in the Southwest will facilitate a smooth transition. I am confident that he will continue to build on the excellent work of his predecessor, Ian Hayward, in growing our business in the Southwest," stated Ian Dryden, National Sales Manager for Accuroof.

Paul Griffiths said, "I am excited to be part of the Accuroof team. I have known the team for a long time, and they are dedicated professionals doing excellent work in the roofing market.

"My role will involve collaborating with both architects and contractors to provide product training and specifications for our flat roofing products. Overall, I aim to generate new inquiries to help grow our business in the Southwest region."





A Palace to Remember: The Historic Roof Restoration of Blenheim Palace

Roofing Today was thrilled, as one of only a handful of media, to recently be given access to an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the monumental £12 million roof restoration project at Blenheim Palace - the most ambitious undertaking in the history of Britain's Greatest Palace.

Here, Russell Blackaller, himself an expert heritage roofer and owner of Heritage Roofing Southwest, describes the scale of the project, what it involves and the numerous multifaceted considerations facing those leading the task.



"It is our policy not to hide scaffolding away from our visitors; we're proud of the conservation work we are doing and our visitors are very interested in what's happening – many of whom have long-standing and personal connections to Blenheim Palace."

Now, the Palace is about to embark on one of the most ambitious restoration projects in its history—the complete replacement of the Great Hall's roof.



The current one-acre sized roof echoes the architectural structure of the whole Palace, in that it consists of a series of smaller roofs, first constructed in lead.

The United Kingdom is home to some of the most globally recognized architectural wonders. From Stonehenge to Hadrian's Wall, these historic landmarks chart a timeline of human ingenuity, craftsmanship, and resilience. Weaving through centuries of history, we arrive at castles, cathedrals, and palaces, each standing as a testament to their era's finest artisans.

Standing out among these grand structures is Blenheim Palace, built in 1705-1722 by Queen Anne and gifted to the Duke of Marlborough to celebrate his victory over the French at the Battle of Blenheim, ending the War of the Spanish Succession. Blenheim Palace is now designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and remains one of the country's greatest gems.

Though known to many nowadays as the birthplace of WWII leader Sir Winston Churchill, the younger son of the 7th Duke of Marlborough (the 12th Duke is still in residence today), Blenheim's grandeur extends beyond its historical significance. It is a masterpiece of Baroque architecture, adorned with elaborate stonework, intricate detailing, and one of the most breathtaking ceiling paintings in the country.

Painted in the early 18th century by Sir James Thornhill, the Great Hall ceiling captures the eye with its sheer scale, masterful use of perspective, and striking allegorical scenes of the 1st Duke kneeling to Britannia, offering up his victorious Battle plan. This invaluable painting, already suffering from hairline cracks from structural movement, now has substantial rainwater damage from the Great Hall's leaking roof.

The failing Great Hall roof was last replaced 75 years ago, and because the ceiling is suspended directly underneath it with no barrier between the roof and the ceiling's plaster and lathe, the impact of its deterioration is obvious. Water ingress has tracked straight through to the ceiling, visibly staining the underside's surrounding windows' stonework, creating mould growth and threatening the priceless artworks.



The Great Hall ceiling captures the eye with its sheer scale, masterful use of perspective, and striking allegorical scenes.

Now, the Palace is about to embark on one of the most ambitious restoration projects in its history—the complete replacement of the Great Hall's roof. Kelly O'Driscoll, Head of Built Heritage at Blenheim Palace is leading the two-year, £12m roof restoration project. The process of erecting the extensive scaffolding needed began in January and will be completed by May. Kelly commented that this, in itself, involved comprehensive planning to execute as all the restoration work will be done while the Palace remains open to its annual two million visitors as well as continuing with a full calendar of events.

"It is our policy not to hide scaffolding away from our visitors; we're proud of the conservation work we are doing and our visitors are very interested in what's happening – many of whom have long-standing and personal connections to Blenheim Palace," says Kelly.

"We are very grateful for the support we receive from our visitor guests. All the conservation work is being funded by Blenheim and part of that comes from visitor receipts. Including our guests in the developments here is our way of expressing our gratitude to them for their support."

Staying Open Safely

Kelly explains that the recent re-roof of Blenheim's Orangery restaurant, overhauling and replacing the glass roof with Westmoreland slate, as it was believed to be originally, while keeping the facility open, was a good trial bed for their approach to the more major Great Hall roof restoration.

"Undertaking this work is made even more complex while the Palace remains open to our guests. Their safety is paramount and working out the best way to remain operational is something we have carefully trialled here at Blenheim to manage the safety of our visitors, 600-strong staff and contractors."

Kelly, who took up the lead on the Palace's annual £4m conservation programme four years ago, has also in that time put together a conservation strategy for the whole building, assembling a team of four to help deliver the £40m-£60m worth of goals drawn up for the next decade. This strategic plan started with a building-wide survey and as Kelly explained: "The Great Hall roof is actually the most surveyed part of the whole Palace. It was surveyed 10 years ago and it was concluded then that restoration works were urgent."



On the Great Hall roof, an original gabled two pitch lead roof remains, alongside which is two hip end roofs covered with random size Welsh slate and separated with a lead valley gutter. The whole roof area is surrounded with a stone parapet



The Great Hall sand cast lead roof with hollow roll detailing, crowned with two golden orbs. The roof has been weld patched in numerous areas over the years.

To put it into perspective, the last major work on this part of the Palace was completed nearly 200 years ago, and many of the Great Hall's structural components may date back to the palace's original 1700s construction.

The current one-acre sized roof echoes the architectural structure of the whole Palace, in that it consists of a series of smaller roofs, first constructed in lead. Many of these were replaced with slate in the 19th century as the lead was sold off to fund repairs.

The Great Hall Roof

On the Great Hall roof, an original gabled two pitch lead roof remains, alongside which is two hip end roofs covered with random size Welsh slate and separated with a lead valley gutter. The whole roof area is surrounded with a stone parapet behind which are lead gullies draining into six large lead downpipes via sumps. On the northern and southern elevations, the stonework rises up, crowned with two magnificent golden orbs supported by two statues of Britannia.

The lead roof is a masterpiece of traditional British construction techniques. The covering consists of 3-4mm thick, sand-cast lead bays, which were likely cast on site, skilfully joined using hollow roll detailing, a method designed to allow for natural expansion and contraction whilst removing the use of wood core roll. All the lead bays will have a chalk slurry painted to the underside to provide protection from any oak, an age old system before the introduction of builders paper and geotextile membranes. This lead has been regularly repaired over the past century with many welded patches visible.

Beneath the lead covering lies a sarking layer of vertical English oak planks, an age-old method that provides structural integrity while allowing the building to "breathe". Interestingly, parts of these planks appear to have been lime-washed on the underside,



Edward has re-designed this area, adding vertical timbers from the existing trusses to simplify the roof to just two elevations with a single hip, removing the valley and also increasing the pitch to improve drainage.



Project architect, Edward Lewis from Donald Insall Associates, lifts a lead panel to demonstrate how rainwater is being trapped under the laps.

-II an early technique adopted to help protect against insects and moisture.

Architect, Edward Lewis from Donald Insall Associates, is leading the Great Hall project. He explained that several factors have led to the roof's urgent need for restoration. The lead covering itself has come to the end of its life, with failed fixings, galvanised nails, insufficient laps and capillary action now resulting in damp structural timbers.

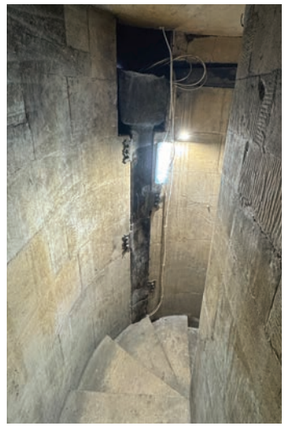
The lead covering is visibly contaminated with red oxide stains, the exact cause of which Edward is unsure. He says it could be the result of bi-metallic action, the lead reacting with the oak resin in the sarking, or general pollution. Given the Palace's location in rural Oxfordshire, it is unlikely to be caused by aircraft fuel pollution, but reaction to airborne chemicals from agricultural spraying cannot be ruled out.

On the underside of the roof there is a well ventilated roof space with an impressive original oak structure consisting of a marvel of king post trusses and purlins. While damp, these timbers are surprisingly intact, probably due to the degree of ventilation present from louvered openings and the lime wash coating referred to above. Edward says that there is also a "bodged" tie-beam running into the parapets, with a series of joists from the trusses now rotting and damp from the leaking roof. Edward has re-designed this area, adding vertical timbers from the existing trusses to simplify the roof to just two elevations with a single hip, also increasing the pitch to improve drainage. The re-roof to this area will be using Welsh slate and Edward is expecting around 60% of existing slates to be salvageable. After previous examinations it was concluded that this was how the original roof structure was built before being redesigned later on.

The other major driver of the roof's restoration is standing water in the roof's lead gullies and the inadequate 340 metre drainage system.



The whole drainage system has been redesigned for the restoration including all outlets and sumps.



The impressive 30m lead downpipes set into the spiral staircase to the roof.



Kelly O'Driscoll, Head of Built Heritage at Blenheim Palace explains the scope of the restoration project.

Standing Water

The other major driver of the roof's restoration is standing water in the roof's lead gullies and the inadequate 340 metre drainage system. Coping with the 30 metre high Great Hall roof's rainfall, as well as being fed rainwater from lower roofs, Edward estimates the six downpipes - just four of which are currently operational - are around 300% under capacity.

While work is taking place, a temporary drainage system will operate, emptying into a holding tank positioned in the courtyard below, which will be periodically discharged into Blenheim's surrounding 2000 acre estate.

Conservation and Climate

This part of the project highlights a larger issue: the growing importance of heritage conservation in an era of climate change. Edward commented, "There's a lot to be taken into consideration in the design, redesigning to standards, fire safety, and energy efficiency and also conserving the stonework. We're not just aiming to conserve however, we need to adapt for the intense rainfall of the changing climate."

Edward has re-modelled the drainage system, increasing capacity to cope with 1-in-500-year rainfall events and included a complete rebuild of the entire system to ensure falls, outlets and sumps are to standard.

The parapet will even have a state-of-the-art heating system install to deal with snow fall building up in the gullies and causing it to fail.

Edward's portfolio includes working on such high profile projects as Big Ben, the Houses of Commons and Hampton Court Palace, so he's experienced in balancing the sometimes opposing forces of conservation with modern requirements.

The complexity of achieving this balance on a project of this scale is also apparent in the treatment of the lead roof. The lead sheeting cannot simply be replaced with modern factory-produced alternatives. Instead, every ounce will be faithfully removed, tested, analysed and recycled using traditional sand-casting methods, ensuring the new roof retains its historical integrity.

Likewise, the two golden orbs that top the roof will be removed, the copper restored before being re-guilded in 23.5 carat English gold. While 24 carat gold is available in Italy, Edward feels that English gold is brighter and more authentic.



The lead sheeting cannot simply be replaced with modern factory-produced alternatives. Instead, every ounce will be faithfully removed, tested, analysed and recycled using traditional sand-casting methods, ensuring the new roof retains its historical integrity.

For the lead welding on this project, oxy acetylene torches will be used as Edward says they are less polluting to the surrounding material despite the modern move to propane in industry at large. It's meant the development of a stringent hot works policy to reassure insurers who cover the Palace to the tune of £400 million.

In the leaking roof space, currently sporting bright yellow tubs to catch the drips, greater concessions are necessary, preserving the oak sarking where possible, but replacing sections that have deteriorated beyond repair with modern softwood. No insulation has been incorporated into the design to avoid any condensation risk. The lime wash will be re-instated on all timbers.

To deliver these tasks, specialist conservation contractors DBR Limited, Berryleadworks, and stone conservation experts have been brought in, each selected for their conservation experience and mastery of traditional craftsmanship.

The Future of Blenheim's Roof

When completed, the newly restored Great Hall roof will stand as a triumph of traditional skills and modern innovation, ensuring that Blenheim Palace's most treasured interior artworks remain protected for generations to come.

Blenheim Palace is not just a monument to history—it is a living structure, adapting and evolving to meet the challenges of the modern world.

As restorations like this push the boundaries of heritage roofing, they set new benchmarks for how we approach the maintenance and preservation of our country's most iconic landmarks. In many ways, this roof restoration is not just about replacing old materials. It is about ensuring that history, artistry, and craftsmanship remain intact for the next 300 years.

And when it comes to preserving the past for the future—what could be more important than that? III



The absence of a barrier between the underside of the lathe and plaster ceiling and damp roofspace puts the ceilings's priceless painting at severe risk.



The underside of the Great Hall lead roof is a well ventilated space with an impressive original oak structure consisting of a marvel of king post trusses and purlins - all now suffering from the leaking roof covering.



Don’t Cut Corners with Slate-and-a-Half

With increasingly complex roofing designs, the demand for slate-and-a-half is rapidly growing, meaning sourcing additional pallets can sometimes be difficult. Here, Steven Pearson, UK Director at CUPA PIZARRAS looks at slate-and-a-half in more detail and why it is important to install it efficiently.



In recent years, roof designs have become significantly more complex, with dormer windows, false chimneys, flue penetrations and solar panels becoming more common. As a result, greater consideration must be taken to ensure that the roof slate around these types of features is both secure and also adheres to the UK regulations.

The Regulations

In the UK, contractors must conform to BS5534, which is the code of practice for slating and tiling and is a requirement of most roofing product manufacturers’ warranties. With regards to verges, the standard states:

> “Verges […] should be detailed with a slate and either a slate-and-a-half or half slate in alternate courses (not less than 150mm in width).”

The standard does give allowance for both the use of slate-and-a-half sizes and manually cut half width slates. However, it is important that the half widths being cut by hand are wide and strong enough for the holes and fixings required at verges and abutments, and in other exposed areas of the roof. If a half slate is too small to fix with an adequate number of copper clouts this could lead to water ingress or allow wind lifting.

This means that it is not possible to manually cut a half slate from a standard 500 x 250 mm slate – the size most commonly used in the UK – as it would not be wide enough to install effectively and also meet the UK requirements.

Slate-and-a-Half

As such, for many contractors, the logical solution for verges and abutments is to rely on the slate-and-a-half option, which is guaranteed to comply with the British Standard.

By using slate-and-a-half, contractors can offset roofing patterns precisely and accurately, easily creating the broken bond look so that there are no straight lines running vertically across courses. Furthermore, by sourcing slate-and-a-half sizes from the same manufacturer, and the same quarry where possible, it is possible to maintain the same aesthetic throughout.

Availability

However, as roof designs have become more complex the demand for-slate-and-a-half has increased, impacting both cost and availability. Despite growing demand, it is not a simple task for manufacturers to increase capacity to match - as it is far harder to produce when compared to standard slate sizes.

Like regular natural slates, slate-and-a-half products are extracted from specific quarries and roughly cut into large blocks that are later hand split into individual slates. Yet extracting larger blocks of slate is a far more challenging as it can crack during the extraction and cutting process, and it can also be difficult for quarries to find outcrops of rock big enough to extract blocks of the required size.

As a result, it has become the norm within the industry that manufacturers will supply a set number of slate-and-a-half pallets per order and it is not possible to buy additional pallets separately.

