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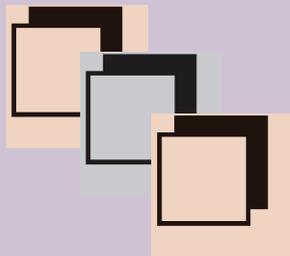
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THE FABRICATOR

Comment

So here we are again: locked down, not locked down, what will it be? I don't know if you have noticed, (or is it just me?) that every time you turn on the telly there is a scientist, professors are very popular but sometimes it is just a doctor, talking about how we should be kept locked up. One of the government's advisors, Susan Michie, a biologist and a member of SAGE, is even suggesting that we should keep masks and social distancing in place, not just for this pandemic but to prevent the spread of other viruses. So while the politicians all talk about ending restrictions they are being advised against doing so by the scientists.

I remember as a schoolboy reading comics such as *The Eagle* and *The Lion*. Always there seemed to be stories about mad scientists trying to rule the world. It can't just be coincidence, can it?

It was always going to be a long slow withering away from Brexit. The government shouts about trade deals around the world, the latest being Australia, But these are really just cover. They make it look like the promise of Brexit is being fulfilled but these deals do not even come close to replacing our business with the EU. At the same time they open us up to substandard food processing and farming practices. Johnson and his acolytes seem happy to destroy whole industries (remember fishing? It hasn't gone away,) just for the headlines. The Northern Ireland 'crisis' should be really easy to solve. We just have to accept EU food standards. But that will close our borders to hormone-fed beef and chlorinated chicken, and who would want to do that? Mind you the 'big one', the USA trade deal, seems somewhat elusive. With friend Trump out of the mix Joe Biden is coming across as a tough negotiator and Northern Ireland could be a big deal.

Recently we saw a hick-cough in inflation. With prices rising everywhere especially raw materials it is likely to continue. Going back to restaurants that were regular before lockdown I am noticing bigger bills for the same order. Energy has gone up too as has almost anything imported from Europe.

With things deteriorating so gradually Johnson is no doubt relying on no-one noticing. And if they do Covid provides a great cover.

The effects on us, on home improvement in general, have also been masked by a big boom in trade as people spend their furlough money. It is a real thing furlough money. Both my son and daughter have been on furlough; Amazon never had it so good!

But things will change, the money will run out and Chancellor Risky will eventually have to stop printing the stuff. Raw material prices, already increasing, will go through the roof. Right now we are seeing metal prices escalate and there is no sign of that changing. As someone says in this edition of *The Fabricator*: 'at present price levels steel manufacturers have no incentive to increase production, which is what it will take to bring down prices'.

The other pressure is the cost of shipping. Some reports put container prices at four times pre pandemic. Much of this is blamed on the recent Suez Canal ship-jam and if that is all it is then it should, eventually ease. However with all the world-wide trade deals the government is doing, pressure on containers can only grow and as they all have to be shipped by sea the capacity is finite.

These costs will all have to reach the consumer eventually and with the shortage of staff-both skilled and unskilled, wages must rise as well. With the cost to someone wanting to come here to work unrealistically prohibitive the only source of cheap labour now is us.

John Roper



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A four tier strategy

It has been ten years since Edgetech became part of the billion-dollar building products group Quanex. Edgetech was already then an established spacer supplier in the fenestration industry.

“This is a fantastic milestone and has given us all cause to reflect on everything Edgetech and Quanex have achieved together over the last decade,” says Edgetech managing director Chris Alderson.

“From the very beginning, the two businesses were an excellent fit – both committed to product innovation, sustainability, health and safety, as well as employee wellbeing,

“Since 2011, those synergies have enabled us to continue pushing boundaries, developing new products, and cementing Edgetech’s reputation as a global leader in spacer technology.

“Fittingly, as we enter our second decade as part of Quanex, we’re currently in the process of implementing a new, group-wide four tier strategy designed to guide our development in the coming years.

“Each of the four tiers represents a crucial stakeholder that we serve – customers, employees, shareholders, and



Chris Alderson

the community.

“By doing everything we can to delight and exceed the expectations of each of these sectors, we know we can build a business that’s even stronger, more innovative, and that provides an even better service to customers all around the world.” □

Oncoming storm

It was six months ago that I first wrote to the press to sound an early warning about the storm brewing in the freight market.

Booming demand in the west, lack of capacity on container ships and a shortage of the physical containers themselves were already starting to push up the price of shipping. I felt I had a responsibility to inform Mila customers



Richard Gyde, Mila MD

and the wider market about what we were all likely to face over the coming months in terms of increased costs.

Since then we have heard the same story from other sources. Like Mila, many suppliers have had to introduce freight surcharges to try to share some of the burden of our massively increased costs.

The price of shipping a 40-foot container from China has risen from around \$2,000 in October 2020 to more than \$8,000 in April 2021. There were signs of a slight softening in March which gave us all some hope, but prices have steadily risen again and it is depressing to have to report that the prices quoted for sailings in May were around 25% higher again.

Pre-Covid, shipping times from China were consistently around 36 days, but now we are working on a minimum of 56 days and the level of demand at our manufacturing partners means many of our lead times have doubled as well.

At Mila, we are doing all we can to ensure continuity of supply and we have already spent more than £440,000 on airfreight since the start of the year to try to keep all those customers who stayed loyal to Mila during the pandemic supplied with stock – and we haven’t passed on any of that additional cost. □

Precision, speed and service



Douglas Commercial has taken delivery of its third Emmegi state-of-the-art Comet X6HP 4-axis 7000mm model, fully enclosed and soundproofed.

Managing director Howard Douglas admits that he was sceptical about the payback when he invested in that first Phantomatic T5 3-axis 7000mm CNC back in 2005 but the speed and performance of the machine convinced him and he subsequently purchased an Emmegi Comet T6I 4-axis 7000mm machine and had no hesitation in upgrading to the very latest Emmegi

model when demand peaked this year.

