

## Obama formaldehyde ruling could impact on Europe

## Laminate cancer scare sparks major US probe

IN what could have a far-reaching impact on European flooring manufacturers, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), now under President Obama, has started an investigation into the health effects of formaldehyde in pressed wood products, including some engineered, laminate and veneered flooring.



Exposure to formaldehyde, which has been linked to asthma as well as some forms of cancer, can reportedly come from plywood, particleboard and fibreboard used in floors, subfloors and other wood-based products.

Formaldehyde is commonly used as a preservative; it is also used to preserve some paints and coating

## CFJ world exclusive

products. Significant sources of formaldehyde include multi-layered (engineered) flooring products made using adhesives and glues that contain urea-formaldehyde (UF) resins, which 'off-gas' over time so that people can breathe in toxic vapours.

The issue of formaldehyde exposure attracted widespread attention in America last year after health problems associated with toxic indoor air were reported by Hurricane Katrina victims. Many people made homeless by the storm were accommodated in temporary housing which reportedly contained high levels of formaldehyde.

Public meetings on this issue were held in centres around the US last month where public input and

additional evidence was gathered.

It will now be up to the Obama administration to define risks and possibly set new standards for cutting exposure to formaldehyde. This could have implications worldwide, including the UK, having a major impact on the flooring industry.

The EPA has already labelled formaldehyde as a 'probable' human carcinogen following pressure from US environmental groups to ban or restrict this potentially toxic chemical, common in certain household products.

**European wood flooring manufacturers, meanwhile, strongly refute this claim, stating that 'available data shows that a connection between formaldehyde exposure at current levels and cancer in humans is unlikely.'**

## Business in brief

## Tops takeover rumour

Carpetright is considering buying Topps Tiles within the next 12 months, according to rumours in the City. Controlled by Lord Harris of Peckham, Carpetright has plans for consolidation and debt reduction. Topps Tiles opened 19 stores last year, to total 320 UK outlets.

## Allied Carpets for sale

Allied Carpets, which has 220 outlets in the UK and employs 1,600, is reportedly up for sale. Allied made an operating loss despite 2007 sales of over £200m.

## Polyflor in strong position

Polyflor's parent company James Halstead saw its sales rise in the first part of last year as raw material prices fell. Halstead reports growth in its share of the British market and its export business, with refurbishment and government-related projects strong in 2008.

## InterfaceFLOR 'cuts jobs'

InterfaceFLOR has reportedly laid off staff in its UK manufacturing, sales and marketing departments. Lindsey Parrell, president and CEO, commented: 'Our UK business has grown tremendously in real terms in recent years. But in a recession it is prudent to adjust the business.'

## Anglo Felt's new name

Anglo Recycling Technology is the new name for Anglo Felt. Established in 1939, the firm now recycles over 90% of the fibres it manufactures from waste materials that would otherwise go to landfill. T: 01706 853513 www.anglofelt.com

## Snickers snapped up

Snickers Workwear AB, part of the Hultafors Group, has bought Snickers Original in the UK. David Clark, md of Snickers Original, will continue to run the UK operation. T: 01484 854488

## Government comes under fire over revised construction act

THE new construction legislation currently going through Parliament as part of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, has been fiercely criticised in some quarters.

The proposed new law is intended to improve the operation of construction contracts, especially to improve cashflow through construction supply chains.

However, **Rudi Klein**, chief executive of the SEC (Specialist Engineering Contractors) Group, claims that payment notices in the bill could actually damage cashflow.

He says: 'The bill gives the payer the option of issuing the payee with a notice for a certain amount and



Rudi Klein



Stephen Ratcliffe

then allows them to issue a second notice with a different amount.'

**Stephen Ratcliffe**, chief executive of the Construction Confederation, representing main contractors, warns that the bill's payment provisions will be a burden to the industry.

He is reported saying, 'Far from reducing costs, proposals to include

verbal contracts within the bill will only serve to make adjudication over disputes a lengthier and more costly process.'

In contrast, the NSCC (National Specialist Contractors' Council, whose members include the CFA, believes that the bill adds weight to its fair payment campaign launched to improve payment practices within the construction industry.

The campaign's three objectives include certainty of payment – agreeing how much should be paid and when; payment within 30 days; and striking out cash retentions in favour of more modern and practical alternatives.