Use it Wisely

Due to the product being in short supply, before starting an installation, it is crucial that contractors carefully analyse the design and build of a roof to make sure that they use their slate-and-a-half product efficiently and without waste. Where possible, consider where slates can be hand cut and still conform to the British Standard, using this method in order to conserve slate-and-a-half for where it is needed most.

The NFRC suggests in its Guidance Note 60 (GN60) to utilise other larger slates at the verge alongside compliant self-cut halfs. For example, when using standard 500 x 250 mm slates you could alternate between larger 500 x 300 mm slates and self-cut 500 x 175 mm slates at the verge. This method maintains the required side lap without affecting the appearance of the verge, while ensuring that each slate is compliant with BS5534. This method is also suitable when using 400 x 250 mm slates, where 400 x 300 mm slates are available. However, the difficulty with this method is that it relies on the use of additional wider slates, such as 500 x 300mm and 400 x 300mm wide slates, which for slate producers are equally as difficult to produce as regular 500 x 375mm slate-and-a-half.

Engage Early with a Trusted Manufacturer

The best way to navigate these issues, is to engage early with a trusted manufacturer that can supply a range of slate sizes, guaranteed to be sourced from the same quarry to provide an ideal quality and colour match. CUPA PIZARRAS owns all 20 source quarries from which our slates are produced and as such, we provide a unique bar code on every pallet that details key information about the slate including product name, selection, technical data, quarry of origin and production date. This ensures that if a roof needs to be replaced or fixed in the future, the exact slate from the same quarry can be sourced and used again, but it is also useful in scenarios where various sizes of slate that match are required. We are also continually investing in our mines and quarries and are able, in some quarries, to increase the amount of slate-and-a-half produced.

For many contractors, the logical solution for verges and abutments is to rely on the slate-and-a-half option, which is guaranteed to comply with the British Standard.



As roof designs continue to become ever more ambitious, it has never been more important to carefully plan well in advance and to consider how to effectively and efficiently use slates. This is not only to make sure that an installation is compliant with the British Standards – and therefore weatherproof – but to ensure projects do not run out of crucial slate-and-a-half sizes mid-way through.

To speak to your local CUPA PIZARRAS Technical Sales Manager about your upcoming roofing project and its requirements or for more information about CUPA PIZARRAS, visit: https://www.cupapizarras.com/uk/natural-slate-roofing/.



How Long Can I Leave a Pitched Roof Membrane Exposed?

It's one of the most common questions put to the A.Proctor Group technical team: the pitched roof underlay has been installed but the project is delayed, or the roof covering is on an extended lead time. How long can the membrane be left exposed? Sue Menmuir, Technical Advisor, explains what you need to know and gives some best practice advice.





Suggested maximum exposure times for pitched roof underlays can vary by product, but the advice we typically offer at the A.Proctor Group is three months. That's the straightforward answer. However, it's worth digging into why we say that, as it helps with understanding more about the properties of different membrane products.

Recap: what does a pitched roof underlay do?

A 'breathable' membrane is more accurately referred to as a low resistance (LR) membrane. It allows the passage of moisture vapour from inside to outside, reducing condensation risk in the roof space.

Some underlays, like Proctor Air®, also allow air to pass through them. These are known as air permeable, low resistance (APLR) membranes. Benefits of an APLR membrane include better and more uniform ventilation of the roof space, without the need for well-sealed ceilings or eaves/ridge ventilation solutions.

In terms of water resistance, the chosen LR or APLR underlay is a secondary line of defence. Water can get into the space below a tile or slate roof finish, so an underlay must also be capable of resisting water ingress, in addition to allowing vapour (and possibly air) to pass through it.

Is a pitched roof underlay waterproof?

As there is an inevitable period during installation of a roofing system where the underlay is in place with no covering to protect it, a product has to be capable of providing some temporary weather protection – with the emphasis on temporary.

In terms of water resistance, the chosen LR or APLR underlay is a secondary line of defence. Water can get into the space below a tile or slate roof finish, so an underlay must also be capable of resisting water ingress, in addition to allowing vapour (and possibly air) to pass through it.



As a secondary defence, there is always a possibility for membranes to allow water ingress, because they are not waterproof. They are water resistant.

NFRC Technical Bulletin TB06 is referenced in BS 5534, the code of practice for slating and tiling. It describes fitness for purpose of pitched roof underlays and says, "a water hold out over 1m when tested to BS EN 20811 will be adequate. Class W1 membranes are to be preferred as defined in BS EN 13589-1."

(*Note*: since the withdrawal of BS EN 20811 in 2018, the relevant test standard is now BS EN ISO 811.) II-



The combination of these two test results gives a realistic overview of a membrane's performance. It's important to check both the BS EN 13589-1 classification of a membrane, and its declared hydrostatic head (water hold out). A product might achieve a W1 classification, but not the 1m hydrostatic head.

So the three month recommendation is all about water resistance?

Broadly speaking, yes. However, the recommended maximum exposure of three months is actually about protection from UV, rather than direct weather protection.

This is because exposure to UV can degrade a membrane's performance over time; beyond three months is the point at which water hold out performance can start to become affected. We have carried out internal testing that shows between six and nine months of exposure can cause a membrane's BS EN 13589-1 classification to drop from W1 to W2.

What other best practice recommendations can I follow?

Ultimately, a pitched roof underlay should be left exposed for as little time as possible. Consider the specifics of the site, the type of weather you expect, and the potential knock-on effects if water was to reach the inside of the building.

If a membrane has been left exposed and particularly bad weather is forecast, then use temporary protection like a tarpaulin – especially in refurbishment projects where the building is occupied or you need to protect internal finishes from water damage.

There will always be examples of sites where a membrane has been left exposed for months, or even years, with no issue. Maybe the site is particularly sheltered, or the roof is steeply pitched and sheds water well. There is no universal answer and, while we offer the best general advice we can, there is no substitute for project-specific common sense.



Ultimately, a pitched roof underlay should be left exposed for as little time as possible. Consider the specifics of the site, the type of weather you expect, and the potential knock-on effects if water was to reach the inside of the building.

Are there any longer-term concerns about membrane performance?

In many ways, pitched roof underlays have been a victim of their own success. It can take just one day of the wrong sort of weather to cause water ingress. It may not even be the fault of the membrane or the length of exposure, if water is blown up the overlaps through untaped joints.

Added to this, the climate is changing, leading to more frequent and more intense periods of rainfall. The urgent need for a fresh approach to our built environment was highlighted at the start of this year with the publication of new recommendations by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Among the data the report shares, UK winters are anticipated to be 30% wetter than in 1990, by 2070. Building fabric generally, and roofs in particular, therefore need to be designed, specified and constructed for the future climate.



They must be capable of protecting people and buildings from more extreme weather.

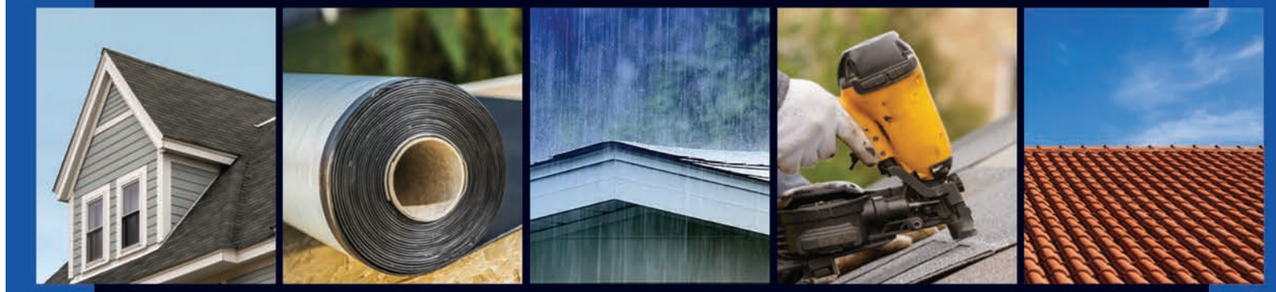
As a manufacturer, when we design a product like Proctor Air, we do so with the future in mind. We are continually evaluating and seeking to understand what issues could occur with underlays. Water ingress can occur for a host of reasons, all of which feed into our product development process, and into what we communicate to the industry through articles like this one.

Sue Menmuir speaks more about this topic on episode 7 of The Proctor Podcast. Listen to the complete discussion: https://www.youtube.com/@proctorgroup/videos.



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Roofing Training Gets Underway at the National Construction College

The roof training department at CITB National Construction College (NCC) England East and Scotland colleges welcome all roofing apprentices to start their construction training with various start dates available this year.

At NCC England East (Norfolk), the first cohort of apprentices started their roofing apprenticeship standard in February 2025 and the college, based near Kings Lynn, will be welcoming two more cohorts of roofing apprentices later this year, in July and October.

The roofing students are being taught by experienced roofer, Ian Cook, who worked for GHB Roofing in Ipswich for many years and has also run his own roofing business.

Ian said, "I'm so excited to be teaching these young people. As soon as I start talking to them about roofing, I get so passionate I have to remind myself to slow down. They don't have to know everything about roofing all at once!"

The roofing apprentices come to NCC for training in nine, two-week blocks, over 18 months. In between the training blocks, they 'earn while they learn' with their employers, and put together a portfolio showcasing the work they have done and the skills they have learned. The final confirmation of their learning and apprenticeship journey is by completing an End Point Assessment (EPA) where their knowledge, skills and behaviours are assessed by means of a knowledge assessment, skills observation and professional discussion.

Recently NCC England East has seen significant investment offering a new state of the art gym, welfare facilities where learners can play pool, game, and relax. They can sign up for evening and weekend activities arranged off site by the experienced supportive Welfare team available 24/7. There's also



fantastic onsite accommodation and catering (including Costa) available.

Ian explains, "It's great for the apprentices who stay here. There's a gym, games room, tv with Xbox and Playstation and other arranged activities. All the meals are catered for them – they're so well looked after. It's a big plus for employers sending apprentices who are teenagers who might not have been away from home before."

In their first two weeks of training, so far Ian has covered the all-important health and safety, and some basic working practices, such as using tools.

Ian looks back to his own start in the roofing industry as a labourer where he learned from the experienced 'ganger' roofers.

"I thought, 'this is it for me, I'll go for it'", Ian enthuses, "and I never looked back. I learned as much as I could, and eventually I became very neat and was told I had a talent for it."

When Ian moved to GHB Roofing he got his NVQ through onsite assessment visits made by a tutor. "I would talk so much with the tutor; I soaked up everything I could about roofing techniques. I also learned so much because there was a massive variety of work – everything from porches to big heritage roofs and new builds, as well as flat roofing."

Ian's experience has made him appreciate the apprenticeship journey and value the off-the-job opportunity to focus on the learning students get at Bircham.

I want to teach them everything they will need to know and come across, to be the best roofers they can be and set the standard for the next generation.



Ian comments, "I like to teach the theory behind different roofing skills and techniques. These young roofers need to know what they're doing and understand why they do it, so they can work out if something's wrong and how to put it right.

"Nothing is ever perfect in the real world of roofing. You come across awkward details, characterful (but not straight) ridges, and the apprentices need to learn how to adapt and find a way to complete the roof to a high standard. That's why it's so important that they have the theoretical understanding.

"They also need to speak to homeowners or clients knowledgeably so that they understand the job their roofer is doing."

Challenges of Learning

Ian has recently achieved his Level 3 Certificate in Education and is now working towards his Level 5 Certificate. So, he too understands and empathises with his learners.

He says, "Before doing my teaching qualification and SMSTS, the last time I had written anything down was on a piece of felt. If I needed to remember it, I would take a photo on my phone!"



It means Ian is very aware of the challenges of learning: "Like me, the students need to get used to the classroom elements of the training, brush up on the standards like BS5534 and 'unlearn' some bad habits picked up on site.

"When we talk, I put myself back on the scaffold and see the students as I would have my labourers. I want to teach them everything they will need to know and come across, to be the best roofers they can be and set the standard for the next generation," Ian ends.

Get in Touch

Ross Ward, Programme Manager for Construction and Specialist Build at NCC England East, said, "Ian has a vast amount of industry experience in roofing and is eager to share his knowledge and skills with the next generation of roofers. This is a fantastic opportunity to be able to expand our curriculum offer here at Bircham to meet industry demand and we look forward to supporting employers and building long term relationships in order to bridge the required skills gap. As we welcome Ian and Roof, Slating and Tiling we are also looking at further expansion of our curriculum in offering the Roof, Sheeting and Cladding apprentice pathway as well, and we would welcome communications from industry in supporting them with their training needs."

To find out more email John Woodfine: john.woodfine@citb.co.uk.



Leah Stewart: A Woman Excelling in Roofing

Crowned BMI Redland Apprentice of the Year 2024 for pitched roofing, Leah Stewart became the first woman roofer to receive the prestigious accolade. Since the competition, which took place at the BMI Academy, Leah remains committed to learning – both through her roofing apprenticeship and her part-time quantity surveying course, while also working at her family-run firm, Roof & Fibre. Amidst all of her commitments, Leah found time to catch up with Roofing Today and tell us about her career progress since AotY24, and what her future holds.



Leah Stewart receiving the BMI Apprentice of the Year Award in 2024 from Fraser Biles, BMI Sales Director and Meghan Waller, BMI Marketing Director.

Leah Stewart is an apprentice roofer at her family-run firm, Roof & Fibre – which was established by her father almost two decades ago.

Leah has been able to bring fresh energy into the business, backed by her learning on the job and in the classroom as an apprentice. Now in the second year of her apprenticeship, she's showing the roofing world what she brings to the table.

Taking part – and then winning - BMI Redland Apprentice of the Year 2024 was a milestone move for Leah, as she explains, "The competition was an amazing experience to be involved in, and I never expected to win it at all. It's certainly something I'll never forget, and to be the first female winner makes the win even more amazing.

On my college course, it's all men, and that's something I expected going into it, but I've never felt out of place and I've found it to always be very welcoming.

"Going into the competition, I didn't really know what to expect, but it was a great experience, and I was able to really push myself, especially in areas like presenting, which is something I haven't had that much exposure to. But the support from BMI and the judges was really good and I learned so much.

"In the days after I won, I saw it being posted all over LinkedIn, I was in the local newspapers, on my college website and even did some radio interviews. The reception was phenomenal, which just goes to show what recognition the award has in the industry.

A Welcome Woman in Roofing

Leah's journey as a woman in roofing has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for her, and although the people on the tools are mostly men, this has not been a particular issue to her. She says, "There's no getting away from the fact that roofing is a male dominated industry. On my college course, it's all men, and that's something I expected going into it, but I've never felt out of place and I've found it to always be very welcoming – it has been a great experience so far.

"I'm one-and-a-half years into my apprenticeship now, but I've been involved in the business for a little longer than that, having worked in the office since 2019. Getting into the apprenticeship was really a natural next step and is something my dad suggested to me. Alongside the roofing apprenticeship, I'm now also doing a quantity surveying course part-time, and getting out on jobs too, so I'm learning lots and really enjoying it all."

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The 2024 BMI Apprentice of the Year participants pictured at BMI's Academy in South Cerney, Gloucestershire.