He says: “We do a mix of subcontract and supply only work and our reputation rests on the outstanding quality of the windows and doors we produce. Customers come back to us time and time again because they know the value of what we deliver in terms of precision, speed and service. For that, we have to have the very best quality machines at competitive prices and Emmegi has always been our first choice.” □

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Driven by the data

With a year of uncertainty nearly behind us now is the time for businesses to strengthen their objectives and put a plan in place for the rest of 2021. Jade Greenhow, operations director of specialist data supplier Insight Data, discusses why working with the most accurate and up-to-date industry data is essential to growing your business

With restrictions lifting and the imminent return to unrestricted working, the UK economy is on the road to recovery. Which is fantastic news for companies everywhere as the country looks to get back to business.

And with 12 months of uncertainty behind us, now is the time for businesses to strengthen their objectives and put a plan in place to tackle the rest of 2021 and 2022 as standing still could be disastrous.

Your competitors have the same idea so working faster and smarter will be the way to get ahead and working with real time GDPR compliant data will be pivotal to how you reach your target audience and how you can grow your business. At Insight Data, we have been helping businesses scale rapidly with our highly targeted and accurate business data for 15 years to help clients unlock their growth potential.

Data driven

There is a reason why data should be the most important part of your marketing mix; if you don't target the right people then you are hardly likely to make any sales.

Customers want information that is useful to them, so marketing messages relevant to their specific needs will mean they are more likely to engage with your content.

Data-driven marketing enables you to have a much better idea of what and when to send marketing messages and can optimise your brand communications based on customer information.

Having as much information about your customers as is possible will allow you to develop highly targeted marketing campaigns that cater to their specific needs, desires and future behaviours. Such insight will help you to target the right customers with the right messages for the highest possible return on investment (ROI).

Salestracker

Our online prospect database and CRM system, Salestracker, holds detailed information that is updated live in real-time using seven different verification processes, including a team of telephone researchers making over 20,000 calls a month.

This allows us to manage our prospect databases frequently and accurately and helps our customers target prospects more precisely.

The accuracy of Salestracker provides our clients with all the data they will need to find out everything they need about a business, from the products they buy-in and their target market, to the areas they cover, the key decision makers and their turnover.

It means you have the right background intelligence on the companies that you are contacting to help the relationship along and make your communications more personal.



Jade Greenhow

It provides you with real time information of, not only your existing clients, but an untapped potential customer database and it's no surprise that Salestracker currently has over 700 users across the fenestration and building products industry.

A better business

Using data and Salestracker can also help you view current trends and establish new routes to market and new opportunities.

It also allows you to streamline your business thanks to credit profiling. This gives you a clear view of who best to work with and allows you to replace high maintenance, low credit, or credit-risk customers with carefully targeted profitable customers. □

Since launching in 2006, Insight Data is now the leading provider of marketing data and CRM software exclusively in the UK construction, fenestration, and glazing industries, helping suppliers get better results from their sales and marketing. If you are looking to grow your business in a faster, smarter, way, contact Insight
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Give us some credit

Transport, professional and scientific, and retail and wholesale sectors are also among top users of credit for insurance. One in four SMEs across the UK who use credit to pay for their insurance are borrowing more to pay for their premiums with many relying on credit cards. Premium Credit Insurance Index is monitoring insurance buying and how it is financed

The construction and manufacturing sectors are the most likely to rely on credit to help pay for insurance, new analysis⁽¹⁾ from the premium finance company, Premium Credit, shows.

Premium finance allows you to pay for your insurance in monthly instalments but unlike taking out a credit card or bank loan, taking out a premium finance loan does not affect credit ratings on application.

Construction firms accounted for more than 8% of all net advances from Premium Credit last year ahead of the manufacturing sector which made up 7% of advances. This was followed by transport, professional and scientific, and retail and wholesale. The five sectors together accounted for nearly a third (31%) of all net advances from Premium Credit.

Premium Credit's data shows SMEs are increasingly borrowing to pay for insurance – total net advances of premium finance for commercial insurance increased by over 11% in 2020 compared with the previous year even though the number of policies rose only marginally.

That is supported by research⁽²⁾ among SMEs and corporates showing they are borrowing more to fund business insurance with owners most likely to rely on credit cards. Nearly one in four SME owners and managers who use credit increased the amount they borrowed in the past year, with average additional credit coming to nearly £1,300.

Around three out of four (73%) SME bosses interviewed who use credit to pay for insurance say the impact of COVID-19 is the main reason for increased borrowing but premium rises from insurers were also blamed by 36% of firms.

Premium Credit is advising companies to consider premium finance which is specifically designed for insurance buyers to pay monthly for cover instead of in a lump sum, ahead of less appropriate and more expensive borrowing vehicles like credit cards and personal loans.

Owen Thomas, chief sales and marketing officer at Premium Credit says: “The cost of commercial insurance has been rising dramatically, and this coupled with the fact that many businesses have seen their cash flow deteriorate during the coronavirus crisis means more are using credit to pay for their cover.

“This is reflected in the fact that the amount of premium finance we provided to businesses last year was over 11% higher than in 2019.”

The table below shows what percentage of SMEs who rely on credit to buy insurance, used it to buy these types of policies.

Percentage of SMES who use credit to buy insurance used it to purchase this type of cover



Owen Thomas

- Vehicle insurance 75%
- Property insurance 52%
- Employer liability insurance 30%
- Business interruption insurance 26%
- Cyber insurance 22%
- Key man insurance 17%
- Directors and officers insurance 10%

Premium Credit's Insurance Index research last October⁽³⁾ found 51% of small and medium-sized firms had stopped paying for a range of business insurance policies with employers' liability insurance the most cut from a list including business property cover, professional indemnity and cyber.