[www.fairpaymentcampaign.co.uk](http://www.fairpaymentcampaign.co.uk)

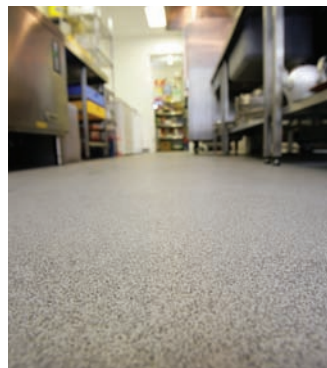
## Walk this way to cashback on safety flooring

TO celebrate the 21st anniversary of Walkway safety flooring, **ALTRO** is offering flooring contractors £21 cashback for every full roll purchased until April 30.

To claim the cashback, send a copy invoice and completed claim form, which can be downloaded from Altro's website.

Sarah de los Rios, marketing manager at Altro, says: 'We have worked closely with flooring contractors over the years to develop a material which is malleable and easy to fit, yet also durable, and which stays down once installed. [www.altro.com](http://www.altro.com)

T: 01462 707 700



**QUOTE:**  
**'Spending on construction projects does create more employment than many other sectors of the economy. It also provides the infrastructure and education facilities key to ensuring we have a productive and competitive economy as we move out of recession'**

– Michael Ankers, chief executive, Construction Products Association

# 10 most profitable firms are revealed

THE 10 most profitable flooring companies are revealed in a 2008 Business Ratio report which provides a detailed analysis of 78 leading companies operating in the flooring and floorcoverings sector.

Although the report precedes the current economic downturn, it gives an in-depth picture of the individual firms covered over a three year period until 2007.

Under the section of profitability it analyses factors such as return on capital (measuring the percentage return on the funds invested into a company). This is shown to have fallen on average from 32.5% in 2004/05 to 28.6% in the middle year of review, before making a partial recovery in 2006/07 by increasing to 30.1%.

Return on total assets deteriorated from 14.0% to 12.8% over the three-year analysis period. The average pre-tax profit margin continued this negative trend by seeing a reduction from 7.4% in 2004/05 to 6.7% in 2006/07. Return on investment declined from 28.9% in the first year of analysis to 24.7% in 2005/06, before climbing to 25.4 the following year.

It carries detailed performance league tables under a number of headings, including employee performance.

The average employee across all

## Top 10 money spinners in flooring

Company name	Pre-tax profit margin			Sales growth
	06/07	05/06	04/05	
<b>Report average</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Westex	20.1%	20.3%	17.3%	6%
Polyflor	18.1%	18.5%	15.8%	14%
United Carpets (retailer)	14.9%	8.9%	10.5%	26%
Carpetright (retailer)	14.1%	14.3%	15.7%	1%
GH Frith (distributor)	12.6%	13.1%	5.9%	13%
Gorse Eight (distributor)	11.0%	11.7%	-	-
Market Carpets (retailer)	10.5%	8.6%	12.4%	2%
HFD (distributor)	9.8%	8.6%	8.6%	13%
Base Flooring (retailer)	9.7%	7.9%	5.2%	24%
Stokers (retailer)	9.6%	10.8%	9.5%	1%

78 companies reviewed experienced a 6.9% increase in their annual salary over the three years analysed. Average salaries rose from £20,544 in 2004/05 to £21,955 in the third year of analysis.

Sales per employee climbed from £135,000 in 2004/05 to £144,000 in 2006/07, an overall improvement of 6.7%. Capital used per employee (the amount of funds allocated to assist each individual in their job role) rose from £31,000 in the first year of analysis, to £32,000 in the third.

After standing at 1.90 in the first two years of analysis, the asset utilisation ratio (measuring the volume of sales generated in

comparison to the total assets held by a company) rose to 1.93 in 2006/07. This result indicates that the average company was generating sales which exceeded the value of the total assets it held; generating £1.93 for every £1 of total assets held in 2006/07.

Sales to fixed assets climbed from 5.9 in 2004/05 to 6.3 in the third year of review.

Stocks to sales saw a marginal deterioration by increasing from 13.2% in 2004/05 to 13.5% in 2006/07. The number of debtor days outstanding ratio remained at 34 days in each year of the report.