Leah's father has been a big inspiration for her, motivating her to learn all she can to further the family's business.

Hard Work and Motivation

Leah said, "Growing up, we didn't have much, but dad has always worked really hard, so when he decided to go it alone and launch Roof & Fibre in around 2008, we knew he'd put everything into making it a success.

"For the first decade or so, he was growing the business, with word of mouth being the biggest factor – testament to his commitment and quality of work. I then joined the business around a decade later, and at that time it was just dad, my brother and me.

"Today, there's 10 or 11 people on the team and the business continues to grow. I've seen that first-hand, and I think with everything I'm learning through my training, I'm able to bring a fresh perspective which will help us to grow even further.

"I think winning Apprentice of the Year has given me even more motivation, so I'm really looking forward to getting through my apprenticeship and helping the business to grow."

Knowledge and Experience

Having grown up with the business, Leah's been able to develop her roofing and industry knowledge through the range of experience she's gained. She explains: "Every day is different. Generally, I'm out on site, working on the domestic projects we take on around Fife. I also have my college weeks where I'm learning everything I can and progressing my apprenticeship.

"When you're in the industry, you realise it's about much more than just laying a roof. Behind that, there's a lot of work that goes in, including costing and planning jobs – and I'm getting stuck into as much as I can. Having that experience changes your perspective on the job and really helps when working with customers because you know what's going into it."

2025 BMI Apprentice of the Year

As entries are now open for the 2025 BMI Apprentice of the Year competition, Leah is encouraging any other roofing apprentice who is thinking of applying to take part. She says, "Honestly, I would say to just try your best, take advice from workmates and those around you, and go for things. Pushing yourself is how you build your confidence and grow.

"Since winning the competition, I've actually been to Newcastle College for National Apprenticeship Week in 2025 to deliver a presentation to students, which is a really great opportunity to give back and hopefully inspire others. I'm also really proud to have been asked to be a representative for Raise the Roof in Scotland, so I'll be attending events and helping to build the profile of careers in roofing through this.

The BMI Apprentice of the Year competition takes place annually, with entries now open. Visit bmigroup.com/uk/aoty.

As entries are now open for the 2025 BMI Apprentice of the Year competition, Leah is encouraging any other roofing apprentice who is thinking of applying to take part.



Pictured right: Leah Stewart discusses her ideas with fellow contestants for a new roofing business concept before the team presents the plan to judges.

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Over Two Centuries of Clay Roof Tile Making



Alastair Holding from Dreadnought Tiles reflects on the changes and challenges in the roof tile industry during the company's 220-year history.

Clay roof tiles can be traced back to 10,000 B.C. in ancient China and are thought to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans in the 1st century AD. However, clay plain tiles, which are seen on our historic buildings, first became popular during the 12th and 13th centuries. Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, they were much preferred over thatch due to their durability, longevity, and resistance to moisture, frost and, crucially, fire.



The pre-war Dreadnought factory entrance.

Regional Clays

The single most important factor in the evolution of tile-making was the quality of the clay. Seams formed millions of years ago had distinct properties that determined the type of roof tiles made, leading to different regional characteristics and colours. For instance, alluvial clay from the Humber and Bridgwater had low shrinkage during drying and firing, making it suitable for producing large clay units such as interlocking pantiles. Weald clay was associated with red, brown, and orange clay tiles, often handmade and sand-faced, which still remains a characteristic of the south of England.

Etruria marl, a dense clay with a high shrinkage rate, was well-suited for producing strong, smooth-faced, and sand-faced plain tiles. Due to its high iron content, the kiln firing process produced colours ranging from reds and browns to Staffordshire Blue.

A Pick-and-Shovel Operation

Clay roof tile making remained regional, but by the beginning of the 19th century the rapid development of the coal fields and the abundance of Etruria marl had led to the expansion of brick and tile making across Staffordshire, the Midlands and Central England.

In those days, tile manufacturing, including at Dreadnought was heavily reliant on labour and the 'marl hole' (quarry) beside the works was very much a 'pick and shovel' operation to remove the clay from the pit. Later, tubs on lines were installed pulled by horses, until they were powered by electricity around 1935.

The original factory was deliberately built on a slope to help ease the manual production processes by allowing the clay to come in at the highest end and be put through a grinding mill and mixers. Strips of clay were then extruded, cut into rectangular sections, and pressed by hand in 'fly presses'.

Steam Power

From the 1840s up to 1960, the tiles were still literally loaded onto barrows by hand and pushed to the drying sheds, which were heated by steam pipes beneath the floor. They were then stacked on top of cambered plates to make them curve. The tiles stayed in the drying sheds for three weeks, compared to seven days in a modern gas-heated drying room.

No-Manses

Much of the hard graft and heavy lifting relied on female labour in the 19th century. Women operated all the presses, pushed the barrows, and carried tiles on bustles (trays tied around their waists with hessian cloth) while a team of men worked on setting or sorting the tiles. The use of female labour continued well into the 1960s. In fact, Dreadnought was commonly referred to as 'no-manses' due to the few men employed.

Traditional Kiln Firing

Traditional kiln firing typically involved stacking tiles one on top of another in coal-fired kilns. However, a different stacking method was introduced at Dreadnought, where the tiles, with three nibs instead of two to keep each tile separate, were placed on their edge. This edge setting exposed the surface of the tiles to the kiln atmosphere, allowing a chemical reaction with the iron in the clay that produced a range of natural colours across the surface of the tiles. This technique was also adopted by Broseley in Shropshire, Hawkins and Rosemary in Cannock, and Ruabon in North Wales.



The young women workers at Dreadnought with Mr Perry.



Dreadnought labourer workers 1912.

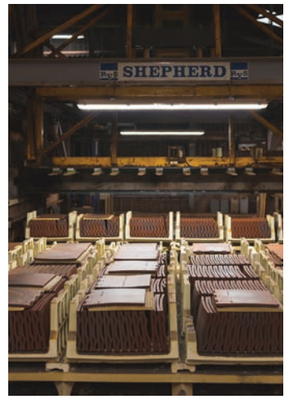
During the pre-war period, the manufacturing industry boomed. Dreadnought was among the first to install two more efficient producer gas-fired continuous kilns in 1935 (before their conversion to LPG in 1971 and natural gas in 1978) and with the expansion of roads, canals, and railways, tiles could be distributed widely, no longer restricted by the locations of clay seams.

Post War Decline and the Rise of Concrete

The Second World War was an abrupt turning point for the industry when many clay roof tile manufacturers closed due to labour shortages and reduced demand. Dreadnought's workforce fell from 420 workers to 94 at the start of the war. The army commandeered most of its lorries, some of the kilns were converted into air raid shelters and drying sheds were used to store boxes of fuses for detonators. Output of tiles during the war was greatly reduced and most product was used for repairing bomb damage.

Although there was still significant demand for clay roof tiles, the large-scale post-war housing programme for affordable homes led to the increased use of concrete roof tiles, which, being cheaper to manufacture, started to dominate the market. Traditional clay tile manufacturing became less profitable and, by the 1950s, was in rapid decline. Many tileries closed, and in Dudley, which was once home to 25 brick and tile manufacturers, only one still remains - Dreadnought.

By the 1990's most of the remaining clay tile makers were acquired by multinational organisations, which, unlike Dreadnought, substituted the traditional production of natural clay colours solely through temperature control of the kiln with the more cost-effective use of artificial surface stains and sands. In addition, since 2000, prices have been squeezed by competition from cheaper imports, from countries such as Turkey and Poland, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.



Dreadnought's tile production today (*credit*: Rob Hill).



Hand making a roofing finial today (*credit*: Rob Hill)

Today's Challenges

Today, the roof tile industry is once again facing a turning point with significant economic pressures and environmental challenges.

The crippling increases in energy prices and the cost and imperative of cutting carbon emissions are threatening the long-term viability of some energy-intensive businesses in the UK and forcing radical changes in others.

The industry has responded by implementing energy and production efficiencies. However, if we are going to continue using gas-fired kilns and retain the existing qualities of traditional plain tiles, it will be necessary to embrace technologies such as carbon capture from the flue gasses to abate carbon emissions.

Evolution and Innovation

If history demonstrates anything, it is that manufacturing must continue to evolve. The company's flexibility together with a culture of continuous improvement and innovation will ensure the emergence of lower carbon clay roof tiles. At Dreadnought the focus is to invest in energy efficiency, fuel switching and ultimately carbon capture to play our part in sustaining a successful clay roof-tiling industry for the years to come.



Tiles on the bat roll machine in the 1970s.



The yard in 1972 with the old producer gas kilns.



Setting tiles in bungs on the Drayton tunnel kiln in the 1970s.



Setting tiles a nib apart in 12 rows in one of the 18 chambers of the gas kiln, 1971.



Making roof tile fittings 1971.

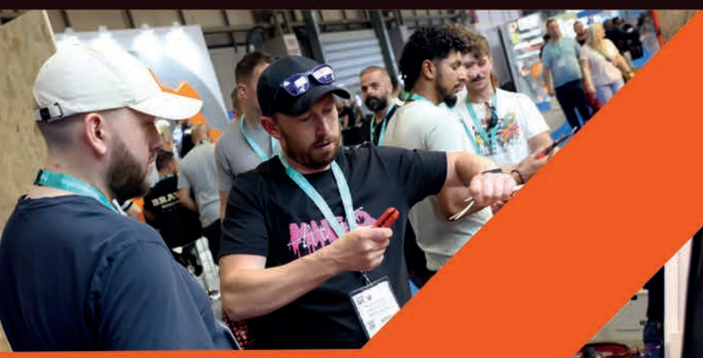
For more information about Dreadnought Tiles and for expert advice call: 01384 77405. Email: sales@dreadnought-tiles.co.uk or visit: https://www.dreadnought-tiles.co.uk.

Have you got your ticket for InstallerROOFING?

InstallerSHOW - 24-26 June 2025, NEC Birmingham - is leading the charge towards sustainable building and retrofitting with the launch of InstallerROOFING and InstallerBUILD in 2025.

InstallerBUILD will tackle the key issues of building sustainably and retrofitting our buildings, encouraging collaboration between trades and specifiers as we head towards Net Zero and a more sustainable built environment.

Don't miss out on three unforgettable days this June. Scan the QR code below to secure your free ticket!





Highlights for RCI professionals include:

- **The HAUS** - a full-scale two-storey house taking centre stage in InstallerROOFING
- **Building Safety Week** - offering guidance and advice on the Building Safety Act
- **Solar Innovations Zone** - live demos and practical advice on all things solar, electric and batteries
- **InstallerTRADES** - a zone dedicated to the latest tools, van gear, workwear and more

installer ROOFING

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installer BUILD

installer SHOW

24-26 June 25
NEC Birmingham



Experience InstallerROOFING at InstallerSHOW 2025!

The UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC) says residential retrofits need to increase to a rate of 500,000 per year by 2025 – and 1,000,000 per year by 2030 – to meet the UK's Net Zero target.

InstallerSHOW – taking place on 24-26 June 2025 at the NEC, Birmingham – comes at the right time for roofing, cladding and insulation professionals working on residential and commercial projects to engage with manufacturers and suppliers. Here's a rundown of what to expect at InstallerROOFING this June.

InstallerBUILD

Tackling the key issues of building sustainably and retrofitting our



buildings, InstallerBUILD will encourage collaboration between trades and specifiers as we head towards Net Zero and a more sustainable built environment.

Integral to this will be the inaugural Building Safety Week, in partnership with Building a Safer Future (BSF) and the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI).

Focusing on education, networking, sharing best practices, and brands showcasing innovation in construction products, the aim is to bring the industry closer together to improve the safety of the buildings in which we live and work.

The week will also champion best working practices so that we can continue to improve safety as we build.



The HAUS

The HAUS at InstallerSHOW 2025 is a full-scale, Passivhaus standard two-storey house build that will take centre stage within Hall 4 of the NEC, serving as the heartbeat of InstallerBUILD and InstallerROOFING.

Designed by award-winning architects IF_DO and built using regenerative materials by Natural Building Systems, The HAUS will sit at the centre of InstallerBUILD's most desirable neighbourhood, surrounded by manufacturers and suppliers who share the vision to showcase sustainability and shine a light on innovation.

The HAUS will be built using NBS's ADEPT integrated and demountable modular system to ensure it can be completed within three days. ADEPT is designed for full adaptability and non-destructive disassembly to aid circularity and reuse.

The design of the HAUS you will see at InstallerSHOW will provide cutaways and information about products to explain how the fabric and systems within it are designed to work together. Crucially, we are working with suppliers to explain the circularity and sustainability of the products used – ensuring its sustainability credentials stand up to scrutiny.

Supplier partners already on board include:

FloPlast, Steico, wienerberger, A.Proctor, SIG Roofing, Accuroof, Sandtoft, Hanson Plywood, SR Timber, LUXORLiving (Theben), Solax, Parkside Architectural, Stevie Chargers, Fire Angel, Egger Group, Ball & Young, Voltsmart, NIBE, Omega PLC, Abode, Hafele, Pipelife, Grundfos, JAGA, Triton, Senstec Non Slip Shower Tray, Correla, ProTilerTools, Maincor, Fernox, Impey Guttman, *plus many more*



Industry-Leading Theatre Programme

InstallerSHOW 2025 will boast 10 content streams covering both domestic and non-domestic buildings, as well as solar energy, smart buildings and the electrification of heat.

InstallerSHOW – taking place on 24-26 June 2025 at the NEC, Birmingham – comes at the right time for roofing, cladding and insulation professionals working on residential and commercial projects to engage with manufacturers and suppliers.

In partnership with the National Home Improvement Council, the elemental Housing Hub will feature expert panels and key debates on a number of topics relevant to both newbuild and refurbishment projects, all designed to help you make homes healthier, more energy efficient and affordable. The Solar Innovations zone will return for 2025, supported by Solar Energy UK and MCS.

With capacity on rooftops and on the ground now estimated to be more than 18 gigawatts, solar is playing an increasingly important role in decarbonisation and bolstering energy security – meeting around 4.7% of the UK's electricity demand last year. But delivering the government objective of 70GW by 2035 means greatly expanding the skilled workforce.

The Solar Innovations feature will deliver expert demonstrations and talks on the MCS certification process, PV module technology, mounting systems, battery storage, how heat pumps and solar power can work together, and much more.

Join us for three unforgettable days this June! Scan the QR code below to secure your FREE ticket and get ready to level up your business.
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With over 800 top brands showcasing the latest tools, products, solutions and technologies, InstallerSHOW is THE place to be!

Expect live, interactive demos, a chance to get up close with the newest products on the market, an opportunity to connect with thousands of industry pros and decision-makers and so much more.

Cheap Ventilation, Expensive Problems: *the Case for Quality Roof Accessories*

The roofing accessories market has experienced significant growth and mushroomed into a global ecommerce arena over the past few years. However, one thing that has remained the same is the need for quality roof products. In this new era of roofing accessories, Nick King, Portfolio Manager at Klober, discusses what goes into ensuring the accessories you purchase will perform as expected, how you can tell and why choosing quality accessories is still a crucial part of the process.



