



The chief executive officer: Richard Catt

CFA comes dancing, but it's not strictly social ...

I RETURNED to work with a satisfied glow generated by a successful CFA dinner dance that we hosted over the previous weekend.

Like most businesses, moving the CFA forward requires a careful balance of updating areas that need to keep pace with the modern commercial world, whilst maintaining those key elements that define the essence of the CFA and what makes us special.

I think I can speak on behalf of the council in saying that although the CFA dinner dance is a traditional affair, it remains a popular part of the calendar and CFA culture that we want to keep.

That's not to say that we won't continually look to make things fresh and interesting and this year's event was no exception. The venue for 2009 was the Marriot Hotel, Bristol City Centre and I knew we had got one thing absolutely right as I turned in to the car park which was only a few hundred yards from the new shopping centre and within sight of Harvey Nichols to name but one of the shopping attractions.

Michelle's eyes lit up with equal measure to the groan that came from my wallet. Having dumped our bags we wandered towards the shopping centre passing our president John Alcock who had escaped having done his basic tour of duty. But joking apart, the venue and shopping were brilliant.



Then to the evening. Superbly organised by Helen at the CFA office, this year we had a disco and proper DJ rather than a live band. James Taylor was superb and a craftsman who worked his socks off to make the evening a success.

But then I guess he should be good as he is used to working at corporate events and is often employed for celebrity bashes. Of course a band has its attractions, but I gauged the success of our changed format by the number of smiling faces and the fact that the dance floor was full all night.

The dinner dance is mostly a social occasion and numbers were slightly down due to the recession, but the networking opportunity for everyone was self evident. I am sure some relationships were cemented and new contacts made.

Another highlight was the

entertaining speech given by Mark Leigh of Tremco. I like to think of him as the contract flooring worlds answer to Peter Kay, but a pound cheaper.

Another important tradition was the raffle with all proceeds going to our president's charity of choice, which this year was the Claire House Children's Hospice in Bebbington, Wirral. A worthy charity generously supported with prizes from Gradus, Altro, F Ball & Co, Heckmondwike FB and Ardex and then with equal measure by those who attended raising a total of £570 during the evening.

If you were there and enjoyed it as much as I think you did, please spread the word. But equally if there is anything we could do differently, ideas for venues or content, let us know at the CFA office. Email: info@cfa.org.uk

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CFA president: John Alcock

Ask **not** what the CFA can do for you

I HAD a good night at the recent CFA dinner dance. It was a nice evening although numbers were a touch down on previous years, but then I guess that's to be expected given the economic climate.

As well as the obvious social side though, it gave me the opportunity to talk to many more people and in greater depth than I normally could and as I said in my speech, I look forward to getting around to more regional meetings to have a chat and get a handle on some of the real issues facing

contractors today. That said, and I've said it frequently in this column, regional meetings are poorly attended and this is a pity and an opportunity lost for CFA members.

Maybe it's the 'I want' culture we live in that contractors view the CFA as something only to take from and that membership is all about member benefits and services. Trouble is, associations like the CFA shape their services and support based on input of members and this is where you come in. It's time to put

something back!

Talking to contractors at the CFA dinner was proof enough that there are issues out there and when together in a group contractors can be really vocal and passionate about your industry.

Certainly, many of you are not shy of offering solutions to problems either, so why the reluctance to participate?

We [CFA] shape our services as well as the all the other, often hidden activities such as lobbying

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