**T: 020 8481 8720**  
**www.keynote.co.uk**

## Everbuild acquires Geo-Fix distribution rights

**EVERBUILD** is now supplying Geo-Fix, the brush applied paving jointing compound, having recently acquired the distribution rights.

Patented Geo-Fix was previously distributed by Feb.

Apart from the time saving benefits of brush application, the product is said to have other benefits over cement based mortars, being easy to point up, no

cement stains, setting hard and won't crack or wash out. It is also stated to be totally weatherproof and unaffected by frost.

Everbuild acquired Kwikgrip and Purimachos earlier last year. The company says there is much potential for the Geo-Fix brand to be expanded in the UK, Ireland and abroad. **www.everbuild.co.uk**

**T: 0113 240 2424**



## Proving that partnerships boost business

**PACKEXE** was highly commended in the client focused approach to new business category in the recent construction marketing awards.

The company's product portfolio includes self-adhesive protection films for carpets, hard floors and surfaces such as ceramic tiles. It was recognised for launching its range into Dulux Decorator Centres, a

**Packexe**<sup>®</sup>

SELF-ADHESIVE PROTECTION FILM

HIGHLY COMMENDED

**CMA08**

CONSTRUCTION MARKETING AWARDS

nationwide chain of 170 stores.

Says Laura Mills of Packexe, 'getting to know the customer and their requirements is a basic rule of business, and it is now more important than ever that companies maintain and develop their marketing programmes to build, protect and expand brand awareness.' **www.packexe.co.uk**

**T: 01392 438191**

## Business in brief

### 20% discount demanded

House builder George Wimpey Bristol is asking its sub-contractors, including floorlayers, to cut 20% of all current orders, it is reported. NSCC chief executive Suzanne Nichol says the demand is 'out of touch with reality' as margins are already squeezed to the limit.

### 'More profit in Brazil'

British construction companies seeking opportunities away from the slow domestic market are being advised to look to Brazil and Mexico where infrastructure projects worth almost £300bn are being planned. UK Trade & Investment has reports highlighting opportunities in these countries. [www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk](http://www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk)

### BASF moves to Cheadle

BASF Construction Chemicals has moved its head office to Cheadle, Manchester, including customer services, technical support, marketing and management for its PCI tiling and flooring adhesives businesses. [www.basf.com](http://www.basf.com)  
**T: 0161 485 6222**

### Regent Cleaning grows

National contractor Regent Cleaning has acquired Birmingham-based Exclusive Support Services, which has offices in London, Harwich and Manchester. The deal boosts staffing to 4,500 and sales to £26m at Regent. [www.regentcleaning.com](http://www.regentcleaning.com)

### £1bn training cash offer

The government plans to invest £1bn to create over 7,000 construction apprenticeships over the next three years – in spite of the economic downturn.

### Many 'to go bust' in 2009

Almost one in 20 of the UK's small firms (a total of 200,000) could fail this year, according to the Forum of Private Businesses. It notes that small and medium enterprises employ 60% of the 22m workforce.

### £7bn jobs frozen in 2008

Over £7bn worth of UK construction projects, including 900 individual schemes, were put on hold towards the end of 2008 as the recession took hold, according to Glenigan.

## QUOTE:

**'In the current economic climate, it is crucial to recognise the importance of training programmes such as apprenticeships'**

– Chris Banks, chair, Learning and Skills Council

# Green guide 'misused': Specifiers are warned

PRODUCTS listed in the BRE Green Guide must not be assumed to be the most efficient in every situation. This warning has been issued by none other than BRE in



John Tebbit

conjunction with the Construction Products Association (CPA).

The recently updated version of the Green Guide has reportedly caused at least one council to demand the use A+ products to the exclusion of all others, regardless of suitability.

John Tebbit, industry affairs director at the CPA, contacted CFJ to explain the concerns. 'This is just a guide. It is not the law or regulation; it is certainly not the Bible, which some people apparently think,' he said.

'Just because you tick boxes specifying exclusively A+ products doesn't mean that you can send your brain off to lunch. You should look at the whole building. If you blindly follow the Green Guide you could end up with a building that uses twice as much material as needed.

'The nightmare scenario is a building constructed from A+ rated materials that unnecessarily uses vast amounts of energy. The message is to use your professional judgement.

