



Sean Mackey (left) and Adam Jones (right)

Fortunately, it doesn't happen very often these days, but when a window and door systems house goes out of business, the impact is extensive and far reaching. When the rug was pulled earlier this year by the owners of one of the industry's longest established and once most popular brands Duraflex, the fall out amounted to a good eight on the business Richter scale, as whole commercial ecosystems were reorganised for dozens of fabricators and possibly hundreds of installers

Maintaining the earthquake simile, Jade Engineering became 'International Rescue' in the mission to re-equip fabricators rushing to tool up for the systems chosen to replace Duraflex which, whilst suffering through underinvestment and faith from its owners, was nonetheless a popular brand. But the end was nigh, and continuity was the name of the game. Now, at the end of one of the most frantic periods in its history, tool maker and specialist frame machinery builder Jade Engineering has been able to reflect on what amounts to the anatomy of a systems house closure.

"It has been the most manic period for years," says Sean Mackey, who, with partner Adam Jones, owns Jade, which provides machine tools for every PVC-U system in the UK and most of those presented in aluminium. "Essentially we work for the systems houses who traditionally come to us to equip new fabricators with the tooling needed to fabricate windows and doors, using their system," says Mackey. "So the companies to which the soon-to-be ex Duraflex fabricators rushed when news broke that their profile supplier would soon be no more, then turned to us with a rush of orders, for machine tools but also specialist machinery such as millers. And of course, every fabricator taken on, wanted their factories equipped the day before yesterday."

Burt Mackey says he is now able to smile again after an intensive three months involving 14 hour days and seven day weeks.

The statistics for the quarter ending September provide entertaining reading in themselves. Jade manufactured, supplied and installed no less than 70 of its Jade end and bead millers, with a further 40 of its customers' own machines being retooled, figures Jade would expect in a normal 12 months.

425 sets of cutting heads were milled in Jade's advanced CNC-equipped machines, using three tonnes of steel, whilst 2,000 pairs of contour blocks were manufactured to high tolerances, using two tonnes of aluminium.

Additional miscellaneous machinery and tools were also produced and delivered in this period as many fabricators took the opportunity to review their systems and processes for the first time in years in some cases, taking advantage of the tree shaking that forced them to review.

"We could not have done it without our people, who stepped up to the plate – literally – and put in the hours to apply their skills to processes that simply cannot be hurried," says Mackey. "The manufacture of tooling and machinery of this type requires high precision and great engineering skills and experience, and our people have done us proud."

"They clocked more than 32,500-man hours during this period, and swigged 10,000 cups of tea and coffee between them."

Whilst Sean Mackey and Adam Jones are proud of their achievement, the operation has not been without a price to the partners: "We purchased a 30,000sq ft building last year that was intended to become Jade Engineering's new headquarters this autumn, with all except one of our various operations being housed under the same roof. That has been on hold and we now need to kickstart that process again," says Mackey. "We hope to open now in the New Year."

"Let's hope and pray that another big name doesn't bite the dust, at least for a few months." □





Winchester manufacturer Bespoke Aluminium Manufacturing (BAM) has made what it describes as: ‘an extensive purchase of machinery’ from Bedfordshire supplier Kombimatec



Having made the decision to expand the company’s direction and start cutting frames in house, managing director Ben Turner and business partner Matt Goss invested in the range to ensure maximum, 24-hour output from BAM’s new factory, which opened in January 2022. Along with windows and facades, the factory will also supply aluminium bi-folds to the south and south west.

With years of combined expertise in sales, plus a mutual frustration with the quality and service from competitors, the pair chose to take on new premises and fill it with five Kombimatec pieces. Turner explained the difference they hope BAM will make to the industry landscape: “Matt and I have always liked to get our hands dirty and share a determination to offer the very best to our customers. When we talked about expanding into cutting the products on site, we immediately had Kombimatec

recommended to us due to its reputation for simple, straight forward transactions and great customer service.

“We knew our spend would be big, and we were keen to move quickly, so it was vital that whoever we went with could support us in what we wanted to achieve.”

The list includes the CC124 pneumatic corner crimper, the DGS530 electronic double mitre saw, which boasts a series of automated features and routines, an AMC308 axis machining centre with automatic tool change cabinet and touch screen control, an AFV362 variable angle end miller with quick change arbour and the MGS460 variable angle upstroke mitre saw with 400mm blade.

From order to delivery was just two weeks, something which Goss and Turner were highly impressed with: “Kombimatec’s David Parsons has been superb to work with. Aside from the recommendation, we searched online for potential suppliers, and it was an easy choice once we saw the vast range of equipment Kombimatec offered. One conversation with David and we knew we were in safe hands. We’re very pleased to be working with such a progressive and forward-thinking company and look forward to seeing both businesses grow.” □

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