



Mary Murrell

speaks to

Stuart Varndall



# Right

## first time

*Getting the job right first time is the bedrock of the business at Vagg Flooring, says the md Stuart Varndall:*

STUART explains: 'We are recognised as a force in the industry because of our first class management, expert supervision and fantastic fitting team. As a result we have few snags on completion of projects, so we are known to do a good job.'

He entered the flooring trade in 1991 when he joined his brother-in-law's flooring contractor business. 'He was a most knowledgeable flooring man and the training that he gave me was second to none,' says Stuart.

After three years with him Stuart spent 10 years working for well known vinyl floorcovering and flooring accessories manufacturers in a sales capacity. During that time he became a good friend of Graham Vagg who had set up Vagg Flooring in 1976. In May 2003 Graham, having been diagnosed with cancer, asked Stuart if he would like to take over the company. The two men worked together until Graham's death the following year.

'We had a good foundation to build on but it has been six hard years work to get to where we are now,' says Stuart. 'We have a great team of 15 floor layers, the majority directly employed and mostly trained in-house, all able to carry out all aspects of floor laying. This is a strong negotiating point with builders who know that our men are reliable.'

'Our management team is amongst the best in



**Flooring at St Andrew's School, Leatherhead, a recent contract by Vagg Flooring**

the industry with over 100 years combined experience and knowledge. Contract manager Ian Kite, who started as a floor layer, has been with Vagg Flooring for over 20 years. We have a very high level of technical knowledge especially in subfloor preparation which is undoubtedly the most important element of what we do.

'In these times of increased competitiveness it may be tempting to cut corners or even be bullied into it, but that way lies disaster. We stand firmly by our 'right first time' policy.'

The company supplies and fits woven, tufted and bonded carpet and carpet tiles, vinyl, linoleum, rubber, safety flooring, wood floors and specialist sports surfaces. It is an approved installer for Gerflor's Taraflex sports flooring as used by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) among others.

Customers include builders, care homes, hospitals, local authorities, schools, sports facilities etc. Over 90% of the business is for commercial projects, with less than 10% undertaken in the domestic market, usually by request and for good quality carpet or decorative floors.

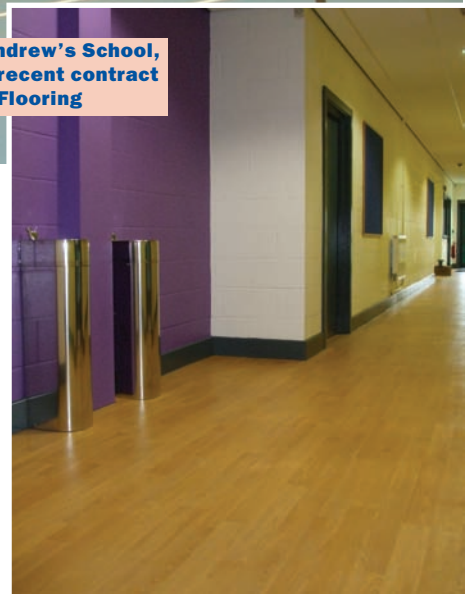
'Many manufacturers recommend us for projects, and we never under estimate their help and advice. Advisors are integral to our success and we have first class financial, legal and business help,' says Stuart.

'For over 30 years Vagg Flooring has done some fantastic work. Some jobs are very challenging especially overcoming problem subfloors.'

'A year ago we were asked by The Gym Group to lay floorcovering in one of its 2-3,000sq m gyms which are open 24 hours a day. The precast concrete subfloor had been laid with the expectation that raised access flooring would be installed, not a floorcovering. We had to make the subfloor surface billiard table smooth before installing Gerflor's vinyl. Overcoming such problems is where our strength lies.'

'Business is very good so we are fortunate. When everyone is talking doom and gloom it is so easy to hide away and wait for it to pass, but our sales manager Simon Pearson and I continue to drive the business forward.'

'We have just finished three 60 bed care homes



on the same site, in association with the builder, which makes nine so far. We installed Danfloor impervious backed carpet, SafeTred vinyl in the wetrooms and decorative floors in the dining areas. We will also be working at many schools this summer.

'I'm a great believer in the web, but sites have to be developed properly so I waited until I was sure I knew what I wanted. The Vagg Flooring website has been running for over a year and we are developing it further.'

'It already carries the CFA logo, but we are moving this to the top of the home page so that people can click on it and find out how we became a member. Being a member enhances our reputation as the CFA is a valuable association that is becoming more and more professional.'

'To promote its business in chosen market sectors, Vagg Flooring now uses a PR service. 'We can't do everything ourselves and take advice when we need it,' says Stuart.'

'Our financial year ends in August and I expect it to show that turnover is up on last year, so we are doing OK. Here everyone is working and earning the same sort of money as last year. Long may it continue.'

'The future, even in these difficult times, looks very good for Vagg Flooring as we push forward for continued growth.'

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**Carpets St George's Park care home in West Sussex installed by Vagg Flooring**