'BRE and the bulk of our members want to move towards a system that gives a figure for overall

## 'Flawed' BRE standard criticised by TRADA

TRADA has criticised the BRE 'Framework Standard for the Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products' for lacking credibility and showing 'flawed thinking'.

Rupert Scott, regulations consultant for TRADA, says: 'The BRE standard (BES6001) aims to create a mechanism for measuring and certifying a range of green credentials and purports to be a framework for all sectors, but it fails to address adequately resource stewardship.'

TRADA advocates that the BRE standard should focus on the 'clear, specific criteria for good resource stewardship' demonstrated by the Marine Stewardship Council (governing fish stocks etc) and the Forest Stewardship Council (governing forestry/timber management).

The BRE standard 'applies a scoring system making relative judgements between products. It appears very confused about whether it's aimed at materials, products, business or organisations or their processes. Without the necessary focus, it cannot justifiably make clear claims and therefore lacks credibility.'

He adds: 'Different raw materials face very different issues and each sector should be free to develop these in their own way, assisted by some agreed principles which address areas of common interest such as governance and sustainability issues.'

[www.trada.co.uk/standards/summary/34](http://www.trada.co.uk/standards/summary/34)

impact of the materials including how much of them you are using. The priority is the efficient use of materials, not that they all have A+ ratings.'

Mr Tebbit indicated that some manufacturers use the BRE rating system simply for promotional purposes. 'We know that certain

companies make a conscious decision to get their products rated to use as part of their marketing campaign.

'That's why specifiers need to rely on their professional experience and judgement, rather than what's in marketing literature or even what's listed in the BRE green guide.'

## Industry in brief

### Asbestos blitz by HSE

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) with local authorities is running an inspection campaign to ensure that companies, including flooring firms, are not exposing workers to potentially harmful asbestos fibres. Asbestos related diseases cause around 4,000 deaths per year in the UK. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### TRADA unveils CSR guide

TRADA Technology has published an introduction to corporate social responsibility, covering the wood flooring sector. It includes a sustainable procurement checklist and a table of CSR issues, actions and measures for waste and transport management, sustainable purchasing and packaging use. T: 01494 569700 [www.trada.co.uk/Bookshop](http://www.trada.co.uk/Bookshop).

### Age concern for workers

Workers face more financial pressure as the UK's population ages, says the Office of National Statistics. In 2007 there were 3.3 UK workers for every pensioner. By 2032, this is forecast to fall to 2.9 workers when one in four will be over 65 and the number of over-85s will double.

### Fitter launches website

Self employed floor fitter Richard Williams has set up a website offering online advertising. It costs £10 to join and you must provide three client references. [www.tradesreunited.org.uk](http://www.tradesreunited.org.uk)

### Jail for safety offences

Jail sentences and fines up to £20,000 are options in the new Health and Safety (Offences) Act, which became law last month.

### £250 booze prize winner

The winner of the £250 Christmas drinks voucher offered by Laybond, announced in the December issue of CFJ, was M J Eva of Eva Flooring in Cornwall. Cheers!

## QUOTE:

**'2009 is a year for strong business leadership. The challenges of the recession are obvious. But there are going to be opportunities out there as well, along with a set of broader issues that effective business leaders need to tackle'**

– Richard Lambert, director-general CBI

## British Wool has a spin in Las Vegas

**BRITISH WOOL** is exhibiting at Surfaces in Las Vegas (February 3-5), intending to highlight British products from UK manufacturers including Brintons, Axminster, Cavalier Carpets and designer flatweave manufacturer Fleetwood Fox.

Launching Shades of Nature, British Wool aims to attract US interest in the resilient wool of British breeds. The display features a collection of 100%

natural and undyed British Wool carpet yarns, developed to meet the growing environmental interest.

Tim Booth, product development manager at the BWMB says, 'We believe the potential for British Wool is growing as the eco-trend continues in the US.'

[www.britishwool.org.uk](http://www.britishwool.org.uk)

**RIGHT: Shades of Nature 100% natural British Wool yarns to be shown at Surfaces**



## Environmental claims 'less compelling than cash'

CONFIRMING what many think, the latest research shows that environmental claims are less of an incentive than plain old discounts or cash bonuses.

The research was commissioned by OneVu, a company offering a

consolidated electronic bill presentation and payment service, designed to let people see, track and pay all their bills from their online bank.