Its most recent research shows the impact of not having insurance or being underinsured – nearly one in ten (9%) firms have suffered damage to property or belongings they were unable to claim for because of not having insurance or being underinsured. Average losses as a result were around £2,000 per company. □

⁽¹⁾Analysis of Premium Credit's own data for 2019 and 2020

⁽²⁾Independent research conducted by Consumer Intelligence online among 291 SME owners and managers between April 1st and 3rd 2021

⁽³⁾Independent research conducted by Consumer Intelligence online among 156 SME owners and managers between August 20th and September 3rd, 2020



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Forget price check

The Industry needs a ‘reality check’ Paul Sullivan, the CEO of Anglo European Group, one of the UK’s largest suppliers of steel and aluminium frame reinforcement for window and door fabricators. He further warns that the widely reported increasing prices for steel and aluminium are here to stay and that other suppliers are playing this down

Sullivan made his comments as reports continue to circulate about price rises in a broad range of commodities including steel, aluminium and PVC-U resin, prompting suppliers to the window and door industry to impose surcharges on supplies: “The cost of steel especially, will continue to climb for the foreseeable future,” says Sullivan, “and prices will remain high for the next 12 to 18 months at least. If prices cool at all, they will never return to pre-pandemic levels. To pass on these price rises as ‘surcharges’ gives a false impression that it is simply a short-term issue. We need a reality check. Focusing on steel, the unparalleled volatility in global price rises is the result of a number of factors. These include the cost of iron ore, closure of a number of steel mills due to plummeting demand during the early stages of the pandemic and the permanent closure of others. Production curbs in China and a surge in consumer demand as the pandemic lifts in markets around the world are also contributing factors. Neither should we forget that whilst we in the UK are heading out of the pandemic, in many countries the disease is still surging. When these countries, such as Brazil and India for example, eventually recover then pressures on steel supply will further increase.”

Sullivan also believes that steel mill owners are taking advantage of the rises in Global demand to shore up profitability: “The unrealistically low prices of steel pre-pandemic have also contributed to the closure of some mills, and we are now paying the penalty for that. I have been told privately: ‘Why would the billionaire owners of steel mills choose to start manufacturing more steel when they have managed to make less and push prices to £1,200 per tonne? The mills are very happy making far less product for double the price of last year...’”

Sullivan’s comments about global conditions are backed by those from the steel supply industry, including remarks by Richard Evans, who heads Davro Steel, one of the UK’s leading steel stockholders: “During my 30 years’ experience in the steel industry, the current price cycle increases are unprecedented. Following the dramatic reduction in global production capacity due to COVID-19 last year and the subsequent bounce back in demand worldwide in the second half of 2020 and early 2021, has meant that demand has been significantly greater than supply. This imbalance looks as if it will continue well into next year and possibly beyond, with prices continuing to be firm,” stated Richard.

Tendencies for fabricators and installers to limit increases in prices to annual or even six-monthly rises should be reviewed, suggests Sullivan. “Steel is just one commodity that will face continued price volatility during



Paul Sullivan

the foreseeable future and the reluctance of suppliers throughout the supply chain to limit price rises to once or twice a year, may result in business failures,” he says. “This is the new world; companies should be prepared to pass on these rises as they occur to their customers, including to homeowners at the end of the supply chain in our sector. That is crucial to ensure operating margins are not destroyed.”

It is not all bad news however, says Sullivan: “At Anglo European we buy our steel months ahead to ensure continuity of supply for our customers with orders now placed for 2022. Being unable to produce and sell product will be more disruptive than any price increases and window and door manufacturers must take that into account in their future planning. Irrespective of cost, availability is a very real issue. “We are working hard to protect our customers.” □

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Your H&S hub

The Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF) has launched a new online health, safety and environment hub. The site will house all the health, safety and environment services and products the federation delivers for members and the industry.

The aim is to provide a more informative service primarily for GGF members but also to show non-members all of the many services and products the GGF offers to make a more safe and sustainable industry.

The hub provides the full range of health, safety and environment support and covers core services such as the Glass Charter scheme, consultancy, health and safety data, publications, latest news and events including online forums and webinars

John Agnew, GGF managing director says: “The GGF team has been working hard to improve our value proposition and also to present our information in the most effective way. Visitors to the GGF website can freely access the new hub and see the full range of services and benefits available to help them with their operations from a health, safety and environment perspective.”

James MacPherson, GGF health, safety and environment manager says: “Working with both GGF health and safety and environment committees, we wanted to create an online space within the GGF website where members and non-members can find all aspects of our health, safety and environment services in one place. The new Hub achieves that and enables much easier navigation and access to our products and services.” □

www.ggf.org.uk



James MacPherson

Crown Roofing & Cladding has started fingerprint drug and alcohol testing at one of its European sites to promote employee health, safety and wellbeing.

Crown has a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse. The company recently purchased the Intelligent Fingerprinting test to enable on-site, in-house drug testing, along with an alcohol breathalyser from the same company, with the objective of ensuring everyone is safe at work.

Crown Roofing and Cladding now has plans to roll out the in-house testing approach to promote positive adherence to its drug and alcohol policies across construction sites in Ireland and other European sites.

Described as exceptionally easy-to-use by existing customers, the fingerprint drug test tests a sample of fingerprint sweat enabling results to be determined within 10 minutes. Crown’s own well-trained staff will carry out the random tests in-house as required, acting as a deterrent to help



underpin the company’s drug and alcohol policies. □ www.intelligentfingerprinting.com

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Stainless, flawless

By **Andy Holland**, technical and marketing manager at **Rapierstar**, the UK's largest specialist supplier of fasteners to the window industry

Windows or doors for properties located in relatively harsh environments, such as by the coast with all the salty air or in an industrial area where air pollution levels are higher, have to be manufactured with hardware and components that will stand the test of time.