When it comes to roofing, the devil is in the details. Accessories have been a vital part of the process for years, however over the past decade, the roofing accessories market has undergone a dramatic transformation.

What was once a local affair, with roofers relying on nearby merchants, has now become a global marketplace. Thanks to globalisation and the rise of e-commerce, roofers can now source products from around the world.

While competition is always to be welcomed, in some cases cost is now being prioritised over quality, bringing its own set of challenges for roofers - especially, as the difference between a good product and a subpar one often lies in the details that aren't immediately visible.

Hidden Importance of Roofing Accessories

Investing in quality roofing accessories is not just about meeting standards; it's about ensuring the long-term health of the roof. Choosing quality accessories can prevent common issues such as water ingress, damp, and mould, which can compromise the integrity of the roof and the safety of the building's occupants. This can help both clients and the installer, as by picking products that have been thoroughly tested and certified, roofers can provide their clients with peace of mind and protect their own reputation.

Finding these quality products is important. One way to evaluate the quality of roof accessories is to find the testing that has been performed on them. Vigorous testing processes can reveal a lot about a product's reliability. For example, butyl backed products, such as ridge rolls used in dry ridge systems, should be tested for peel adhesion. Similarly, artificial aging tests, which simulate high temperatures in an oven, can indicate how well a product will perform over time.

A further attribute of roofing accessories that could potentially be overlooked is their material composition. Typically, high-quality products are made from raw materials that are designed to perform to a declared level of performance. For example, products that conform to BS 8612 standards will have demonstrable performance criteria where appropriate. Additionally, CE marked products will have been tested to meet specific safety and performance standards which will be made available in a Declaration of Performance (DOP).

Another potential avenue to checking a product's quality, outside of industry standards, could be third party certifications. Third-party certifications, such as BBA certifications, indicate that the product has been independently tested and verified to meet high standards of quality and performance.

Roofing Accessories and Ventilation

The need to choose quality accessories is highlighted by the pivotal role they play in ensuring proper ventilation, especially in complex roof structures. Having effective ventilation is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the roof and the building it protects.

Investing in quality roofing accessories is not just about meeting standards; it's about ensuring the long-term health of the roof. Choosing quality accessories can prevent common issues such as water ingress, damp, and mould, which can compromise the integrity of the roof and the safety of the building's occupants.



Complex roofs, such as those with dormer windows, skylights, fire partitions, or breaks in the roofline, present unique ventilation challenges. These features can disrupt the natural airflow, leading to potential moisture buildup, which can cause damp and mould. Well-designed ventilation accessories are optimized to ensure a continuous air flow.

Ventilation Options

Roofers have several options when it comes to ventilating roofs, and knowing how to use the right mix of accessories is key. Traditional ventilation methods, such as eaves and ridge ventilation, are crucial in maintaining roof health. According to BS 5250, high-level (ridge) and low-level (eaves) ventilation is usually required for effective moisture management and preventing condensation, although this is dependent on the type of roof construction and material.

Membrane choice is of course a critical factor in the roof ventilation design. The type of membrane used can significantly impact the overall ventilation strategy. For instance, breathable membranes allow moisture to escape while preventing water ingress, thus reducing the risk of condensation. Non-breathable membranes, on the other hand, require more robust ventilation systems to manage moisture effectively. For example, the Permo Air 160 membrane is ideal for roofs requiring air and vapour permeability, allowing for effective ventilation while preventing moisture ingress.



Alternatively, tile vents are a versatile solution. Companies like Klober offer a range of tile vents with different ventilation capacities, such as 10,000 sq mm, 15,000 sq mm, and 20,000 sq mm. These vents can be used in various combinations to achieve the desired level of ventilation, making them suitable for different roof configurations.

Key Considerations for Choosing Roofing Accessories

Considering all these different factors, there is a lot to think about when looking at roofing accessories. Using high-quality, tested, and certified roofing accessories offer numerous benefits to both client and roofers. Failing to do so could lead to poor quality roofs being fitted, leading to costly callbacks and reputational damage down the line. Ultimately, investing in quality accessories is a smart decision that pays off in the long run, both in terms of performance and customer satisfaction. |||



The Key Role of Blue Roofs in Tackling UK Water Shortages

With the UK confronted by an imminent water scarcity issue, efficient water management is more crucial than ever. Blue roofs, which temporarily hold and gradually discharge rainwater, provide an environmentally beneficial approach to water attenuation, alleviating strain on drainage systems and promoting conservation. Here, Neill Robinson-Welsh, Consultant at ACO Building Drainage, explores how blue roofs can play a significant role in mitigating stormwater issues and water shortages.





Understanding Blue Roofs

Blue roofs are sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) designed to improve water sustainability, especially in urban areas. Unlike conventional roofs that quickly channel water away, blue roofs regulate stormwater runoff, minimising flood risks and reducing the load on sewers. This functionality is now vital as urbanisation and climate change increasingly lead to rising volumes of stormwater, requiring an upgrade to existing infrastructure and water management methods.

The UK's Growing Water Shortage

According to Environment Secretary Steve Reed, water demand will exceed supply by the mid-2030s unless substantial infrastructural enhancements are made. Certain areas of the UK, particularly in the South and East, are already experiencing water stress, with projections indicating further shortages will only be exacerbated. Urban areas in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc already face difficulties due to inadequate water and sewage facilities, hindering both housing development and economic expansion. Since the privatisation of water services in 1989, a lack of sufficient investment has left UK infrastructure struggling to meet growing demand and effectively control stormwater.

Throughout 2024, heavy rainfall has repeatedly overwhelmed urban sewer networks, leading to combined sewer overflows (CSOs), where untreated sewage is discharged into natural waterways. Blue roofs help combat this issue by storing rainwater on-site and releasing it slowly, decreasing the influx of water into over-burdened drainage systems. By doing so, they provide a sustainable, forward-thinking method to counter sewer overcapacity, helping prevent CSOs and associated environmental harm. The need to combat CSOs and implement more sustainable drainage presents an interesting opportunity for roofing contractors.

The Value of Roofing Contractors' Involvement

Regulatory requirements surrounding urban water management are becoming tighter by the day, making sustainable drainage solutions like blue roofs ever more necessary for project approval. If roofing contractors can understand and implement systems that ensure compliance with planning regulations, they will be able to avoid any expensive project delays.

Furthermore, with growing awareness of environmental responsibility, contractors who offer blue roof solutions can gain a competitive edge by attracting clients looking to incorporate sustainability into their projects. As flooding and drainage issues become more severe, contractors who are able to contribute to the implementation of blue roofs can help lower risks for developers and property owners, reducing any concerns related to water damage.

Optimal Design and Implementation

For blue roofs to function effectively, careful design and correct installation are paramount. Important considerations include roof gradient, outlet placement and the selection of appropriate attenuation mechanisms. ACO's RoofBloxx are the only products specifically designed to function independently of the roof's waterproofing and drainage components, ensuring precise water retention control. With a modular configuration, RoofBloxx simplifies maintenance while guaranteeing long-term efficiency, even under extreme weather conditions.

This technology aligns with building regulations, ensuring that rooftops adeptly manage stormwater while also reinforcing overall structural resilience. With the capability to retain water and control runoff without jeopardising roof integrity, ACO's solution is ideal for modern buildings in areas struggling with excess water management.

How Roofing Contractors Take Advantage of the Situation

The need for sustainable water management solutions means roofing contractors can open significant business opportunities by integrating blue roofs into their range of services offered. By expanding their expertise to include sustainable water management, contractors can attract new clients and differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market.

The ability to install and maintain blue roofs allows for premium pricing, as these solutions offer long-term benefits such as flood mitigation and regulatory compliance.

Additionally, offering ongoing maintenance contracts ensures recurring revenue. Contractors who establish themselves as experts in blue roof technology can also secure large-scale projects with developers and local authorities, creating long-term business growth opportunities.

The ability to install and maintain blue roofs allows for premium pricing, as these solutions offer long-term benefits such as flood mitigation and regulatory compliance. Additionally, offering ongoing maintenance contracts ensures recurring revenue.

Blue roofs do not just contribute to water conservation and stormwater control. By collecting and storing rainwater, they allow rainfall that would otherwise be lost to runoff to be repurposed for irrigation, creating an alternative water source for the building and reducing dependency on potable water supplies.

Enhancing Climate Resilience and Urban Sustainability

Blue roofs also help protect urban areas from climate change. With extreme weather events occurring more frequently, cities need to be prepared for both intense rainfall and prolonged dry periods. As droughts can lead to severe flooding during storms, the ability of blue roofs to store excess rainwater and release it slowly helps to combat this issue, while also storing water for use in prolonged droughts. When integrated with vegetation as a blue-green roof, they also improve urban environmental conditions and cool city spaces.

Incorporating blue roofs enables urban areas to develop more resilient and sustainable infrastructure to better cope with climate change challenges. Aside from their water management benefits, these systems support biodiversity, contribute to ecological balance and enhance overall urban living conditions. As such, they present a growing opportunity for roofing contractors.

What Role Can Roofing Contractors Play?

Roofing contractors can play a pivotal role in integrating blue roofs into the UK's urban framework. By adopting these systems, they can help relieve sewer congestion, support water conservation efforts and improve sustainability. Blue roofs should be viewed as a fundamental component of infrastructure modernisation. Indeed, rather than being an optional feature, blue roofs are gradually becoming a necessity in building designs, often serving as the only viable solution to meet planning requirements. By controlling stormwater, conserving water and improving climate sustainability, blue roof systems alleviate pressure on the country's aging water infrastructure. It is essential that roofing contractors embrace blue roofs as a key strategy in improving water scarcity and shaping more adaptable, sustainable cities for the future. |||

For more on blue roofs, download ACO's Blue Roof Guide here: https://www.aco.co.uk/blue-green-roofs.



Repair or Replace Metal Cladding?

Martin Lowther, Operations Director for CA Group, discusses the ongoing debate in the construction of metal cladding.



Applying a filler or over-spray paint would alter the Reaction to Fire performance, and, unless tested and certified in conjunction with the overspray, the product is now 'unclassified'.

"If I were buying a new car I wouldn't accept any scratches" – how many times have we heard that comparison when considering the inevitable minor scratches on a newly constructed metal clad building? There are so many ways to answer, but rarely do you see a new car being assembled in a field subject to the wind and rain, or with a selection of other people constantly brushing past. And, of course, the costs per square foot of a car relative to the cost of a building product are incomparable.

The industry is experiencing a change in common practices when dealing with new buildings, especially when getting close to practical completion. Consider that scratches and dents can appear as if by magic, with no one to accept responsibility among the many trades crowding a busy site.

Historically it has been accepted practice to employ a specialist repair company to repair, fill dents, and overspray damaged areas. This practice was particularly common for composite panels which can be difficult to replace, often requiring large areas or entire bays of an elevation to be removed in order to remove a damaged panel.

Modern Practices

Modern practices have changed, and with renewed focus on the fire performance of cladding and on guarantees, the use of filling and over-spraying metal cladding has (or should have) ceased.

Firstly, consider BS EN 13501-1 Reaction to Fire, commonly known as Euroclass. This standard refers to the complete product as assessed by a series of stringent tests, which means that if a product is fundamentally altered in some way the classification and performance changes. This means that applying a filler or over-spray paint would alter the Reaction to Fire performance, and, unless tested and certified in conjunction with the overspray, the product is now 'unclassified'.

In an industry that is increasingly demanding A1 non-combustible cladding products (often for insurance purposes or to comply with investment fund policies) it is not acceptable to alter a product from being A1 to being Unclassified. Other fire performance characteristics might also be compromised, including BS476-22, BS EN 1364-1 or LPCB LPS1181.

Secondly, consider the material guarantee. Most coated steel products carry a material guarantee from the steel manufacturer. In the case of Colorcoat® pre-finished steel by Tata Steel, the Confidex® Guarantee offers up to 40 years comprehensive material guarantee.

The local area affected by physical damage or paint repair (where applicable) will no longer be covered by the original pre-finished steel guarantee and all over-spray repair work will be excluded from the pre-finished steel product guarantee. It is also important to consider that an over-sprayed area might weather differently to surrounding un-sprayed areas, potentially causing a colour difference after a relatively short period of time.



Easy Replacements

For these reasons, the old practice of repairing cladding has (or should have) ceased. This, in turn, has led to increasing use of products, systems and solutions that can be easily replaced on site without disturbing larger areas of a clad elevation. For example, CA Building Products cladding profile CA 300MR is a micro-rib plank that can be laid horizontally or vertically, and gives an excellent finish especially for front-of-house or around offices where profiled cladding might appear a little too industrial. If damaged, individual profiles of the CA 300MR can be removed and a replacement fitted with minimal disruption to the surrounding areas and no breach of the weather-tightness or air-tightness of the building envelope.

We also increasingly see detailed specifications indicating a shorter profile sheet used at low levels for vertical cladding, making it easier to remove individual damaged sheets and replace with new.

Risks of Damage

We must also consider the risk of damage on the roofs of buildings. Most buildings these days include rooftop solar PV arrays, and for a new build project often the PV installation closely follows the completion of the roof. It is vitally important that the roof is signed off, records kept of any further individuals accessing the roof to ensure they have the appropriate training, and that responsibility for any subsequent damage to the roof is accepted by those companies.

PV arrays must be correctly loaded out onto the roof, the appropriate safety measures taken and the roofing company informed. The roofing installer would normally have a collateral warranty in place, and failing to involve them or damaging the roof they have installed could invalidate this, or compromise the roof system guarantee.

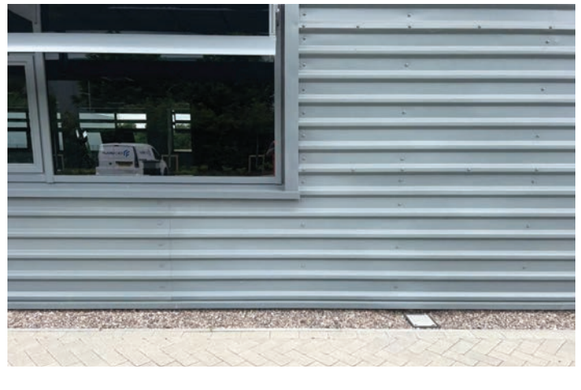


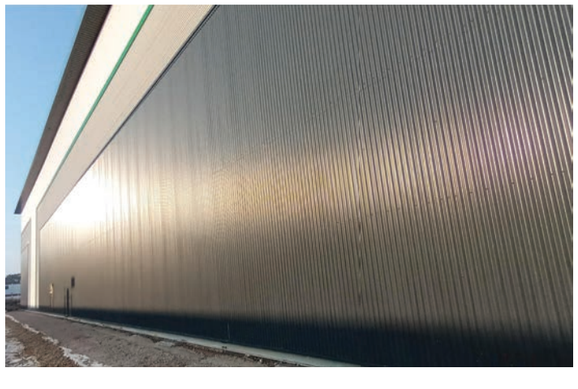
PV arrays must be correctly loaded out onto the roof, the appropriate safety measures taken and the roofing company informed. The roofing installer would normally have a collateral warranty in place, and failing to involve them or damaging the roof they have installed could invalidate this, or compromise the roof system guarantee.