The research conducted among 1,000 people showed that 31% of

respondents rated receiving an incentive or discount from a biller as the most likely reason for using the service, with just 17% being influenced by a reduction in the risk of ID fraud and only 6% by environmental considerations.

## 1 in 4 flooring company directors are over 65

# 'Oldies' rule, OK



**Neville Cormack OBE, right, chairman of Cormar Carpets, marks 60 years in the flooring trade this year. He started in 1949, when he joined Greenwood & Coope, the company founded by his father. Cormar Carpets was formed in 1956.**

A QUARTER of all directors working in flooring companies are over retirement age – most having spent a lifetime in the industry, according to a new report.

The survey looked at over 1,000 flooring companies, employing 2,156 directors, and discovered that 540 of them are aged over 65.

Overall, there is a gloomy assessment of prospects for the UK flooring industry, with the report claiming that the state of the economy could put 5,000 more jobs in flooring at risk. It predicts an overall decline in sales by as much as 30% in 2009 with several companies having to cut staff numbers by 40%.

On a positive note the report identifies 411 cash rich firms which it says are in a strong position to weather the economic storm, giving them more time to adjust their business models.

It also picks out 107 businesses,

some offering 'low cost alternatives', it says are poised to succeed.

Furthermore, it names 69 companies it says will make more profit on 30% less sales, by implementing major cost reductions.

Another optimistic note is an overall rise in productivity with sales per employee up to £141,500 compared with £136,500 just two years ago. It recommends that managers deliver at least £146,000 sales per employee in 2009.

However, it also suggests that 134 floor coverings firms, which have invested heavily on borrowed money, will struggle to cope as

'rising debts hamper their survival options'.

The report records that profitability in the UK floorcoverings market has historically been very uneven with a select band of 42 super profitable players delivering 27% plus margins, while most of the others achieve no more than 5.2%, with loss making not uncommon.

Compiled by Plimsoll, the survey claims that the top 15 companies (out of 1,000) share 53% of the total market. It even pinpoints 115 'high growth, high margin' companies that have become acquisition targets. So watch this space!

## Forget the recession: Global flooring sales forecast to rise

WORLD sales of flooring are forecast to rise 4% annually through 2012 to 15.2bn sq m, valued at \$178bn (£127bn), according to a new report.

Notwithstanding the economic downturn, demand for flooring will reportedly be stimulated by growth in non-residential building construction as industrialisation efforts continue in less developed parts of the world, it states.

China is expected to record the largest gains of any country and expand its lead as the biggest floorcovering market in the world.

According to the survey, China will account for a staggering 43% of the difference in worldwide flooring demand by 2012, and half of the increase in flooring shipments.

Sales growth is also expected to be strong in India, as well as in lower-volume markets in the developing world.

Flooring and carpet demand in developed parts of the world will also rise as well, although the pace of increase will be less robust than in developing countries, the study

**'Flooring demand is expected to be led by contract projects and the continued industrialisation in less developed parts of the world'**

concluded.

Demand in both Western Europe and Japan will slow slightly from its already moderate pace of the 2002-2007 period.

In the US, flooring and carpet sales through to 2012 will be spurred by an expected rebound in residential construction from the 2007 level, along with increases in non-residential construction spending and motor vehicle production.

Non-resilient flooring, such as ceramic, wood, and laminate, is said to be the most popular type of floorcovering worldwide, and demand is forecast to outpace that

for both resilient flooring (which includes vinyl, linoleum and rubber products) and carpet and rugs through to 2012.

According to the survey issued by the Freedonia Group, non-resilient flooring demand will be driven by the products' durability and ease of maintenance, and supported by growing consumer preference for high-end and natural hard surface flooring products as income levels climb.

Suppliers of carpets and rugs, the second most widely used type of floor covering, will benefit from growth in building construction expenditures in Western Europe, rising construction activity in other parts of the world and, to a lesser extent, growth in global motor vehicle production.

Demand for resilient flooring, which accounts for the remainder of floorcovering sales, will reportedly be stimulated by its comparatively low cost, as well as by favorable performance characteristics like high underfoot comfort, noise absorption, durability and wear resistance.