This is because the extent to which different metals and alloys resist corrosion varies massively. But do you think enough about how this impacts on the fasteners you are using in the assembly of your windows and doors?

If you choose window screws made from a metal that is relatively susceptible to the effects of moisture and surface contaminants – coated carbon steel primarily – your window and door quality could be undermined. Ultimately, this could cause problems for your customer within a matter of months after installation and result in costly remedial work as well as reputational damage.

That's why many fabricators will know to choose stainless steel fasteners to help prevent these risks. But did you know that stainless steel is actually a category of metals which is made up of a number of different alloys which again have varying performance characteristics?

Stainless steel's name comes from the fact that it does not stain, corrode or rust as easily as ordinary steel. Its origins go back to Sheffield in 1913 when its properties were discovered during the search for a corrosion-resistant material to make gun barrels. In addition to giving the world an incredibly versatile material for construction and engineering purposes, it was a discovery that has also transformed our ability to create safe and hygienic environments in medical care, food preparation, our homes and much more.

How do stainless steels work?

Stainless steel is an alloy of iron, chromium and, in some cases, nickel and other metals. It is completely and



Andy Holland

infinitely recyclable and doesn't degrade through the recycling process, offering immense longevity, ideal for the era of sustainable construction.

On contact with oxygen, a chromium oxide layer is formed on the surface of the material, a passive layer that protects it and has the unique ability to repair itself. This is why a stainless steel must have a minimum chromium content of 10.5%, and the higher the chromium content the better for corrosion resistance.

Each stainless steel alloy is categorised into a 'series' based on relative performance. For the fenestration sector these are principally austenitic (series 300), ferritic (series 400) and martensitic (also series 400). Within each of these bands there are individual grades based on the composition of the alloys.

Two types of stainless for window screws...

For window and door manufacturers Rapierstar offers two types of stainless steel fasteners – austenitic and martensitic. But how do they differ and compare with non-stainless steel screws? The comparison table shows how:



	Austenitic stainless steel	Martensitic stainless steel	Coated carbon steel
Grade	300 Series (AISI/SAE)	400 Series (AISI/SAE)	1xxx-9xxx (AISI/SAE)
Level of corrosion resistance	High	Medium to high	Low
Magnetic	No	Yes	Yes
Ductility	High	Low	Mid - High
Can it be hardened?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can be used for fixing into reinforcement?	No – but it is suitable as a bi-metallic (hardened drill point)	Yes	Yes
Suitable for PVC-U?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recommended for aluminium?	Yes	No	No

Austenitic stainless steel fasteners offer the highest level of resistance to corrosion, but this alloy is relatively soft. This means that a standard austenitic window screw will not self-drill into metal reinforcement successfully – a martensitic screw would, however, drill through with ease.

But this does not mean you cannot use austenitic stainless steel fasteners in reinforced PVC-U windows or

doors. You can pre-drill into the reinforcement or choose a costly bi-metallic screw.

Which stainless steel should you choose?

When manufacturing aluminium windows and doors there is only one choice – austenitic. This is because martensitic stainless steel screws corrode when fixed into aluminium through contact with a solution. This process of galvanic corrosion is the principle on which batteries work, with two metals reacting with each other in the presence of an electrolyte (in the case of windows, water) to create an electric current – the sacrificial metal will eventually corrode away as the battery runs flat.

Martensitic stainless steel fasteners, however, do offer an excellent and worthwhile upgrade for PVC-U window manufacturing if you are currently using coated carbon steel screws. But they will not be right for every application, especially in coastal and industrial areas, so seek guidance if you are thinking about upgrading.

Austenitic stainless steel fasteners give your windows and doors the most protection from corrosion. And whilst they are also the most expensive option, remember they will ultimately deliver the most reliable outcome. The cost uplift per box of screws is still relatively small, especially when you consider that fasteners make up only around 0.36% of the overall window cost. It is a tiny premium to pay for long term customer satisfaction and peace of mind.

There is plenty of information available at www.rapierstar.com to help you make the right fastener choices, including an application chart for Rapierstar's StarPVCU fastener range and Recommended Fixings Manuals (RFMs) for all the main PVC-U profile systems so choosing the right screws for assembly is easy.

Rapierstar's technical consultants are also available to provide support and guidance to fabricators online. □

www.rapierstar.co.uk





A lot has been claimed about the benefits of aluminium by CAB and many other associations, but we should also ask: “Where would we be today without this material?” With a high strength to weight ratio, aluminium is a structural engineering material, without it we would not have the modern airliners of today, or indeed much in the way of space flight writes CAB chief executive Phil Slinger

On the ground, more of our vehicles are now being made from aluminium, less weight means less energy used in propulsion and potentially longer lasting vehicles. In fact, there are so many uses of the material across our modern life, it is difficult to imagine life without it.

So how does all this translate to aluminium products used in construction? The most obvious is in fenestration, windows, doors, curtain wall and atria roofing. But aluminium is also extensively used today in external cladding of buildings including roofing solutions such as standing seam designs. Despite some recent disastrous building fires where aluminium has been used, aluminium remains completely non-flammable.

Why is it specified so widely? Together with its engineering characteristics aluminium can last the lifetime of a building. More to the point today, last the lifetime of a building envelope as we look to repurpose and re-clad existing building structures. After the aluminium ‘in-use’ phase, it can easily be removed, recycled and replaced. Aluminium also needs no other supporting material to achieve impressive spans and comes in a wide range of alloy types to suit many applications. With the further advancement of architectural aluminium finishes, now in an unlimited range of powder coatings colours in several

exposure classes and the incredibly resilient anodising finishes, we now measure the life expectancy of building envelopes using aluminium in decades, not years.