Minor Damage

Minor damage to roofs can sometimes be left without taking further remedial action, for example if a dent or scratch doesn't penetrate the material coating, or create a risk of water ponding. Aesthetic, localised minor dents often will not adversely affect the performance of the system; whereas attempting to remove and replace profiles to address small issues can actually cause greater and longer term concerns if seals are disturbed by out-of-sequence working.

All in all, the world of metal cladding and roofing is continually evolving, and industry practices are adapting all the time to the shifting landscape of regulation and common practices. It is important that we all evolve too, not clinging to out of date practices, but instead embracing improvements and the progress that we see developing in the construction of good performing, high quality buildings.





Spotlight on the 2025 LRWA Awards Finalists - *including Shortlisted Projects*

Now in its seventh year, the Liquid Roofing and Waterproofing Association (LRWA) Awards & Gala Dinner returns on 26 March 2025 to showcase excellence across the sector.

Project complexity, workmanship, problem-solving, and aesthetics were assessed across four categories. The sustainability award was judged on five key themes: Reduced Environmental Impact, Beneficial Social Impacts, Product and System Innovation, Carbon Management and Reduction, and Responsible Supply Chain Practices.

As well as a winner of each project category, there will be a highly commended accolade for those who just miss out on the top spot.

Taking place at the Titanic Hotel in Liverpool's Stanley Dock, the 2025 Awards & Gala Dinner is supported by headline sponsor, Remmers. Ahead of the event, Roofing Today takes a closer look at the standout projects that have made the final.

Celebrating Industry Talent

The Awards & Gala Dinner will celebrate individual achievements too.

There will be awards for *Trainer of the Year* and *Student of the Year* (sponsored by Rockwool), and someone will be recognised for their special contribution to the liquid roofing and waterproofing industry.

The finalists in the Trainer of the Year category have each been nominated because of their knowledge, enthusiasm and proactive attitude. This award also recognises their commitment to helping the LRWA promote and deliver the Specialist Applied Skills programme.

The finalists are:



Craig Haddon, Sika



Stewart Orton, Restec Roofing Systems



Ken Russell, WestWood Liquid Technologies

Visit the LRWA website after 26 March 2025 for details of all the winners: www.lrwa.org.uk.

Liquid Roofing Project of the Year under 1,000 sq. m

sponsored by Instar

Burgh Island Hotel

Salt Town Contractors and Liquid Roofing Systems

Burgh Island Hotel, a renowned art-deco Grade II listed building, is only accessible at low tide. This unique coastal location presented logistical challenges throughout the hotel roof's refurbishment. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane, fully reinforced with glass fibre matting, was applied over the existing asphalt ensuring long-term protection against coastal weather while maintaining the hotel's aesthetics.

Tidal patterns significantly impacted access and deliveries. Materials and personnel were transported via the hotel's sea tractor during high tide. Limited storage on the island demanded meticulous planning and all work was carried out while the hotel remained open.



Lady McAlpine

Sika and Roofing Matters Group

A quick, durable solution was required to rectify water ingress in Sir William McAlpine's personal library - a room of great sentimental value and home to many important possessions. A polyurethane liquid overlay was installed while navigating the room's complex octagonal shape and bespoke glazing.

A new walkway, designed to complement the roof's aesthetic, was installed to provide easy access for maintenance while preserving its unique appearance.

Set within the Fawley Estate, the surrounding greenery, wildlife and historic elements all had to be considered when specifying the roofing system.



Liquid Roofing Project of the Year under 1,000 sq. m

sponsored by Instar

Lincombe Keep

Accuroof and SMW Roofing

Lincombe Keep, a striking home in Torquay, was built in 1992 within the Grade II listed gardens of Castle Tor. Designed with castellated details and to match the same stone of the surrounding walls, the property resembles a modern-day castle. A silane modified polymer (SMP) liquid-applied membrane was installed onto an OSB deck forming part of a one-storey extension at the top of the property. The liquid waterproofing was also applied to an external terrace at the base of this extension and to refurbish a small turret.

Contractors navigated tight corners and changing edges that emulate hexagonal turrets. Intricate edge detailing around the castellations and 300mm-wide box gutters added to the project's complexity.



The Savoy Hotel

Polyroof and Capital Roofing

The Savoy Hotel's entrance canopy, which is visible from guest rooms and surrounding properties, was in urgent need of refurbishment. The asphalt had reached the end of its design life, resulting in cracks, slumping, and leaks around eight rooflights, causing water to enter the air conditioning units. A low odour polyester liquid-applied membrane was installed over the existing substrate while minimising disruption for guests and staff.

Contractors navigated intricate, complex detailing, including meeting the client's specific design requirements. Ornate detailing on some wall abutments had to be temporarily removed during the waterproofing process to prevent damage.



Turner Street Residential

Sika and Permicoat

With tenants facing persistent leaks, a watertight solution was essential for this city centre residential building. The intricate standing-seam metal roof of the former Victorian warehouse features several converging pitches and complex transitions that created challenging areas to waterproof. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was installed over the existing substrate, seamlessly covering all angles, curves, and junctions.

Adding to the installation challenges, contractors had to control noise levels, adhere to strict safety protocols and overcome logistical constraints. Scaffolding barriers, designated walkways, and restricted access to work areas ensured the safety of residents and the public.



Liquid Roofing Project of the Year over 1,000 sq. m

sponsored by Recticel

Center Parcs, Whinfell Forest

Sika and Central Roofing



This complex refurbishment transformed the roof of a sub-tropical, humid indoor swimming pool, eliminating water ingress. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was installed over a single-ply roofing system that had reached the end of its design life.

The curved roof, rising from 6m to 27m with a 24-degree incline, posed installation challenges in a live and windy environment. Safety measures included fall protection, debris sheeting, and a crash deck.

Contractors installed 13 rooflights and incorporated modern corner detailing to enhance durability and energy efficiency. Adaptive problem-solving, night shifts, and rope-access technicians contributed to the project's success.

National Railway Museum, York

Sika and Malden Roofing



Home to invaluable artifacts, this 100-year-old building was suffering from severe leaks. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was installed over the existing metal roof, which featured complex detailing.

Contractors had to navigate around 14 fragile glazed units, requiring specialist rope-access installers to prevent damage. Intricate jointing work involved taping every 500mm, forcing contractors to work on their hands and knees in cold winter conditions.

The building's proximity to the East Coast Main Line railway created logistical challenges, demanding precise planning and strict adherence to safety protocols throughout.

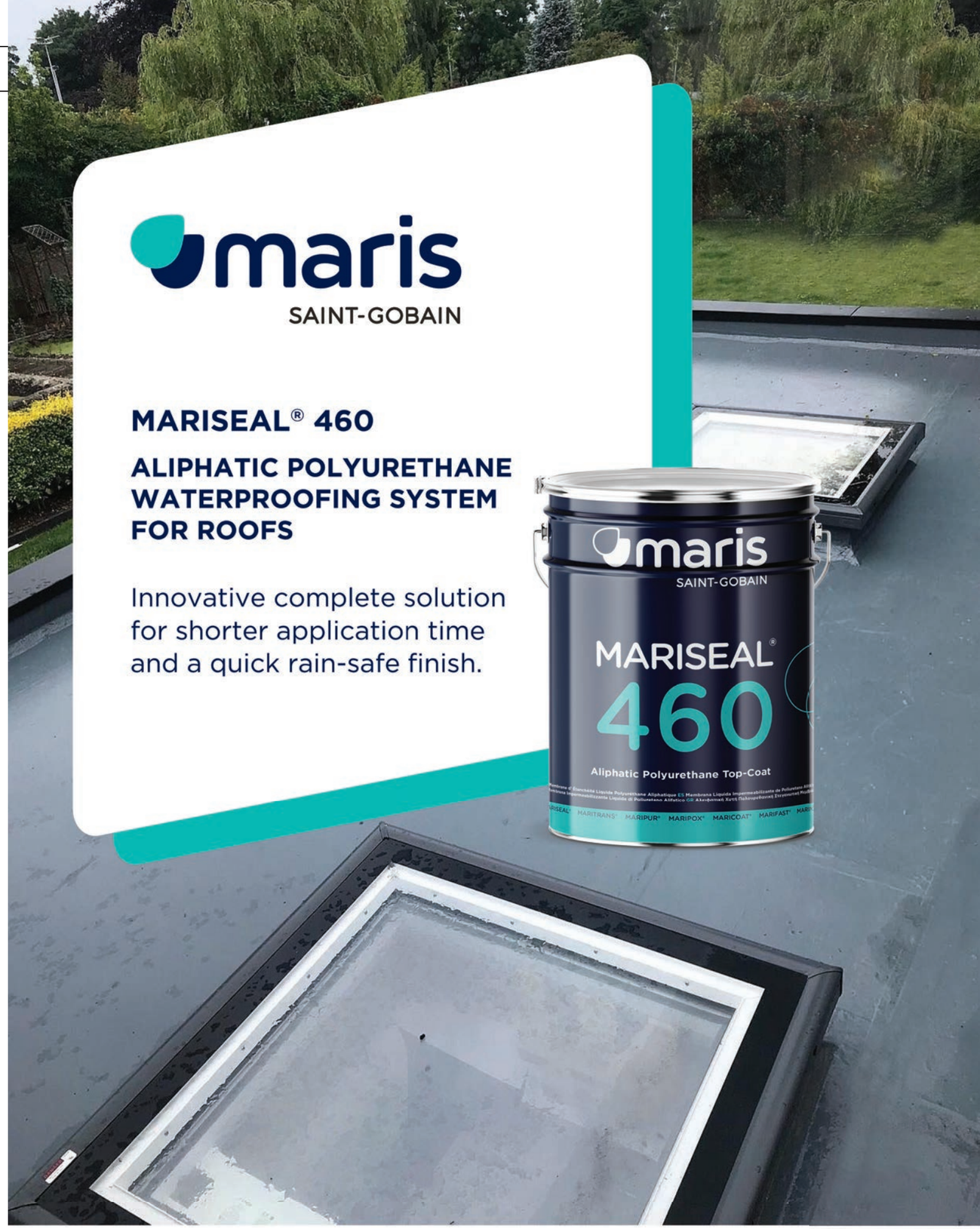
Queen's Club

Tor and RTM Roofing Contractors



The metal roofs of two courts at this prestigious tennis club were upgraded. A thorough survey guided the installation of a warm roof system with a polyurethane liquid-applied membrane. After measuring the existing pitched roof's profile, the insulation was cut to fit precisely, minimising waste and preventing cold bridging.

Both chemical and mechanical methods ensured a robust installation. The liquid waterproofing was applied over the new insulation, and solar panels were installed on top of the warm roof system. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was also used to overlay the existing waterproofing of an indoor court's roof.



Liquid Roofing Project of the Year over 1,000 sq. m

sponsored by Recticel

Spectrum House

Polyroof and MLG UK



This Grade II listed building was designed by renowned architect Sir Norman Foster as a distribution centre for Renault. The single-ply waterproofing on the 25,000 sq. m metal roof had reached the end of its design life, causing leaks, pooling water, and delamination.

A thermographic survey identified areas affected by water ingress allowing for targeted removal, minimising waste and disruption within the occupied building. A warm roof system with a polyester liquid-applied membrane was installed in these areas. This membrane also enabled contractors to waterproof around extensive detailing, including 59 suspension anchors, 42 rooflights, multiple elevations and mechanical systems.

York Railway Station

Sika and Everlast Rail



The barrel-vaulted roof of this historic railway station was suffering from water ingress, affecting the track and platform areas. To resolve the issue, a polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was applied over the existing waterproofing system, preserving the original timber beneath. After meticulous cleaning, liquid-applied membranes were also used to protect cast iron elements on the gutters.

The roof's curved design limited working space, particularly over active tracks and public areas, requiring nighttime work and rope access. Contractors also had to navigate access restrictions and ensure compliance with heritage standards.

Liquid Roofing Project of the Year in a Buried Application

sponsored by Quantum Insulation

90 Long Acre

MAC Roofing & Contracting and BMI



Approximately 80 percent of the original structure was retained in the redevelopment of this office building in Covent Garden. Extensive planning informed the design of 7,000 sq. m of inverted blue and green roofs, accommodating existing levels, threshold heights, and site constraints. Hot melt and polyurethane liquid-applied membranes were chosen together with XPS and cellular glass insulation.

The green roof system features a 25-species London wildflower mix to support biodiversity, while the blue roof integrates solar panels. More than 100 penetrations within the same area required waterproofing, including complex pitch pockets and intricate detailing around existing gutters.

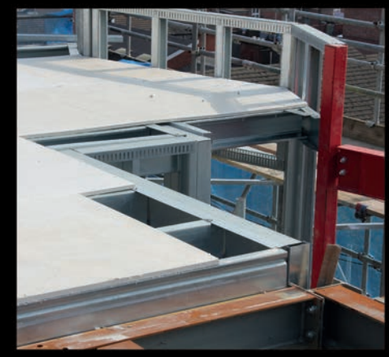


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Liquid Roofing Project of the Year in a Buried Application

sponsored by Quantum Insulation

Google KGX1

Lindner Prater and Radmat

Known as a ‘landscraper’ for its unique horizontal design, this building features a cascading 300m-long roof spanning 10,000 sq. m. Extensive planting, landscaped terraces, seating areas and a 200m running track provide outdoor amenities.

A hot melt waterproofing system with XPS insulation was installed across the vast roof space and to provide robust protection for slopes and staircases in a building maintenance unit zone. The green roof was also integrated into this area.

Additionally, liquid waterproofing was installed in confined plenum areas, essential for ventilation. The building’s city centre location in King’s Cross required strict traffic, delivery, and safety management, adding to the project’s complexity.



Kew Bridge Rise

Tremco CPG and StructureCare

This regeneration project required a waterproofing system for 3,300 sq. m of roof area, and 2,250 sq. m of podium space across five new residential blocks. A spray-applied polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was chosen for the waterproofing and to accommodate complex detailing and penetrations.

Incorporating XPS insulation, the waterproofing system was finished with either ballast or a green roof, enhancing thermal performance, biodiversity, and stormwater management. Bulk containers reduced waste, storage requirements and crane usage. Given the busy urban setting, a stringent logistics plan was implemented to manage a one-way system, multiple tradespeople, and frequent deliveries.



Marylebone House

Proteus Waterproofing and Essential Building Services

Located in a restricted central London site, this building provides 75,000 sq. m of sustainable workspace. Roof and terrace areas across multiple levels required refurbishment.

To meet environmental goals, blue and green roofs with XPS and PIR insulation were designed to address complex waterproofing and thermal requirements. A green roof was also specified for an adjacent new-build office block.

Polyester and polyurethane liquid-applied membranes were chosen for waterproofing with the latter incorporating recycled rubber crumb.

Challenging threshold heights added to the project’s complexity while the city-centre location required carefully timed deliveries.



Liquid Roofing Project of the Year in a Buried Application

sponsored by Quantum Insulation

Poplar Riverside

MAC Roofing & Contracting and Alumasc

This new riverside development required 10,000 sq. m of roof space to be waterproofed across five blocks and different levels.