## Industry in brief

### Builders' body pulls out

Both the National Federation of Builders and British Woodworking Federation are to leave the Construction Confederation at the end of 2009. Meanwhile the Major Contractors Group and National Contractors Federation will dissolve at the end of the year to form the new UK Contractors Group to sit outside the Construction Confederation.

### Millions 'work unpaid'

Over 5m people in the UK worked unpaid overtime in 2008, saving employers a record £26.9bn, according to the TUC.

### Training 'will suffer'

Nearly two thirds of managers in business predict a decrease in training and development, according to a survey by the Chartered Management Institute.

### IDS boss honoured

Peter Hindle, chief executive of Saint-Gobain Building Distribution, parent company of IDS, has been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to the building industry and to charity.

### Nod for college revamp

The £26m refurbishment of the National Construction College in west Norfolk has received planning permission. Work is due to start soon with the new facilities ready by 2011.

### Bid-rigging 'endemic'

The Office of Fair Trading claims that bid-rigging is 'endemic' in UK construction, which may also be 'prone to collusion'. The OFT statement was issued at a recent international forum of government and business leaders.

### Wood bodies bond

The American Wood Flooring Manufacturers Association (NOFMA) has amalgamated with the country's National Wood Flooring Association.

### Agony uncle ooch aye

A Scottish businessman, claiming to be the world's first enterprise agony uncle, has started a wacky new podcast-enriched website for 'entrepreneurs'.  
[www.entreprisecafe.tv](http://www.entreprisecafe.tv)

**QUOTE:**  
**'Pessimism has an uncanny knack of being self-fulfilling'**

– Sir David Tang, entrepreneur

## This is your last chance to support your favourite flooring products!

VOTING in the **CFJ** flooring industry product awards closes soon. Please vote now, if you have not already done so. **There is a voting form on page 39.** You can also vote online by clicking onto the CFA website: [www.contractflooringjournal.co.uk](http://www.contractflooringjournal.co.uk)

The **CFJ** product awards are exclusively chosen by readers. The editor, Alan Bakalor, has 25



2009  
CFJ  
CONTRACT FLOORING JOURNAL  
Flooring Industry Awards

years of experience in the flooring industry, but **CFJ** has no 'editor's choice'. In contrast, 'awards' offered by another magazine are selected by an editor with little more than 25 weeks of flooring industry experience.

The decision on who wins the **CFJ** product awards is entirely in your hands.

**Turn to page 39 and vote now!**

## Visitor interest surges despite financial woes

INTEREST in Floorstyle (May 10-12) at ExCel London is well beyond expectations, defying the current economic gloom. Floorstyle, which this year runs alongside kbbreview EXPO in addition to The Tile & Stone Show, is getting an excellent response from the target audience.

Pre-registered visitor numbers at the biennial kbbreview EXPO are up over two thirds compared with the same stage of the 2007 event.

The show, which received a boost with the addition of Floorstyle and The Tile & Stone Show, is being backed by an extensive marketing programme – double the size and budget of the 2007 event and arguably the largest ever seen for a UK-based KBB trade show.

Over 10% of pre-registered visitors are interior designers with another 10% architects, developers and specifiers.

One reason for the incredible interest is the amazing array of visitor attractions. These include a dedicated CPD seminar programme run by RIBA, the Royal



**Dedicated RIBA CPD seminars will be among the array of visitor attractions at Floorstyle (May 10-12). Pictured is a well attended RIBA CPD seminar at the 2007 kbbreview EXPO**

Institute of British Architects.

These seminars will allow architects to contribute to their CPD quota.

In fact, architects can also add to their CPD simply by attending the show which will help increase their knowledge of the latest developments in technology, design, legislation and best practice.

There is similar excitement from exhibitors. One of them, Mick Hooper of Sika, comments: 'We are

excited to participate again at Floorstyle. If the 2009 event is as successful for us as the last, we will be delighted.

'Last year, our stand saw a number of high quality visitors throughout the show, whilst we made some good contacts and established some significant leads.'

**For further details, contact Stuart Bourne. T: 01892 752400**

**E: [stuart.bourne@kick-star-publishing.co.uk](mailto:stuart.bourne@kick-star-publishing.co.uk)**

**To register for your free kbbreview EXPO pass, visit: [www.kbbreviewexpo.com](http://www.kbbreviewexpo.com)**



## Osmo presents its natural finishing range at Ecobuild

**OSMO UK** will show its floorcare products at EcoBuild (March 3-5) at London's Earl Court, notably Polyx Oil, a premium wood finish designed to be water-repellent and tread-resistant. Available in matt, clear and satin-matt finishes, it is claimed to cover 30sq m with two coats from a 2.5 litre tin.