In fact, 75% of all aluminium in use today, since the material was first commercially produced in the 1880’s, is still in use today. The growing demand for the material means that there is not enough scrap available to meet the growing market sectors across construction, transport and packaging. Today we can only meet a third of the demand by recycling and, as a result, the monetary value of scrap aluminium remains high.

So is aluminium 100% recyclable? In practice, yes, and most importantly, many times over with no loss of structural integrity. The thermal breaks, stainless steel screws, gaskets and hardware can now easily be removed from post consumer scrap in automated processes, leaving the aluminium in chipped form ready to melt back into billet production with no loss of quality. One of the key facts to aluminium recyclability is that it takes just 5% energy to recycle aluminium compared to the energy needed to extract new aluminium from the earth’s crust.

Following oxygen and silicon, aluminium is the third most abundant element in the earth’s crust. It is often close to the earth’s surface in the form of bauxite from which aluminium is extracted. It is also easy to source from open cast mines which can quickly be re-landscaped, often



Phil Slinger



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with the flora which was initially removed.

Aluminium production also continues to become more efficient reducing its embodied carbon with prime (newly mined) low-carbon billet equating to just 4.00 tCO₂e (shorthand for carbon dioxide equivalents). In comparison, the average production of one ton of primary aluminium has an emission of 16.7 tCO₂e. When added with 75% post consumer scrap, as a typical example, the carbon dioxide equivalent is lowered still further to just 2.3 tCO₂e. With continuing steps being made in the use of more renewable energy sources to produce aluminium such as hydro electricity and now with the promise of the use of hydrogen in the future, the embodiment of carbon in prime aluminium will continue to fall.

Today, the challenge in recycling aluminium is to keep the post consumer scrap separated into alloy grades. Fortunately there are only a few grades used in construction and with the help of a spectrometer these can easily be identified prior to the disassembly of post consumer products. With these recycled material grades, virtually 100% recycling is achievable with no prime aluminium needed to produce new billet.

So should we specify recycled aluminium only? Well no, as there is not enough to go around. A project containing 100% recycled aluminium will only mean more prime aluminium being used in another. As aluminium has a high scrap value, the majority re-enters the supply chain in this ‘closed loop’ scenario.

The Council for Aluminium in Building has pioneered its own closed loop recycling scheme in the UK dedicated to the aluminium construction market. The scheme expects its members to collect and recycle pre-consumer and post consumer scrap in the UK through the scheme members creating a closed loop or a cradle-to-cradle cycle which continues to reduce carbon embodiment keeping the material ‘in-use’ in the UK rather than losing this overseas.

The aim of the initiative is to encourage the recycling of aluminium alloys within the same alloy grades. For the CAB scheme we require that extrusion grades of aluminium, namely 6000 series alloys for the architectural aluminium market, are recycled back into the same 6000 series alloys. The same can be said for sheet aluminium recycling, namely with 1000 series alloys. It is important to reiterate that in a ‘closed loop’, an aluminium alloy can be recycled infinitely without loss of its specific characteristics.

Pre-consumer scrap can easily be recycled before it leaves the factory as it is often clean and of a known alloy. Post-consumer scrap on the other hand, is where the challenge lies. With the many thousands of tonnes of alloy extrusion and sheet used in our buildings across the UK, we now look towards the advantages of deconstruction, separation and recycling, and the ability to see view our built landscape as an urban mine for future raw materials. As already stated, we have recycled aluminium over many decades, primarily as it has a high recycle value, but without a closed loop we can lose the specific grades we require to recycle the aluminium back into the same product type. If we can constrain recycling to specific alloy grades, we can recycle extrusions back into new extrusions and offer a true circular economy for our aluminium products in the UK construction industry.

Key to this capability is the advent of the handheld spectrometer for identifying the content of an aluminium



alloy. Easily portable and very quick to use, grades can easily be checked prior to recycling. This means that the aluminium grades can be checked and identified on a building site prior to deconstruction. The quantity available on a given site can also be relatively easily calculated before removal as aluminium extrusions and sheets are usually uniform in shape and easily measured. Skips for the scrap, clearly labelled for the identified grades being removed, can be obtained from recyclers to be placed on site for collection.

The second challenge is to remove non-aluminium components from the aluminium frames of windows and curtain walling, such as hinges, handles, gaskets, screws and weather seals. Done manually this could take some time and we must also consider the removal of thermal breaks made of materials such as polyamide and polyurethane. Fortunately, the technology has advanced considerably, and this process is completely automated. What is supplied back to the smelter is chipped aluminium, with minimal contaminants such as paint and thermal breaks which are mostly removed in the process.

CAB’s closed loop recycling scheme is open to members as part of their membership package. While such closed loop recycling of construction materials is currently voluntary, government legislation could be introduced on embodied carbon content in the future and main contractors are increasingly seeking evidence to demonstrate the sustainability credentials of their supply chain. Aluminium scrap is an important resource and we should maximise the quantity and quality of recovered aluminium scrap in the UK to build the circular economy of the future.

CAB encourages anyone working and supplying products within the construction aluminium supply chain to join CAB and join the discussion. Together we can shape the industry and portray the facts of this amazing material. 

Based at the picturesque Bonds’ Mill development in Stonehouse, despite the pandemic, it is business as usual and staff are on hand at the offices or are working remotely to answer any aluminium fenestration related questions. News and event information is also regularly updated on the CAB website at www.cab.org.uk. For Association Membership enquiries, please contact Jessica Dean at the CAB offices by email jessica.dean@cab.org.uk or telephone 01453 828851

Back to school

Additional funding for school refurbishments linked to the government's Build Back Better commitments should make for a busy summer in the school refurbishment market, with window system replacements likely to be high on the agenda, writes Schüco's Mark Briggs

The government's own figures suggest that around 60 per cent of the UK's schools were built before 1976. Many feature large single-glazed, steel-framed windows that are thermally inefficient.