Contractors installed hot melt inverted roof systems including XPS insulation, while non-combustible mineral wool insulation was used for upstands and parapet walls. Coordination with other trades was essential to ensure watertight interfaces before further construction.

Design adjustments were made for movement joints, and a new waterproofing system was developed for the lift overrun using hot melt, insulation, and upstand boards. Logistical constraints, including tight delivery schedules and restricted access, added to the project’s complexity.



Liquid Waterproofing Project of the Year

sponsored by Polyfoam XPS

Pierhead Lock Terraces

WestWood Liquid Technologies and M&J Group (Construction & Roofing)

A podium area, communal walkways, and private terraces required refurbishment within this waterside residential development. A PMMA liquid-applied membrane was used for waterproofing and to provide an authentic tile effect across several areas. Various layers were installed separately which then homogenised to create one robust membrane with a decorative finish.

Contractors had to meticulously mark out the tile pattern with 5mm masking tape, a task made more challenging by confined and curved spaces. A wooden beam was used to attach several pieces of tape, enabling them to be lifted in constrained areas without damaging the resin.



Q Park Windsor Yards

Tremco CPG and StructureCare

Spanning six internal levels and two external decks, this car park refurbishment involved removing 50 tonnes of asphalt, extensive concrete repairs and the installation of protection systems to address extensive water ingress. Following detailed sound surveys and non-destructive testing, 1,300 sq. m of defective concrete was repaired. A polyurethane liquid-applied membrane was then installed.

Further strengthening the structure and aesthetics, 20,000 sq. m of anti-carbonation coatings were also applied. Work was carried out while keeping the car park operational, requiring phased refurbishments and strict traffic management.



Liquid Waterproofing Project of the Year

sponsored by Polyfoam XPS

Sandown Park Racecourse

Widopan and Noble House Services (UK) Ltd



The grandstand, roof terrace and disabled access ramp at this historic racecourse required waterproofing and resurfacing.

Within just eight weeks, a multi-layered system comprising PMMA technology was installed onto the concrete substrate during unpredictable autumn weather. The quick cure qualities of the PMMA enabled the work to be completed within the tight timeframe.

A waterproofing and surfacing system, including a specialist screed, was also used to create step-free access for disabled visitors.

Swan Walk Car Park

Triflex and Rateavon

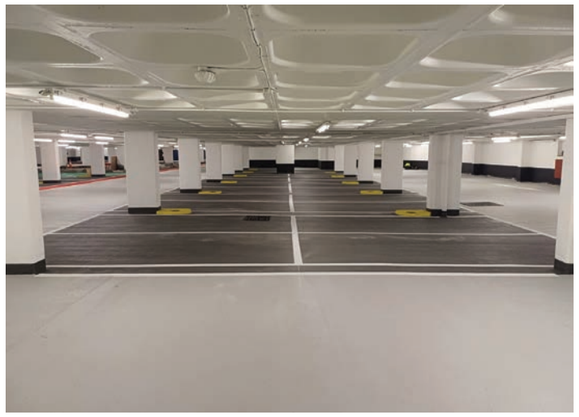


A waterproofing, surfacing and protection system was required for this 900-space car park serving a popular shopping centre 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The existing coating was removed, revealing extensive concrete screed damage and water ingress across the 4,550 sq. m external deck.

A former contractor had left the substrate surface deeply scored, adding to resurfacing challenges. Extensive condition mapping enabled targeted repairs, removing the need for a full re-screed. Failed screed areas were cut out and replaced followed by the installation of a rapid-curing PMMA-based system. Emery aggregate provided a skid inhibiting finish while levelling the surface.

The Thistles Car Park

Triflex and McConnell



This six-level reinforced concrete structure had significant surface damage, and the waterproofing layer had reached the end of its design life. More than 800 concrete repairs were carried out across 3,500 sq. m with multiple issues making the preparation of each deck highly challenging.

A PMMA liquid-applied membrane was used for the waterproofing and to accommodate complex forms and details. Quartz and emery aggregates were added to ensure durability and skid resistance. Challenges, including odour, ventilation, noise, and traffic management, were mitigated through careful planning, specialist extraction equipment, and working out of hours.

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Sustainability Project of the Year

sponsored by Buzon UK

40 Leadenhall and 19-21 Billiter Street

Proteus Waterproofing and ARC Waterproofing



This project involved a newly built 910,000 sq. ft commercial building and the restoration of a Grade II-listed heritage property. Numerous terraces, roofs, and roof gardens across multiple levels were waterproofed while prioritising sustainability. In addition to green roofs, a liquid-applied membrane made with recycled rubber crumb and organic products, such as castor oil, was installed.

Reducing carbon emissions and transport journeys, insulation was stored in bulk and delivered in full loads 'just-in-time'. FORS Gold-accredited logistics meant only vehicles with efficient fuels and designated transport routes were used. Responsible supply chain practices minimised waste and increased efficiency.

90 Long Acre

MAC Roofing & Contracting and BMI



The redevelopment of this office building retained over 80 per cent of the original structure, reducing embodied carbon by 50 per cent compared to a new build. A green roof system features a London wildflower seed mix with 25 species that mimic the region's natural plant life.

On level nine, a blue roof was installed with a wildflower seed mix suitable for integration with solar panels. With certifications like ISO 14064-1 (Net Carbon Zero) and smart waste tracking, contractors monitored carbon emissions, waste, materials, and energy use throughout. Social impact initiatives included school visits, career fair participation, and hiring two local trainee site operatives.

Worship Square

Lindner Prater and Radmat



The development of this nine-storey commercial scheme embedded sustainability throughout its lifecycle. Sedum roofs, incorporating insect houses and a wormery, were installed across various levels, while low-carbon materials, circular economy principles, and an electric energy system help reduce emissions. The waterproofing saw a hot melt inverted roofing system applied with electric melters.

A strong focus on waste reduction led to the use of packaging that could be melted as part of the installation process. Smart building technology optimises energy and water management, while the sourcing of locally produced materials further minimised waste.





Common Defects in Flat Roofing: *Delamination in Felt Membranes*

Following on from our previous discussions on blistering and cracking in felt roofing systems, this instalment of our series examines another prevalent issue: delamination in felt membranes. Delamination occurs when the laps of a roofing felt system fail to bond correctly or lose adhesion over time, resulting in a separation of the membrane layers. This can occur due to poor workmanship, age-related deterioration, or environmental conditions at the time of installation.

When felt membranes are installed correctly, the laps are often the strongest part of the roof, as they benefit from additional bitumen bonding. However, when not executed to a high standard, delamination can compromise the membrane's integrity, leading to water ingress and further deterioration. In this article, we explore the causes of delamination across different types of felt roofing, common failure points, and the importance of skilled installation in preventing this defect.



To discuss your roofing project or for more information contact Steve Cookson:
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Understanding Delamination in Different Felt Roofing Systems

1. Pour and Roll Systems

Pour and roll systems were widely used before the introduction of torch-on membranes in the 1990s. These systems relied on hot bitumen bonding, where molten bitumen was applied before rolling out the felt to create a continuous waterproof layer.

In older pour and roll systems, delamination is almost always caused by age-related deterioration rather than installation defects. Over time, bitumen loses its flexibility due to exposure to UV radiation and the freeze-thaw cycle, making it brittle. As a result, laps can become unstuck and separate, leading to water ingress. However, because these systems were traditionally well-bonded at installation, delamination is far less common than in modern systems unless the roof is nearing the end of its lifespan.

2. Torch-On Membranes

Torch-on membranes replaced pour and roll systems as the standard for flat roofing, not only for performance reasons but also for health and safety benefits, as it reduced reliance on kettle-applied bitumen, which posed a significant burn risk.

While properly installed torch-on membranes rarely delaminate, poor workmanship remains a major factor in modern delamination cases. During installation, the membrane must be heated sufficiently to fully melt the thermofusible film—a layer designed to prevent the felt from bonding to itself while rolled up. If insufficient heat is applied, the bitumen does not fully activate, leading to weak adhesion at the laps. This may not be immediately visible but can lead to failure over time as water penetrates the weak bond.

A properly installed torch-on membrane should exhibit a visible bead of bitumen along the lap edges, indicating that the correct amount of heat was applied. This bead is a hallmark of a high-quality installation. Well-installed torch-on systems are some of the most durable felt roofing solutions available, lasting 25+ years when installed by competent contractors.

3. Self-Adhesive Membranes

Self-adhesive membranes are increasingly specified in fire-sensitive areas where torch-on application is not suitable. This has become particularly important following the introduction of the Safe2Torch campaign by the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) in 2017.

Safe2Torch promotes safer roofing practices, reducing fire risks associated with open-flame application by encouraging the use of cold-applied systems in high-risk areas.

While self-adhesive membranes eliminate fire risks, they require careful installation to ensure a proper bond. Unlike torch-on membranes, which use direct heat to create adhesion, self-adhesive membranes rely on a combination of temperature, pressure, and additional heat application during installation.

For self-adhesive membranes to bond effectively:

- Installation must be carried out at circa 5°C and/or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, as cold conditions reduce adhesion strength.
- The adhesive backing should be warmed with a hot air gun in colder weather to ensure proper activation.
- Pressure must be applied across the membrane and at laps to create a solid, long-lasting bond.

When these steps are overlooked, delamination is almost inevitable, particularly in detailed areas such as upstands, roof penetrations, and terminations.

When felt membranes are installed correctly, the laps are often the strongest part of the roof, as they benefit from additional bitumen bonding. However, when not executed to a high standard, delamination can compromise the membrane's integrity, leading to water ingress and further deterioration.



Over time, bitumen loses its flexibility due to exposure to UV radiation and the freeze-thaw cycle, making it brittle. As a result, laps can become unstuck and separate, leading to water ingress.

Common Failure Points for Delamination

Delamination is more likely to occur in certain areas of the roof due to stress, water exposure, or detailing complexities. Below are the most common failure points:

1. Upstands and Details

Upstands, such as parapet walls, pipe penetrations, and rooflight kerbs, are high-risk areas for delamination. These sections require meticulous detailing, yet they are often installed with insufficient heat or pressure, resulting in poor adhesion. Over time, movement in the structure can worsen the problem, leading to separation and water ingress.

2. Internal Outlets and Drainage Points

Delamination frequently occurs at rainwater outlets, particularly internal outlets and sumps, due to:

- Water backing up at the outlet throat, softening the adhesive bond over time.
- Thermal movement, which can pull the membrane away from the outlet if it was not properly adhered.
- Loosening of the clamping ring over time, especially as movement occurs in the building structure. If the clamping ring is not regularly checked and tightened, water can creep into the laps, weakening adhesion.
- Insufficient detailing around outlet perimeters, creating weak points where water can seep in.

Regular maintenance, including keeping outlets clear of debris and checking the integrity of clamping rings, is essential in preventing water accumulation and adhesive failure.

3. Field Areas in Self-Adhesive Membranes

Large, open field areas of a roof are also susceptible to delamination when self-adhesive membranes are applied in cold conditions. Unlike upstands or outlets, where detailing errors are the primary issue, field area delamination typically results from improper bonding during installation. If the adhesive is not fully activated, the membrane may never bond correctly, leading to premature failure.

The Importance of Skilled Installation

While poor workmanship is the leading cause of delamination in modern systems, a well-installed felt roof can provide decades of reliable performance. Some older felt roofs installed in the 1980s are still performing well today, a testament to the quality of both the materials used and the contractors who installed them.



Delamination frequently occurs at rainwater outlets, particularly internal outlets and sumps.

A high-quality torch-on installation can be seen in the uniformity of lap bonds, the presence of a visible bitumen bead, and the precision of detailing. These signs indicate that the membrane has been correctly heated and adhered. Conversely, poor installations, particularly those with insufficiently heated laps or cold-applied membranes installed in suboptimal conditions, are far more likely to suffer from delamination.

For property owners and specifiers, ensuring that competent, approved contractors install roofing systems is the most effective way to avoid delamination. The best materials in the world cannot compensate for poor workmanship—but when installed correctly, a felt membrane roof can exceed 25 years of service life.

Conclusion

Delamination is a serious defect in felt roofing, predominantly occurring due to poor workmanship in modern installations or age-related deterioration in older systems. Understanding common failure points—upstands, drainage outlets, and field areas in self-adhesive systems—allows for early identification and prevention of this issue.

Ultimately, installation quality is the defining factor in whether a felt roof will fail prematurely or stand the test of time. When installed correctly by skilled professionals, modern felt roofing systems can last for decades, providing a robust, long-term waterproofing solution. |||



Delamination is more likely to occur in certain areas of the roof due to stress, water exposure, or detailing complexities.



A properly installed torch-on membrane should exhibit a visible bead of bitumen along the lap edges. However, in this image, we can clearly see the thermofusible film, signalling not enough heat has been applied.



If the adhesive is not fully activated, the membrane may never bond correctly, leading to premature failure.

Rubberseal: *The Rising Force in UK Flat Roofing*

Flat roofing distributor Rubberseal Ltd is rapidly expanding, solidifying its position as a key player in the UK's commercial roofing sector. With major blue-chip partnerships including Travis Perkins, MKM, NHS projects, the MoD, and global roofing giant Elevate, the company has seen remarkable growth in recent years and continues to expand across the UK.

With increasing demand from national merchants, e-commerce, and its extensive installer network, Rubberseal has significantly expanded its operations, recently acquiring two larger warehouses and training facilities in Kilmarnock, with plans for further expansion into a third.

The company was founded by David Stewart, who started as a cladding and roofline installer before moving into flat roofing distribution in 2003, initially as a distributor of EPDM for Firestone Building Products covering Northern UK. Firestone was acquired by global building materials giant Holcim in 2021 and rebranded as Elevate, opening new doors for Rubberseal as a national UK partner. This partnership has enabled Rubberseal to significantly expand its product offering, now supplying a full range of flat roofing solutions to the residential and commercial markets.

Following Elevate's acquisition of German manufacturer FDT, Rubberseal has further strengthened its portfolio by supplying Rhenefol CV PVC roofing membrane, an extremely durable system for commercial projects.

"Now that we've got the three main product ranges, it's allowed us to supply for a greater range of projects," explains Managing Director David Stewart.

Recognising the growing demand for liquid waterproofing, Rubberseal introduced Liquiflex five years ago to offer a versatile, UK climate-ready solution. Partnering with a specialist manufacturer, they developed Liquiflex-Pro, an adaptable liquid waterproofing system.



Over the years, the company has expanded its liquid offerings with specialist systems such as: Liquiflex-Ultra PUMA – Designed for high-performance balcony and car park waterproofing and Liquiflex MTX Hybrid Membrane – A spray-applied, fully reinforced PU acrylate hybrid for metal cladding overlays and asbestos encapsulation.

The company has also introduced Elevate's self-adhered EPDM membrane, RubberGard SA, which is revolutionizing single-ply roofing with its fast application and large roll sizes (3m x 30m), cutting installation time dramatically.

Key Distributor

"Speed of application is a huge benefit, and we're seeing great demand for RubberGard SA. We remain the key distributor for Elevate commercial roofing systems in the UK," adds David.

Rubberseal's commitment to quality and innovation has driven its expansion, not only in product range but also in training and technical support. As a member of NFRC, Rubberseal provides expert guidance to architects, specifiers, and installers nationwide.