Also to be showcased are Colour Foundation; Polyx Oil Rapid; Polyx Professional Hardwax Oil and



Color Range, including Country Color, an opaque, satin-matt wood finish, said to protect against all weather conditions.

As well as its 16 pre-mixed shades, an additional 186 RAL colours are also offered.

Osmo wood wax finishes and hardwax oils are said to be made using natural microporous raw materials.

**T: 01296 481220 [www.osmouk.com](http://www.osmouk.com)**

## Lano display its top-end luxury contract carpet ranges

**LANO** will exhibit at the Surface Design Show (February 10-12) in London) with carpets for luxury office, leisure and hospitality. From hospitality driven Walk of Fame to Antron carpet fibre bearing Concerto and Crescendo for offices, Lano will unveil new axminster

carpet tiles, plus the evolution of the Carve Concept in 100% nylon for hotel bedrooms, offering designs said to give depth and texture. The 80/20 wool/nylon Walk of Fame II collection in 16 colours will also be presented. **[www.lano.com](http://www.lano.com)**  
**T: 00800 5266 5266**



### Industry in brief

#### Wood floor vibration

TRADA Technology's revised Guidance Document 6 (GD6) vibration in floors (Eurocode 5) is available to download. This document complements Guidance Document 5 (GD5) to calculate deformations in timber structures using Eurocodes. [www.trada.co.uk](http://www.trada.co.uk)

#### Cleaners' code launch

The National Carpet Cleaners Association launches PAS 86 Code of Practice (Publicly Available Specification) at the Cleaning Show (March 10-12). The new code was developed by NCCA and British Standards for carpet cleaning technicians. [www.ncca.co.uk](http://www.ncca.co.uk)

#### Glue gun discount offer

A 45% price reduction on the new TEC 810-15 industrial glue gun is offered for a limited period. It is fitted with an extension nozzle, silicone rubber release mat, metal stand and sample pack of 15mm glue sticks all for £65. T: 01268 885800 [www.poweradhesives.com](http://www.poweradhesives.com)

#### Genesis supply deal

Yorkshire flooring accessories and finishes supplier Genesis APS has agreed an exclusive deal with a South African company, Tile and Floor Care (TFC), to sell its products in the UK and Europe. T: 01642 713000 [www.genesis-aps.com](http://www.genesis-aps.com)

#### 3M targets merchants

3M construction products are now available from builders' merchants, including bonding, gaffer and masking tapes; adhesives and sealants; personal protective equipment (PPE); abrasives; anti-slip flooring and matting. T: 08705 360036 [www.3m.co.uk](http://www.3m.co.uk)

#### Assessor body hits 500

The Association of Construction Assessors and Verifiers (ACAV), launched 12 months ago, has signed its 500th member. Members' benefits include discount rates to CPD events, access to online discussion forums and expert advice. [www.acav.org.uk](http://www.acav.org.uk)

#### Manufacturers suffer

UK manufacturing output fell 7.4% in the year to November 2008, its fastest decline since 1981, according to official figures.

### QUOTE:

**'People get physically healthier and mortality rates fall during bad economic times. It's the opposite of what we expected to find'**

– Chris Ruhm, US researcher

# Flooring man packs world beating punch

STROPPY builders are warned not try it on with **CHAN SAU** (right), a project manager at Loughton Contracts, a flooring contractor member of the **Contract Flooring Association**.

Martial arts expert Chan recently won a gold medal, the first ever for England, in the Commonwealth Taekwondo Championships in Canada. Chan, who has 15 years experience in Taekwondo, is a 2nd Dan black belt.

He joined Loughton six months ago to assist in the growth of two new divisions, a new residential division and a specialist timber flooring division. Having successfully project-managed some of the most prestigious high rise residential projects in the North West, Chan's experience will broaden Loughton's offering to the industry.

The company has offices in Loughton, Canary Wharf and Derby which allows it to manage projects

## Chop



nationwide. Its clients include ISG Interior Exterior, Como, Mace and Overbury as well as Laing O'Rourke, BAM Construction and Carillion.