School rebuilding programme

Recognising the issue, in 2020 the government launched the 10-year School Rebuilding Programme, with construction on the first sites expected to start from autumn this year. In addition, the annual allocation to schools in 2021 has been increased by 20% and now stands at £1.8 billion.

Energy efficiency and ventilation

Increasing energy efficiency will be one of the objectives of any refurbishment, yet there is also likely to be a very close focus on ventilation, given the established link between poor ventilation and the spread of coronavirus in school classrooms.

Many schools rely on natural ventilation – using the 'stack effect' where warm air rises and is vented through windows or rooflights at the top of the building and by default, air is drawn in through windows at lower levels. This is very effective when windows are open but the tendency to close windows when the temperature falls or when there is a lot of outside noise will hugely reduce the ventilation flow.

Ventotherm Twist

A more predictable supply of outside air will be achieved if the window systems include ventilation provision in the outer frame profile. The Schüco Ventotherm Twist, created in collaboration with Renson, is an example of this solution. It is almost completely concealed in the profile and allows for controlled air exchange even with closed windows. Energy efficient heat recovery of up to 80 per cent means fresh air is pre-heated as it comes in from outside.



Air quality sensors ensure demand-driven regulation for an optimum, user-oriented indoor climate. At the same time, Schüco Ventotherm Twist protects against draughts and keeps insects and pollen out.

Refurbishment

In a refurbishment project, a standard system (such as the Schüco AWS 70 SC) can be customised, allowing opening windows to be pivoted to match existing windows and additional opening units can be added if required. Large-scale refurbishment projects will benefit from a seamless integration of window, door and façade systems.

Skinner's School

The refurbishment of Skinner's School is a good example of this type of integration, providing a consistent appearance throughout the glazed areas and delivering very good thermal performance. In this instance, the Schüco AWS 70 SC and FWS 50 were combined, with the school bursar choosing the systems for both their aesthetics and performance.

Skinner's is an ambassador school for green initiatives. It was felt that using the Schüco products would give the right impression and provide a combination of performance in use and demonstrable sustainable principles.

Build, build, build

If the government lives up to its promise to Build, Build, Build in order to restore the UK's economy, then education buildings, with their very specific design needs, will be an important and growing market. ▣

Missing progress

Veka Recycling's Simon Scholes says that, whilst attitudes towards the reprocessing PVC-U framing material for the home improvement sector is better than ever, we are not there yet

Whether we in the PVC-U recycling business like it or not, our sector still retains an element of *Steptoe and Son* about it. Whilst post-consumer PVC-U is anything other than scrap, some of the collection and re-manufacturing processes still leave a little to be desired.

I risk sounding a little pompous but Veka Recycling and a handful of other well-known window and door industry brands, have led the way to professionalise this key sector of the industry. With solid investments and operating to strict and well-proven practices and protocols that guarantee that the collection and recycling of PVC-U is safe and completed legally and ethically, the image of the sector has changed dramatically. But the fact that an estimated 20% of removed PVC-U window and door frames remain unaccounted for each year, means that as an industry we have lost control of that material. It could be anywhere.

Furthermore, the now largely debunked suggestion that window and door fabricators and installers will object to 'second-hand plastic' in their profiles is clearly barmy and yet this was reiterated to me by a serious player in the systems market quite recently.

There is still work to do.

Veka Recycling's new state-of-the-art facility at Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, was created for the unambiguous purpose of recycling up to 30,000 tonnes of PVC-U window and door frames and profiles annually. It required a great deal of preparation, as all such projects do. However, in addition to the usual considerations of planning and permissions, site preparation, design and build, engineering calculations, specification and application, logistics and, of course, installation, we also faced the challenge of elevating the concept of recycling PVC-U amongst a significant section of the window and door industry.

At Veka Recycling we have put our money where our corporate mouth is. Our commitment and faith to the UK market are undeniable and our investment is now around the £15m mark. The inclusion of additional refinements that further increase the Wellingborough plant's capabilities and capacities allow us the proud boast that our facility is Europe's most advanced specialist recycling plant.

As advanced as our technology may be however, we still need the feedstock. And as an industry we still must ensure that every shred of PVC-U window or door removed from a building, reaches our factory or those of our competitors. Not a gram should 'leak' from the system, to find its way into landfill or dumped illegally in a field or abandoned in a warehouse. And that especially includes the material that is not so easy to re-process such as gaskets, that still have to be dealt with correctly despite



Simon Scholes

their limited value.

PVC-U resin shortages are affecting every systems house and therefore knocking on down the line to fabricators and installers nationwide. But if there is a positive to emerge from this situation it is that recycled polymer is in great demand by extruders that have previously resisted the inclusion of recycled material in their profiles, irrespective of the science that supports doing so. Reprocessed PVC-U is now in great demand and there is a more concerted effort to focus on the professionally managed collection and reprocessing of the material as it is removed from homes and commercial buildings.

Not everyone is fully on board with this however. Our industry needs the commitment of everyone in the supply chain to take responsibility for the old frames that are removed, to ensure that the company that those frames are committed to for disposal is operating to the highest standards and can certify the route of their disposal.