Now that we've got the three main product ranges, it's allowed us to supply for a greater range of projects.

With continued investment in its growing sales team, now totalling seven nationwide, Rubberseal is delivering CPDs for architects and specifiers across the UK, further strengthening its commercial offering.

"The support from Elevate and its new management team has been enormous, added to our investment in people and resources, we're now successfully supplying more and more major projects," says David.

Beyond product supply, Rubberseal offers a full suite of services for commercial projects, including:

- Initial Consultation
- Roof condition surveys
- Leak detection
- Thermal Imaging
- Product specification
- Technical assistance
- Approved contractor network
- Project monitoring

Recognising the importance of high-quality installation, Rubberseal has invested in state-of-the-art training facilities in Kilmarnock and Walsall, designed to provide practical, hands-on experience.

David explains: "Our training centre in Kilmarnock has large roofing rigs for practical application and a dedicated classroom for technical learning. With an average of 20 roofers trained each month, we're ensuring high standards in flat roofing installation."

A Name to Watch in Flat Roofing

With the ability to offer up to 25-year warranties, including single-point cover for Elevate warm roof systems, Rubberseal provides end-to-end solutions for installers, specifiers, and commercial customers.

Through strategic growth, investment in people, and cutting-edge product innovations, Rubberseal is firmly positioned as a market leader in flat roofing and waterproofing. |||





Pictured: Tower House in Arundel, West Sussex (*courtesy Historic England*).

Meticulous Mastic Asphalt Refurbishment at Tower House

Mastic Asphalt Council (MAC)

Due to its longevity, waterproofing reliability and suitability for heritage projects, mastic asphalt is often selected as the ideal roof refurbishment system for listed buildings where it is crucial to retain the character of the building or structure in question.

As one of the world's most traditional waterproofing materials, mastic asphalt has been relied on for roof refurbishment works on heritage projects for many years. It is frequently specified by the National Trust and English Heritage, as well as other public and private property owners in this sector.

Mastic Asphalt Council (MAC) contractor members are regularly involved in roof refurbishment projects on listed buildings, one of which is Sussex Asphalte. The company has recently completed a small but meticulously delivered mastic asphalt application on a Grade II listed building known as Tower House in Arundel, West Sussex.

Built in the early 1800's, the former vicarage now forms six luxury apartments. Sussex Asphalte were instructed by Seraph Property Management to resurface the asphalt valleys and gutters around the various slate roofs. The gutters ran around the perimeter of the roof and between slate roofs that finished on different levels.



This project involved a significant amount of asphalt heritage detailing - in fact much more than the flat roofing area.

This project involved a significant amount of asphalt heritage detailing - in fact much more than the flat roofing area. Sussex Asphalte laid 27m² of horizontal asphalt and 51m² of asphalt detailing including skirting, fillet, sloped faces, collars, corners and solid asphalt drip edges.

The Existing Roof

The existing asphalt on the roof had provided many years of service but had slumped and cracked, taking it well beyond its usable life.

This project involved a significant amount of asphalt heritage detailing - in fact much more than the flat roofing area.

The roof was leaking in several places; some of these leaks were simply due to the age of the work, whilst other areas were poorly retrofitted roofing works carried out in non-heritage materials as an attempt to cover leaks. As part of the project, Sussex Asphalte also had to replace several rooflights and a roof hatch, as well as address many areas of broken or slipped pitched roof slating.

Sussex Asphalte overcame several challenges during the project, many of which involved working around enclosed gutter areas. The refurbishment was carried out during a particularly rainy period and there was a great deal of enabling works required to clear the areas. Every evening Sussex Asphalte fully removed and replaced the existing asphalt whilst ensuring all edge details were properly weathered to avoid any water penetration.

This involved removing slates covering lay boards, relocating satellite dishes and arranging scaffold adjustments so that Sussex Asphalte operatives could apply the correct asphalt details without the scaffolders drilling and fixing into the heritage status building.

Sussex Asphalte also had to temporarily drain and move a cladded water tank on the roof, along with its pipes that went through the roof, and arrange its reinstatement following the asphalt works carried out underneath. Unorthodox details were uncovered on the roof so Sussex Asphalte devised a new solution to ensure that the new asphalt effectively weathers these awkward details, providing strength and durability for years to come.

One area featured a corner section with three vent pipes very closely arranged. The skilled asphalters merged three different solid asphalt collars into one to ensure there was an even thickness of collar all the way around the protrusions. As the pipes were located in a corner, the asphalters had to navigate enclosed spaces, making use of their wide range of asphalt tools.

In another area where an old roof hatch had to be replaced, the hatch space was already quite close to the layboard, and so fitting a new hatch with an insulated curb up to the latest regulations proved to be a challenge. To solve this problem, the asphalters managed to use the vertical face of the kerb as one side of a valley and the layboard as another, laying mastic asphalt in the middle to not only strengthen the joint but to create a fall that would move water away from the detail and drain onto the roof.





The skilled asphalters merged three different solid asphalt collars into one to ensure there was an even thickness of collar all the way around the protrusions. As the pipes were located in a corner, the asphalters had to navigate enclosed spaces.

Complicated Scheduling

The scheduling of the works was also a complicated factor. The greatest challenge in this regard was the resurfacing of asphalt in a flat area underneath the functioning cladded water tank referred to above.

Sussex Asphalte had to arrange with the residents serviced by the water tank the appropriate timings to have a qualified plumbers drain the existing tank in order to move it, with its associated pipes, clearing the area so the roof area could be stripped and re-asphalted.



This needed to be implemented with military precision to ensure the area was covered with two coats of mastic asphalt, marrying-in all the asphalt joints and solar painting, so that the tank could be reinstated the next day.

The extra complication to this was that some of the area underneath had a rotten deck, which needed to be removed and reboarded before any asphalt could be laid. The tank was re-positioned in the same location as before, but IKO Protectoboards were laid underneath to protect the asphalt from point loading.

The mastic asphalt refurbishment has reinstated the waterproofing on Tower House, ensuring the residential properties are not at risk of water penetration for many years to come.

Shaping the Future of Commercial Roofing



Philip Moors, Managing Director of Elevate UK & Ireland explores the factors impacting the commercial roofing market from workforce challenges to evolving products and processes.

With the construction industry getting busier as spring arrives, the commercial market is on the up too. A growing demand for industrial units, data centres, and leisure facilities are just some of the drivers fuelling growth. For the roofing industry, this upward trend is creating both challenges and opportunities bringing innovation, sustainability and quality to the forefront.



Doing More with Less

As commercial work increases, many contractors are facing labour challenges. An aging workforce coupled with fewer younger people entering the industry is widening the skills gap. Contractors are also battling with rising costs, adding to an already challenging operating environment.

Although there is no quick fix for these issues, innovation is easing the burden. For example, the development of self-adhesive products is playing a vital role in flat roofing refurbishment. This technology allows contractors to install an EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene rubber) roofing membrane without bonding adhesives or drying time on site. Installation speeds can be more than four times faster than standard methods with no need for special tools.

By adopting such technology, commercial contractors can alleviate labour challenges and lower costs, putting them in strong position to meet an uptick in commercial projects.

Sustainable Construction

Whether a new build or refurbishment project, the need to improve environmental sustainability is a priority across the whole construction industry. To meet net zero targets, minimising commercial buildings' operational and embodied carbon is front of mind for specifiers. As roofing design plays a key role in sustainable construction, growth is expected across several areas.

Green roofs, with their natural insulation, biodiversity benefits, and ability to reduce air pollution, are likely to be specified on a larger scale this year. To mitigate the impact of climate change and increasing rainfall, the demand for blue roofs is rising too, particularly in city centres.

In addition to designing more green and blue roofs, specifiers are seeking waterproofing systems which can positively impact a property's lifespan as well as maintenance, waste and recyclability. Meeting all these requirements, single-ply roofing membranes provide an ideal waterproofing solution for sustainable roofs in the commercial space.

The main types in the UK are EPDM, PVC (Poly Vinyl Chloride), TPO (Thermoplastic Polyolefin) and PIB (Polyiso Butylene). All are compatible with green and blue roofs as well as solar panels.

EPDM remains one of the most popular thanks to its low environmental impact and long service life. The absence of plasticisers allows the membrane to retain its flexibility without the risk of migration, which can lead to cracking, flaking and ultimately the failure of the roof surface.

A collaborative, innovation-driven approach focused on quality will empower manufacturers, contractors, and distributors to navigate current challenges and build a resilient future for the roofing industry.

Technology Driving Efficiency

Advances in technology are transforming commercial roofing processes. Drones for example, ensure quick, safe and accurate site inspections that can seamlessly integrate with estimating tools. This enables manufacturers to provide a precise digital list of the materials and labour needed for a roofing refurbishment, so contractors can price swiftly and efficiently.

Digitisation is also streamlining project management by making pertinent information more accessible. The consolidation of installation guidance, technical documentation and certifications into mobile-accessible platforms is a key development which will save contractors significant time and resources.

Quality through Collaboration

To sustain growth across commercial roofing, quality is paramount. Our industry must work together to keep raising standards, ensuring systems create resilient roofs and perform as expected.

Ongoing investment in training and education is key. Manufacturers play a critical role by offering bespoke training for contractors on their commercial systems. Technical support, especially during the project's early stage, is also vital ensuring the most appropriate roofing system is developed and installed.

Once systems are approved by a technical services team and executed by a trained licensed contractor, manufacturers should provide long-term warranties covering all components, cementing quality assurance as well as peace of mind.

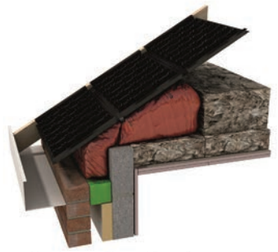
Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is another important element in raising standards, equipping specifiers with knowledge on key issues. Elevate's RIBA-approved seminar for example, provides guidance on designing roofs that improve sustainability.

Strong Foundations

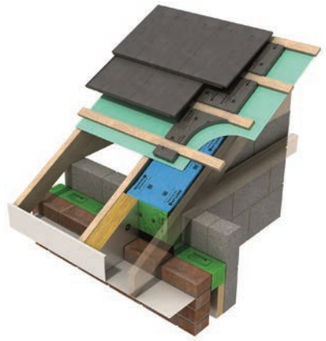
As the commercial market strengthens, so does the focus on efficient, sustainable and resilient roofing systems. A collaborative, innovation-driven approach focused on quality will empower manufacturers, contractors, and distributors to navigate current challenges and build a resilient future for the roofing industry. |||

Mayplas Adds New Passive Fire, Acoustic and Thermal Products to Housebuilder Range

Mayplas, a specialist in passive fire protection, acoustic and thermal insulation for the housebuilding industry, has introduced three new products. The new Thermal Eaves Batt, Party Wall Head Cap System and Therma Soffit add to Mayplas' comprehensive portfolio of products for timber and masonry frame applications.



Mayplas' new Thermal Eaves Batt.



Mayplas' new Party Wall Head Cap System for Masonry applications including Therma Soffit slab. The system is also available for timber frame applications.

The new Mayplas Thermal Eaves Batt provides a thermal barrier at the interface between the ceiling loft space and the external wall of new build homes. Comprising two main components, an eaves tray and a stone mineral wool insulation batt, the batt prevents cold spots and reduces heat loss while providing a clear air path between the roofing membrane and insulation to avoid condensation. The batt is suitable for roof pitches up to 45°.

The new Party Wall Head System provides fire protection compartmentation at the party wall junction. Installed together as per Mayplas' Installation Guide, the two-component system - a party wall head cap and a tile batten barrier, achieves 60 minutes fire integrity and insulation tested to the principles of EN 1363-1:2012 and EOTA TR31:2008 and independently assessed in accordance with BS 476-20:1987 and BS 476-22:1987. The system addresses Building Regulations requirements to maintain the continuity of fire resistance between a compartment party wall and the underside of the roof covering, so preventing the spread of fire and smoke.

Mayplas' third new product also works at the party wall junction. The Therma Soffit provides thermal insulation within the soffit. It is available in two thicknesses, 100mm and 150mm, facilitating required thermal resistance values (Approved Document L) and providing resistance to the passage of sound synonymous with stone mineral wool insulation (Approved Document E).

These new products join Mayplas' MP552 Cavity Stop Socks, MP556 Fire Stop Slab, MP551 Timber Frame Cavity Barriers and MP557 Acoustic Party Wall DPC cavity barrier, all recently tested to BS EN 1366-4:2021, to meet a wide range of housebuilders' specialist insulation needs.

Putting Fire Safety First and Foremost

"Builders are putting fire safety first and foremost. Our new Party Wall Head System together with our existing passive fire protection range addresses that need," explains Michael Hunter, Mayplas' Technical Director.

"We now provide a comprehensive solution for realising passive fire protection, for reducing heat loss and for minimising sound transmission in both timber frame and masonry construction to help housebuilders create protected, energy-efficient and comfortable homes."

New technical data sheets are available at: www.mayplas.co.uk/housebuilding-solutions

Mayplas is a member of the Association for Specialist Fire Protection and the Structural Timber Association. An insulation specialist for over 40 years, Mayplas manufactures a range of fire, acoustic and thermal insulation products at its facility in Bury, Greater Manchester, ideally located for distribution throughout the UK. Mayplas can accommodate virtually any insulation specification, working with architects, contractors, developers, distributors and merchants. Mayplas is part of the Performance Technology Group.

www.mayplas.co.uk

AIM Acoustic Infills to Reduce Reverberation at Hartlepool Active Wellbeing Hub

AIM – Acoustic & Insulation Manufacturing's cut-to-fit Acoustic Trough Infills have been incorporated into roof areas at Hartlepool's new £34.65m 'Highlight' Active Wellbeing Hub. Designed to reduce reverberation in buildings with a high proportion of hard internal surfaces, especially where noise is generated within the building such as sports facilities, the infills fit into the troughs of perforated metal profiles used in structural steel roof decks.

The new facility will open at The Waterfront, Hartlepool, in autumn 2025, replacing the town's ageing 1970s leisure centre. The development for Hartlepool Borough Council is being delivered in partnership with main contractor Wates, a leader in the sport and leisure sector, while the striking design has been created by GT3 Architects. Via SIG Tyneside, AIM has supplied the Acoustic Trough Infills for two large roof areas to Wates' contractor Chemplas, the North East-based roofing, cladding and glazing company.



"The roof design specified acoustic trough infills," explains Chris Dale, AIM's Business Development Manager (North). "Having received profile details from Chemplas, AIM cut the easy to fit infills to suit the deck. Though a small part of the roof system and a simple product, our Acoustic Trough Infills are a very effective and cost-efficient way to reduce reverberation in a building."

AIM Acoustic Trough Infills are available in a range of densities and are factory cut to suit any trapezoidal profile or perforated standing seam decking. The infills are stone wool, which is recognised as a good sound absorbing material. Acoustic performance is dependent on the structure of the deck and the open area within it.

AIM manufactures the infills to order. Typically, products are supplied in seven to ten working days. They are provided in a range of finishes, including plain (natural mineral wool), white or black glass tissue-faced or Mylar sleeved for humid or moist environments such as swimming pools.