■ T: 020 8498 6857

## Events in brief

### Interbuild only 4 days

Interbuild is down to four days this year, from October 18-21. Visitors last year reportedly included 10 of the top 20 architectural practices, 16 of the top 20 builders merchants and 18 of the top 20 building contractors. [www.interbuild.com](http://www.interbuild.com)

### School building expo

The Building Schools Exhibition & Conference (BSEC) is in Manchester from February 11-12. [www.buildingschools.co.uk](http://www.buildingschools.co.uk)

### Apprentice week dates

National Apprenticeship Week (February 23-27) involves events, interviews, web chats and activities on the benefits of apprentices. T: 0844 844 0046 [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) Meanwhile, February 27 is the deadline for companies to enter the Learning and Skills Council's awards for employers who use apprentices to improve business performance. T: 0800 954 8896 [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards)

### Flooring at Ecobuild

Carpet manufacturer Desso and wood flooring distributor James Latham will be among the exhibitors at Ecobuild (March 3-5) at Earls Court. [www.ecobuild.co.uk](http://www.ecobuild.co.uk)

### BCFA karting event

British Contract Furnishing & Design Association has an indoor karting session for members and guests on March 11. [www.thebcfa.com](http://www.thebcfa.com) T: 01494 896790

### Carpet cleaners meet

The annual general meeting of the National Carpet Cleaners Association is at the NEC, Birmingham, on March 12, alongside the Cleaning Show. T: 0116 271 9550

### Grand Designs in 2009

Over 500 exhibitors, including some in flooring, are expected at Grand Designs Live from April 25 to May 4 at ExCel, London. [www.granddesignslive.com](http://www.granddesignslive.com)

### The year of FTSE freefall

The FTSE 100 index fell 31.3% last year, its biggest annual decline since its inception in 1984.

**QUOTE:**  
*'In the US regulatory environment today, it's virtually impossible to violate the rules'*  
- Bernard Madoff, fraudster

## Grandeur of buildings grabs top trainee

THE Stone Federation Great Britain has named **STEPHEN SPENCE**, of Oldham, trainee mason of the year. Stephen, aged 18, last year won a national Skill Build junior competition at York College, where he is training, with 92 points from a maximum of 100.

Having recently qualified with NVQ level one, Stephen was only 15 when he was introduced to stonemasonry by his brother-in-law, who won a silver medal in a World Skills competition.

Stephen explains: 'One of the most interesting things about the job is the history and grandeur of the many varied buildings we work on. It gives me great pleasure to know that my work will be around for many generations to come.'

■ [www.stone-federationgb.org.uk](http://www.stone-federationgb.org.uk)

## Chip



Stephen Spence receiving his award from TV personality builder Tommy Walsh

## PEOPLE ● PEOPLE ● PEOPLE ●

**CHRIS EMERY** has joined Boen UK specification sales team as area project manager for the Midlands and Southwest, having experience of specification sales in the construction and wood flooring industry.

Business cash flow solution provider, Bibby Financial Services, has appointed **GREG TAYLOR** as business development manager. He was previously associate director at Bank of Scotland Cashflow Finance.

East Midlands flooring distributor Cheshires has recruited **SIMON HETHERINGTON** as area contract representative for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, parts of Staffordshire & the West Midlands. Simon worked for Gradus Accessories for 19 years.

British Ceramic Tile has



Chris Emery



Greg Taylor

appointed **NIKI JONES** as marketing co-ordinator (trade) and **CHRIS GRABHAM** as product marketing co-ordinator. Niki comes from Nestlé, where he was responsible for marketing. Chris previously worked on prestigious accounts such as Royal Canin, involved with product launches, exhibition design and planning, trade and retail advertising.

## OBITUARY

**JOHN COOKE** F Ball and Co sadly announces the passing of John Cooke, who worked for the company for 29 years from 1976, as technical representative in the south-east, covering Kent, Sussex and Essex. A devoted father and grandfather, he retired in 2005 to spend more time with his family and his hobbies, including woodworking and restoring vintage tractors.

Says David Hibbert, sales director at F Ball: 'John was widely recognised as a trusted and knowledgeable figure. He was a very popular character, known as much for his great sense of humour as for his industry knowledge. He will be sadly missed.'