The responsibility for this lies largely in the hands of installers, who have a duty to ensure that the frames that they remove are passed to licenced operators who can easily demonstrate the trail for disposal and reprocessing. It is the duty of all of us however, and especially the systems companies and fabricators, to support the installers in achieving this. □

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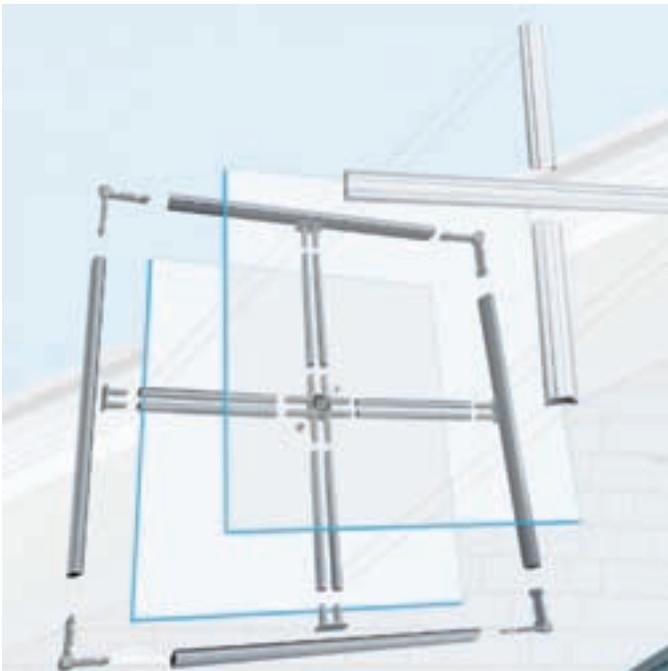
Cost over quality?

Mark Hickox, sales director at Thermoseal Group discusses the balance between price, quality and energy efficiency in the supply chain



The priority for homeowners purchasing replacement fittings and additions to homes is, as it has been since the government proposed initial targets for achieving zero-carbon homes, a balance between price, quality, and advantages of purchasing energy efficient products.

In the current trading environment where prices are rising due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic which have been compounded by Brexit, it is easy to lose sight of these goals to achieve the most cost-effective product offering.



Mark Hickox

Graded on a curve

For years, the construction and appliance industries as a whole have spent millions of pounds telling homeowners about the advantages of purchasing energy efficient products with rainbow style labels offering 'A' ratings followed by 'A+', 'A++', and even 'A+++ in some markets. As a result, it has become an expectation that the best products offering long-term savings are those offering the best energy-ratings.

As manufacturers and suppliers within the window trade, it is our responsibility to make sure that we do our best to offer the homeowner what they expect: a product which has been constructed to the highest standards using quality energy efficient components.

Having been in the window industry for over 30 years now, I am pleased to say that I have seen continual improvements in both quality of components and an



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ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT



emphasis on quality of the construction of insulated glass (IG) sealed units. This is great to see, but as we are all aware, true quality comes at additional cost.

Finding balance

We are the first to admit how difficult it is to focus on quality in the face of such a multitude of costs, including negative exchange rate movements, massive fluctuations in the LME and the price of oil, as well as major price increases on shipping which in some cases has increased four-fold. The effects of these increases may not always be immediately obvious. For example, steel is used to make the drums that desiccant and sealant are supplied in. With the price of steel having seen as much as 100% increase, this has significantly impacted on the price of desiccant and sealant. Then if we consider that oil, which increased by as much as 10% in a month, is used in the manufacture of a multitude of plastic products, this will have an impact on the price of plastic spacer systems and injection moulded fittings. As much as we dread passing the rising costs down the supply chain, we will all have to do it.

For our customers, insulated glass manufacturers, not only are they seeing price increases on components from suppliers such as ourselves, but they are also seeing price increases from glass suppliers. Fabricators and window installers have also seen price increases on many of the products they purchase.

Despite these increases, quality of construction at each stage of the supply chain is paramount. We all must still

run the business with increased costs but focus on quality at every stage, sometimes with whole teams isolating due to Covid-19 government guidelines.

Keep moving on, keep moving forward

At Thermoseal Group, we are driving quality through our production sites, doing our best to keep prices as low as possible, but ultimately, we are doing everything we can to maintain an uninterrupted supply of energy efficient components that our customers require to manufacture high performance IG units and keep the supply chain moving. The way we see it is that it is most important to keep the supply chain moving with high quality energy efficient windows to meet end-user demand, even if the windows come at a slightly higher price to the homeowner. □



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GEZE builds NHS



GEZE UK has been awarded a five year contract by NHS UK Property Services.

The contract is believed to be one of the largest contracts of its kind providing a service to more than 1,000 sites and 5,000 assets. The majority of sites provide regional healthcare and fall into one of the following categories:

- Health centres and GP surgeries
- Hospitals and hospital-related properties and offices

GEZE Service has recently launched a recruitment drive to provide the necessary support for the contract and is recruiting for key account managers, account administrators and service technicians for automatic and

industrial doors.

Service director Adam Presdee says: “GEZE Service is delighted to be given the opportunity to work on such a prestigious project, we are confident that this contract will provide job security and opportunity for years to come. With an exciting relationship ahead, GEZE is looking forward to working with the NHS in maintaining and improving the public’s experiences and prolonging the life cycles of its assets.”

The total NHS Property Services portfolio consists of more than 3,000 sites and is worth over £3bn. □

www.geze.co.uk

Dudley’s Aluminium has secured projects with a combined worth of over £250,000, with two new clients.

The first project is the TVR Showroom in Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent. TVR is a British manufacturer of high-end sports cars and will produce the Griffiths model at their new home in South Wales.