The Highlight Active Wellbeing Hub is set to have major long-term benefits for Hartlepool in line with the Council's commitment to regenerate the town, raise aspirations and support improved health outcomes for local people. Funding is a mix of grant money from Sport England, the Council's Capital Programme, capital contingency funds and borrowing and represents one of the largest investments in Hartlepool for decades.

Part of the Performance Technology Group, UK-based AIM - Acoustic & Insulation Manufacturing has over 30 years of experience in the design, testing and manufacturing of high-quality fire, thermal and acoustic barriers. The company produces a wide variety of bespoke insulation products to customer specification and a range of standard products.

Find out more at www.aimlimited.co.uk.

Keylite's New Distribution Hub Helps Fulfil Increased Orders



Keylite Roof Windows's new distribution hub in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone is driving growth across both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, helping to fulfil increased orders and support the needs of builders and merchants. Keylite's new facility has enabled the company to meet rising demand for its roof windows and loft ladders while driving sustained growth across the region.

Regional Sales Director, Robert Lee said: "With ample stock at our Cookstown distribution hub, we are well-equipped to meet the needs of builders and merchants across NI and ROI. In response to growing sales and demand, we have invested heavily in the Irish market to guarantee stock availability and swifter delivery times. We have also expanded our team with two new area sales managers over the past 12 months. At Keylite, we are committed to designing products that contribute to the perfect indoor environment – and those products are ready and waiting at our Cookstown distribution hub." Keylite provides a comprehensive range of roof windows, blinds, timber loft ladders, flashings, electric operation kits, and accessories. Visit www.keyliteroofwindows.com, call 01283 200 158 or email info@keylite.co.uk.

Transforming School Roofing Challenges into Long-Term Solutions



When Ysgol Llwyn Yr Eos in Aberystwyth faced severe roofing challenges, Garland UK stepped in to provide a high-performance solution. The roof was in a critical state. Missing copper sheeting had left fibreboard insulation exposed and saturated with moisture. This compromised the roof's structural integrity, making it unstable and unsafe to access.

Technical Manager Jordan Thomas developed a targeted solution to address the roof's structural dangers and thermal inefficiencies. Installed by The Complete Roofing Company, the project began with removing the damaged roofing materials. Stripping the existing layers to the timber deck eliminated the moisture-saturated insulation and unstable components, creating a secure base for the new system. A vapour control layer was installed to protect the roof from future moisture issues, ensuring the new insulation remained dry and durable over time. High-performance 130mm PIR insulation was added, enhancing the building's thermal efficiency and addressing the issues of fluctuating indoor temperatures. The final stage involved applying the R-MER SEAM, a low-profile steel standing seam system with a secret fix. The lightweight system allowed for efficient installation, ultimately eliminating safety risks and restoring confidence in the building. Visit: www.garlanduk.com

NHBC Announces Louise Minchin and Deborah Meaden for its New BEYOND '25 LIVE Event

NHBC has announced broadcaster, journalist and author Louise Minchin as host for its upcoming BEYOND '25 LIVE event on 20 March, with entrepreneur Deborah Meaden confirmed as a keynote speaker. With 20 years' experience presenting BBC Breakfast, Minchin will guide over 1,200 delegates through an action-packed agenda of expert speakers, industry insights and cutting-edge discussions on the future of house building, as NHBC takes over the CBS Arena in Coventry.

This new construction industry event will see Minchin joined by celebrated entrepreneur Deborah Meaden in a fireside chat, diving into a host of hot topics including sustainability, innovation, resilience, leadership, adapting to change, the environment and women in construction - advancing opportunities across the industry.

Boasting a full exhibition, dedicated networking space and a variety of workshops and training sessions, the event will feature more than 50 guest speakers covering a broad range of topics including best practice, skills, innovation, regulation, housing regeneration and customer care. The must-attend, future-focused event will reflect the ever-changing nature of the house-building industry, issues affecting the sector and explore the opportunities and challenges the construction industry faces in everything from innovation to sustainability.

View the full agenda and book your tickets at nhbc.co.uk/beyond.

Tata Steel Achieves Prestigious Biodiversity Benchmark at North Wales Site



Tata Steel's Shotton Works, the home of Colorcoat® pre-finished steel, has achieved The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark for land management, as part of its wider sustainability commitment. This makes it the largest industrial manufacturing site in Wales to currently hold the standard for commitment to biodiversity and responsible land management. Launched in 2022, Tata Steel's Shotton sustainability commitment set out a long-term strategy focussing on four pillars: reducing carbon footprint; developing products for sustainable construction; biodiversity; and maximising material efficiency and achieving zero onsite waste. Tata Steel achieved the benchmark by integrating the biodiversity commitment throughout its processes and wider sustainability strategy, including setting out a clear biodiversity policy with performance indicators to measure progress, clear action plans to deliver against and a robust integrated management system for the Shotton site.

Quality Health Safety and Environmental Graduate, Emma Wright, said: "The achievement is testament to our company-wide commitment to conserving, enhancing and restoring biodiversity for future generations, all with the aim of maximising the biodiversity that we live side by side with."

To find out more, visit: www.colorcoat-online.com or www.wildlifetrusts.org.

Why 'Zero' is a Plus for West Fraser's SterlingOSB



In 2016, the UK government classified formaldehyde as a carcinogen. West Fraser has gone above and beyond to reduce the chemical compound's impact on the built environment and building occupants. In the home, formaldehyde is found in materials like plywood, panelling, adhesives and foam insulation.

Formaldehyde occurs naturally in trees so there is no such thing as formaldehyde-free wood products. The issue is what the concentration rises to when wood is processed. The HSE directs that the workplace exposure limit for formaldehyde should not exceed two parts per million (2.0 ppm) as a time weighted average over an eight-hour period. Unfortunately, the amount of formaldehyde present increases during the processing of wood into wood-based panels – unless they are sourced from West Fraser, a specialist which has developed a methodology which results in there being zero added formaldehyde during the manufacturing process. Hence, we see panel products with appellatives such as SterlingOSB Zero being utilised across construction. So, it makes sense to try and minimize the presence of formaldehyde wherever possible by specifying panels with the lowest of emissions. Call 01786 812 921 or visit https://uk.westfraser.com/.

Makita Nails It Again with its Latest Launch



Makita has added a new 18V LXT Framing Nailer to its cordless tools range. Designed for first fix framing applications, the DBN900 can be used in the same way as a pneumatic nailer but without the additional setup time, complication and restriction of a compressor and air lines. In addition, unlike gas nailers, the DBN900 has no additional consumables. It is compatible with clipped head nails between 50-90 mm and nail gauges between 2.9-3.3 mm. Its magazine will accommodate 58 nails and is quick and easy to reload. It also features a variable drive depth.

The DBN900 features two operation modes. In sequential actuation mode, it drives a nail each time the trigger is pressed, while the contact actuation mode allows continuous nailing. Using a Makita 6.0Ah LXT battery, it can drive 1000 nails on a full battery charge at a rate of two nails per second. The anti-slip nose of the tool makes working on angled materials easier, while the LED job light improves visibility. It features a rafter hook and belt hook, allowing it to be hung on ladders, scaffolding and timbers or clipped to the user. The DBN900 also includes an anti-dry-firing mechanism and an anti-restart function.

To find out more, visit www.makitauk.com.

SterlingOSB Zero Engineers Out Carbon



SterlingOSB Zero from West Fraser represents a choice of precision-engineered square edge or tongue & groove boards selected for applications such as roofing and offsite cassette or timber frame manufacturing. The 'Zero' in the name refers to there being no added formaldehyde in the formulation. The board is manufactured from a natural product which locks in CO2 from the atmosphere, with round wood sourced as sawmill residues and co-products in the form of peeled chips.

"Environmentally, we're delivering on many fronts," comments Marketing Manager David Connacher. "Across Europe, the company's target is to become carbon negative by 2030. It is currently on track to achieve a 56% reduction by 2025 against a 2019 baseline. A major contributor to this was to construct the Inverness plant without fossil fuel sources, instead burning biomass and switching to electric fork-lift trucks along with other changes."

All West Fraser panel products produced in the UK are net carbon negative and manufactured in mills that have obtained the coveted environmental ISO 14001 certification. The panels are FSC® certified (C012533) and created from locally grown timber, cutting embodied carbon from transportation.

Call 01786 812 921 or visit https://uk.westfraser.com/.

A. Proctor Group Appoints New Finance Director



The A. Proctor Group has welcomed Teresa Thomson to the position of Finance Director. In doing so, the company is also saying farewell to Paul Roy, who retires from the role in March after 32 years of service. Teresa is a professionally qualified accountant and has held a director position for more than 15 years. Alongside managing monthly accounts processes, and providing trusted information and analysis, she is experienced in acquisitions, financial controls, and business strategy. Teresa commented: "Joining the A. Proctor Group was an easy decision. As a family owned and run business, the company shares my values of having the right culture and looking after its people. I'm looking forward to working with Keira – the MD – and providing guidance to the A. Proctor Group Board, and helping take the company into its next chapter."

The business's family ethos has been an important part of Paul Roy's tenure with the A. Proctor Group. He played a pivotal role with Allan Proctor in making financial decisions aimed at ensuring the long-term stability of the company. Paul is looking forward to taking it easy in his retirement, his only goals being to climb every Munro in Scotland and the highest peak of every mountain in Europe.

Breedon Generon Solar Roof Tile System Generates First Rave Review



A unique solar roof tile system launched by Breedon has ticked all the boxes for the first housebuilder to use it. Launched in partnership with European roof tile manufacturer Terran, Breedon Generon has now been used by UK regional developer John Brooke Builders on two sites in Yorkshire. The innovative system, a premium whole roof concept comprising a 3.2mm monocrystalline tempered glass PV cell discreetly integrated with a Breedon Elite 330mm x 420mm base concrete roof tile which is laid in sequence with matching standard roof tiles, was specified for 10 detached houses in Brighouse and two semi-detached houses in Robertstown. Designed by Fox Architecture and Design, cross sectional roof drawings of the houses at Brighouse were supplied to Breedon for the design of a 4kWp system on each plot, and training was held for sub-contractors at a local Huws Gray depot.

The Generon system has a 20-year performance guarantee and a home owner app to track its energy production. Interconnecting cables link the Generon tiles to create an overall solar output based on the number of tiles fitted. Fitted in an almost identical way to traditional roof tiles, the Generon system connects to the remaining PV infrastructure to generate renewable energy.

Proctor Air Brings Benefits of Modern Technology to Traditional Scottish Roofs



An architect's home is seeing the benefits of its new roof underlay – even though the re-roofing hasn't finished yet. Neil Simpson, Partner at Wellwood Leslie Architects, is fitting the Proctor Air® himself while renovating his roof. Proctor Air has a water resistance classification of W1, and its BBA certificate states the hydrostatic head is greater than 1m. This water hold out performance means Proctor Air can be left exposed for up to three months (although should not be relied upon as being waterproof). Proctor Air can also be used in wind zones 1-4 without additional measures such as taping joints or additional battens. Other advantages are its Mullen burst strength and slip resistance performance. Proctor Air also provides consistent ventilation across the whole roof, so Neil didn't have to install plastic ventilation products that would have detracted from the traditional appearance of the property. "Proctor Air has been excellent," explained Neil. "It is relatively easy to install, and has protected us from the weather. The wind used to whistle through the roof, but we've seen a difference straight away in reducing that infiltration."

Download the brochure at proctorgroup.com/products/proctor-air.

New Modular Canister Pump Tube: Safety and Efficiency for Industry and Trade



The use of hand pumps in industry and trade comes with certain risks. They can endanger health and safety and lead to cross-contamination between tanks. Seeking to prevent this, Lutz Pumpen has developed a modular pump tube designed especially for efficient and safe pumping from canisters. Instead of inefficient hand pumps, a clip-on battery-powered motor enables automatic pumping, reduces carryover and prevents splashing and spilling.

Made of durable, chemical-resistant materials such as polyethylene and stainless steel and fitting all common canister sizes (400-700 mm, S60/S70 thread), Lutz Pumpen's pump tubes enable the safe pumping of a range of media, such as mineral oils, disinfectants and chemicals. The powerful battery-powered motor (260 W, 12,000 rpm) can pump up to 6 litres per minute and empty 12 200-litre canisters on a single charge. This robust and flexible system optimises workflows and protects users from dangers.

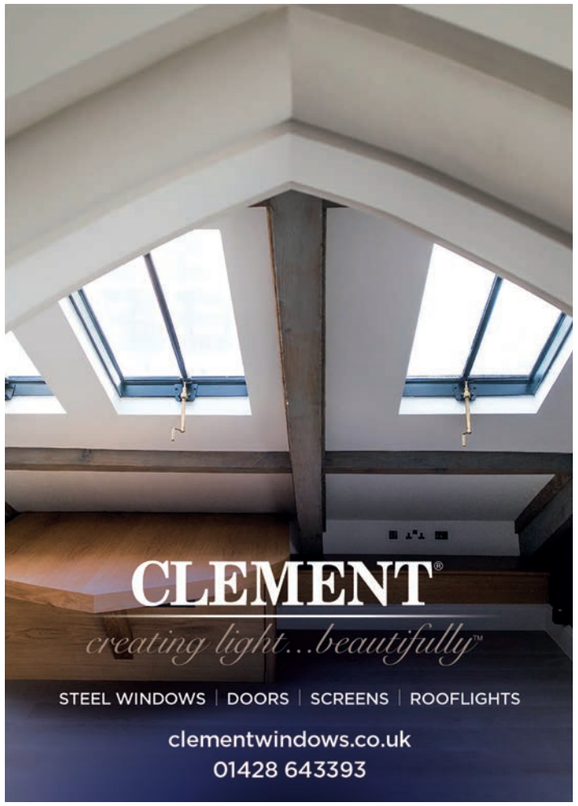
For more information, visit: https://www.lutzpump.co.uk/.

Trustap and BookaBuilderUK Partner to Modernise Safety in Home Improvement Payments

Hiring a tradesperson should be easy. However, stories of rogue builders, unfinished jobs and bad quality work have made homeowners cautious. To address the need for a more secure payment option for both homeowners and tradespeople, BookaBuilderUK, the digital platform for connecting homeowners and tradespeople, has partnered with Trustap, a secure transaction platform, to launch SafePay, a payment solution designed to protect both parties. "There is a lot of anxiety out there when it comes to hiring tradespeople," says Bradley Jarvis, BookaBuilderUK CEO. "We want to eliminate the threat of cowboy builders whilst protecting genuine tradespeople and ensuring they get paid in full, on time."

SafePay integrates Trustap's payment technology to protect both homeowners and tradespeople, ensuring funds are securely held until both parties are satisfied with the outcome of the job. SafePay reduces the risk of fraud or disputes, protecting all parties during transactions. The partnership marks a significant milestone in the evolution of online payments for the UK's construction sector, providing a solution that simplifies payments while maintaining a high level of security.

The SafePay solution is now available at https://www.bookabuilderuk.com/.



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ELECTRIC HEATED
- 1.5 drum, silent-running with portable generator or site power
- For sites that prohibit liquid propane gas

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