



Contract Flooring Association

Contract Flooring Association

4C St Mary's Place, The Lace Market, Nottingham NG1 1PH

T: 0115 941 1126

F: 0115 941 2238

E: info@cfa.org.uk

W: www.cfa.org.uk



The chief executive officer: Richard Catt

'What has the CFA ever done for us?'

I WAS probably a bit too young to appreciate early Python, but by the time 'The life of Brian' came out in 1979 I was tuned in. Lots of us at school could recite whole scenes verbatim and spent many happy hours doing so.

The concept of having a poke at the 'establishment' was not lost on us, even though our appreciation had little depth and was more or less based on the liberating feeling of mischief and laughing at grown men using funny voices.

My favourite scenes include the freedom fighters wasting time in debate, with one of the debated items being that they should not waste their time debating so much, as well as the famous scene where Reg gives his 'What have the Romans ever done for us?' speech.

Originally a rhetorical question, it ends up as: 'Alright, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a freshwater system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?', 'Brought peace?', 'Shut up!'

As with a lot of comedy and humour there is an exaggerated basis of truth that we all recognise. How many meetings have you sat in where a minor point has been chewed over to no real end or perhaps benefit? And the question 'what have the CFA ever done for us?' is one that I am

sure could reasonably be asked if we became complacent.

Of course, some of the benefits we are offered need to be claimed, for example using our helplines. It really is important to keep the CFA in mind on a day to day basis so that if you face a taxation, employment, technical, health and safety or legal issue you remember to call the CFA and obtain benefit from your membership.

Then of course there is the member's area of the website where we publish a host of documents and guidelines that can save you time and money. Not to mention the dispute resolution service, free to all contractor members, to assist in investigating a problem where the floor installation has been blamed, either reasonably or otherwise.

Other things happen in the background without having to draw upon them directly as in the previous examples. I have mentioned many times recently the fact that the CFA website promotes members and their services and has a proven track record of driving business towards CFA members. But we also work on a host of medium to long term

projects as well.

Through our membership of the Construction Products Association, we recently secured a significant grant to continue our work on environmental issues. Essentially, we are engaging in a survey to investigate practical ways that materials, of various types and from various sources, can be recycled.

The CFA have been involved in earlier studies, but as interest and legislation grows we want to be certain that we can provide our members with practical advice in advance. By the time this article is published we will have our legislation checklist available to download: Our commonsense guide to things that a contract flooring business should be doing now to comply with the law.

And don't forget that we've held the 2008 membership fee this year to help companies through the current economic problems.

So 'what have the CFA ever done for us?' Well quite a lot really, but I need to make sure I keep telling you about things otherwise (in a slightly squeaky high pitched voice a la Eric Idle) I could be accused of being 'a very naughty boy'.



CFA president: John Alcock

Good installations..Do ya feel lucky?

NOT more site problems I hear you say, and yes I know I keep coming back to this, but only because it really, really annoys me. Only yesterday I was on-site, and although I say site what I really mean is that it was a building site.

Screeds were not in yet on the ground floor and the upper floors were showing damage to the concrete subfloor as the building was not watertight when the floors were laid. You walk around looking at the site and you really do get the feeling that everybody there wants to take a chance.

They [the main contractor] know the floor's going to be wet, but they don't want to use a membrane, supporting this with 'we're only sticking carpet.' It's almost as if the main contractor is challenging the flooring contractor - well you install the floor and don't put in for

any membrane as it'll keep your costs down, winning you the job, but wait if it goes tits up then it's your fault.

I say to the main contractor 'look you know the floor's wet, I'm telling you the floor's wet and that you should use a membrane. The contractor wants to use a membrane, but you're telling him not to so that he can win the job; you are therefore culpable not the flooring contractor.'

What's left is the flooring contractor taking a calculated risk!

It's OK the CFA bleating to the contractor 'don't do this and don't do that' - we all know that there is someone, somewhere that will install the floor. What we really need to do is lobby the construction industry.

Now part of the remit of the CFA is its relationship as a part of CPA

(Construction Products Association), and what Richard Catt and hopefully myself will be doing in the future is lobbying them hard to try and improve the conditions for the flooring contractor on-site. More specifically, flooring contractors should not be going onto building sites.

Trouble is, whilst flooring contractors are happy to be complicit in decisions made by the main contractor and main contractors see no compulsion to prepare a site to a standard and condition to accept a flooring installation, until legislation and standards define acceptable minimum conditions, which takes cost away from the equation, the whole flooring industry will be installing on a success rate afforded to the flipping of a coin.