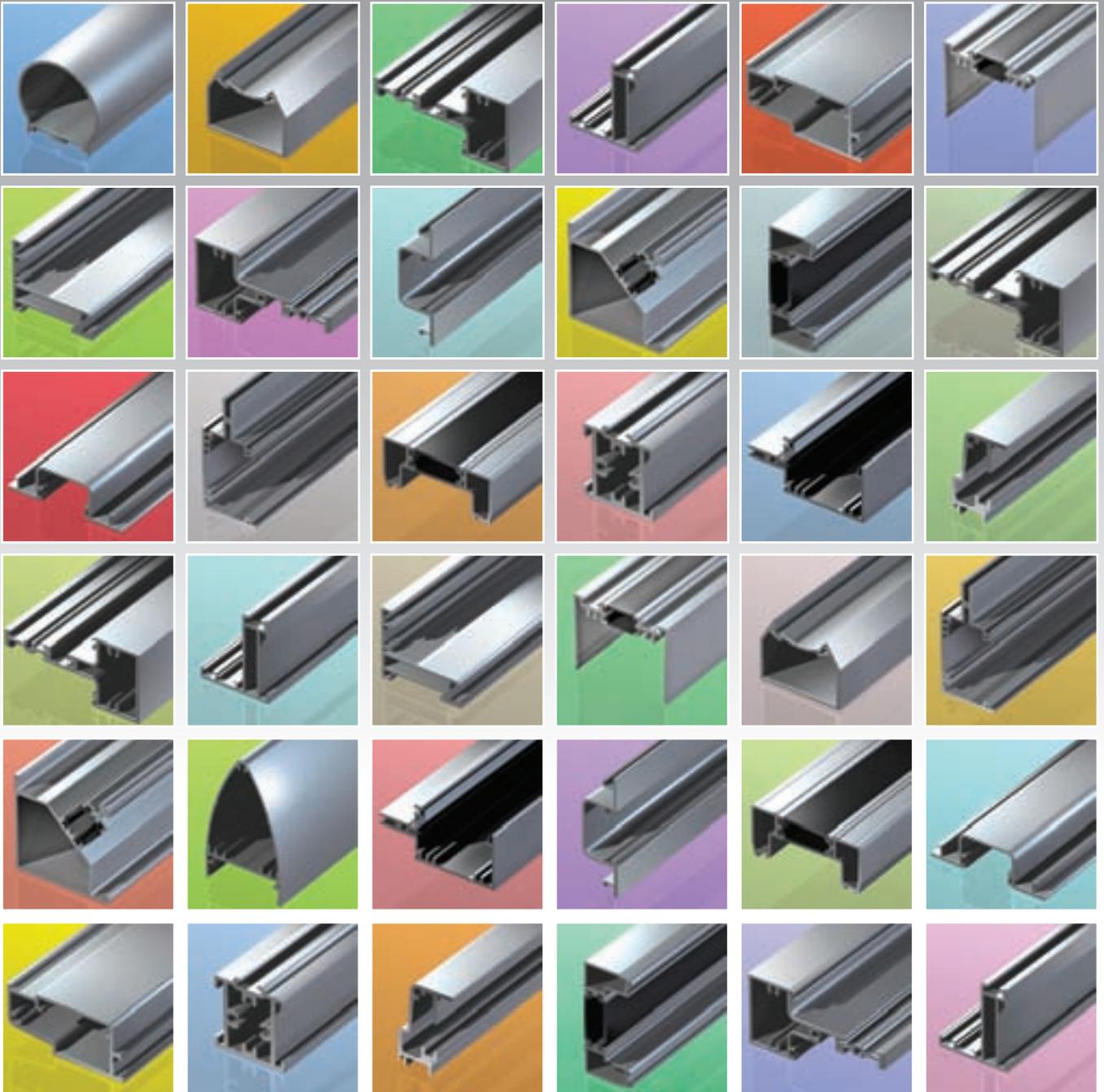
Dudley’s will be working with Jones Brothers (Henllan) and will install Kawneer curtain walling and automatic entrance doors.

Dudley’s Aluminium will also be using Kawneer products on the second project, the Boundary Yard development in Newbury. Working with construction specialists Verogen, Dudley’s will use Kawneer curtain walling and framing in addition



to installing automatic entrance doors. □

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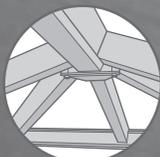
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Colour my cladding

The customer service and a wide choice of colours are some of the reasons why stockist Watts Roofing says that it looks no further than Freefoam for all its cladding requirements.

Watts Roofing began stocking Freefoam cladding and other products four years ago on the recommendation of now assistant manager Chris McGrath.

As well as Fortex cladding, Watts Roofing also sells a range of other Freefoam products, including fascia and soffit. The company recently installed Fortex cladding to the front counter of its Stevenage branch. It says that it has seen an increase in interest and sales of the product since doing so.

The company has built up a strong working relationship with the Freefoam team over the past four years, working closely together to solve any problems as soon as they occur.

McGrath says: “The Freefoam sales team are a great help and the office staff are outstanding. I have been offered many opportunities to move to other suppliers, but I won’t budge from Freefoam. They do their best to sort out any issues, I have no qualms with them.

“Colour is important to customers and lots of other reps can’t source the colours that Freefoam can supply. We have a display in our Stevenage branch that shows off their



range of colour options. Grey is popular at the moment, as aluminium seems to be taking off in a big way.

“We have seen an increase in interest from the home improvement market for cladding. The recent lockdown has seen lots of people making changes, building summer houses and ‘pub sheds’. Also, I have had a big order from a local council for Freefoam cladding in Rosewood and other councils have shown an interest too. □

www.wattsroofing.co.uk

Dustcontrol UK has launched a new, all-in-one range of powerful three-phase turbo vacuum cleaners.

The latest addition to the DC Tromb family, the DC Tromb Turbo offers optimum quality, containment and performance. One of the major updates is the three-phase turbo motor that has been designed specifically to target heavy-duty cleaning. The new range has also been developed with a thermal protector that activates at high temperatures, while a simpler filter change has also been included for easier and quicker removal.

The DC Tromb Turbo is available with direct start or a frequency inverter (VFD), while those working in ATEX zone 22 can benefit from the EX model.

The DC Tromb Turbo with direct start is suitable for source extraction from medium-sized power tools such as grinders, jackhammers and saws, while the VFD model gives 50% more Hepa filter area than its predecessor and can remove dust during polishing of glass fibre, carbon fibre and epoxy with a hand-held sander. New safety features such as overheating protection is also added. Both models can be equipped with either a steel container, plastic bag or a Longopac bag. □



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