

Innovative Thinking for the Future Home

Keylite Roof Windows and their dedicated technical team are helping architects and housebuilders create the smart homes of tomorrow.



Mark McCall of Automated Homes has always been an advocate for smart home living and has recently completed the build of his own house which sets the standard when it comes to energy performance. By integrating all the buildings technology systems into one and incorporating the most energy efficient materials Mark has delivered a beautiful home with exceptionally low running costs.

Homeowner Mark said: "As a low-energy household, insulation and ventilation are two very important factors for us. 2020 Architects understood that we needed some high-performance roof windows that would complement the extra insulation, air tightness and other low energy features we incorporated into the property.

"Being able to open up our roof windows to expel any excess heat has been fantastic, particularly this summer. Yet once the windows are closed, Keylite's fully integrated expanding thermal collar and triple glazing ensures that minimal heat can escape, which has made the windows perfectly compatible with the rest of the features in our home.

"Keylite's technical department went above and beyond and spoke to our smart home suppliers, Epitome Living, supplying additional pieces of hardware which allowed us to integrate Keylite electric windows and blinds into our own automation system, Loxone."

With specialist knowledge and advice on bespoke Roof Window requirements, Keylite's Technical team are on hand to support your project enquiries for the homes of tomorrow.

What's
coming
up in this
issue



Merchant Milestones

Mark Setchell
Managing Director, EH Smith



Buoyant Demand...

Noble Francis
Economics Director, CPA



Championing Change

Kate Tinsley
CEO, MKM Building Supplies

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Into the Storm

When it comes to storms, failed forecasts and predictions are nothing new. Michael Fish infamously failed to predict a hurricane just hours before it hit. He said during the forecast: “Earlier on today, apparently, a woman rang the BBC and said she heard there was a hurricane on the way. Well, if you’re watching, don’t worry, there isn’t!”
The rest is history!

The tsunami of events over the last 20 months have certainly felt like a ‘Michael Fish’ moment for the majority of us. Brexit of course was no surprise – far from it – it graced the news channels for months on end. However, a global pandemic with numerous lockdowns followed by a rapid V-shaped recovery, escalating demand, material shortages and price inflation impacted at a rate and force no-one was expecting. This rapid turn of events presented us with the most challenging period in our industry since the recession. How did we respond? With agility! We were decisive in our actions and tackled the challenges with great resourcefulness and resilience. I must acknowledge all staff across our Group for their commitment and dedication. They adapted quickly and weathered the storm.

The contributions in this issue of Merchant Margin Maker demonstrate how dynamic and forward thinking our industry is in the face of adversity. We are evolving and embracing change in response to challenging times. Digital transformation, sustainability and investment in our talent are prevalent themes.

Sean Og Coyle
Keystone Group Commercial Director

Keystone Lintels Awarded Buildbase Supplier of the Year

Keystone Lintels has been awarded 'Supplier of the Year' by Buildbase in recognition of its outstanding customer service.

Keystone Lintels is delighted to have won this coveted award as it follows on from the company's success in winning Southern Division Supplier of the Year. With over 175 branches nationwide, Buildbase is part of the Grafton Group and is one of the largest builders merchants in the UK.



People on the Move



Chris Hemmington-Green
Sales Director (GB)
Keystone & IG Lintels

In April this year, we were delighted to have Chris Hemmington-Green join us as Sales Director for both IG and Keystone brands. Chris is responsible for the development and delivery of a profitable sales strategy for GB, as well as contributing to the overall development of the business. Chris had previously worked for his last employer for 17 years, where he held various sales leadership roles.

On joining, Chris said "I am really excited to be joining Keystone Group. As the market-leader Keystone are well placed to develop their brand and reputation even further as the market begins to reopen and opportunities arise. I am very much looking forward to working with the team to develop these opportunities and be part of the continued success and growth."



Kris Willis
Regional Sales Director
Keystone Lintels (Ireland)

In January 2021 Kris Willis took up a new role within the Keystone Lintel brand, focusing solely on the growth of Keystone Lintels sales in Ireland. Kris now has the additional responsibility for both the technical sales office and the external sales teams. Throughout the last number of years Kris Willis has led the sales activity for both Keystone and Keylite brands in Ireland.

On this promotion, Kris said "I am very much looking forward to continuing to grow the Keystone Lintels business in Ireland with our key merchant and builder partners whilst also driving Keystone's customer first ethos throughout the business from start to finish in the sales process".



Jonathan Boland
Regional Sales Director
Keylite (UK North & Ireland)

Earlier in the year, Jonathan Boland was promoted to oversee the entirety of the North of the UK as well as Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Jonathan says: "Our ethos at Keylite is to work hard, but always with a smile on your face. Morals and trust are incredibly important to us, and this is why we have built up such close relationships with loyal customers across our markets. There is an enormous sense of pride that comes with knowing that we are continuing to develop our markets and build long-standing partnerships with customers – we want everyone in the supply chain to succeed, and this is what we at Keylite are passionate about."



Jamie McGuinness
Regional Sales Manager
Keylite (North)

Keylite's Jamie McGuinness has been promoted to Regional Sales Manager for the North. Being with the northern division for over seven-years, Jamie has forged strong customer relationships and is enthused about bringing his passion for the brand to his new role. Jamie says: "I'm looking forward to getting stuck into this next challenge, supporting our loyal customer base at a regional level and providing a strategic focus on future growth plans. As market leaders in innovation and product development, Keylite prides itself on developing and supporting our merchant customer base by offering training and marketing opportunities to help increase sales."



Building on Success

Buildbase is one of the UK's fastest growing builders' merchants with approximately 150 branches nationwide. Here we talk to Martin Bull, Procurement Director for Buildbase Group of Companies about success and future growth.

Tell us a bit about Buildbase and your role in particular?



Buildbase was established in 1997 as the trading name for Grafton Group's UK builders merchandising operation. Since then, the company has continued to grow, with several acquisitions and multiple award wins.

I've been with the Grafton Group since 2013, but I started my current role in February 2020 – just before the pandemic hit. Having spent 15 years in the industry, I was keen to bring my experience and learnings to the role, but of course, last year threw up its own challenges!

A big part of my role is leading the team I work with – setting expectations and supporting them by removing barriers to help them fulfil their roles. I'm a huge advocate for engagement and empowerment. I want to work with great people who are great at what they do, and I hope I help facilitate this.

“The impression we get from Keystone is that it is a well-run, professional business with helpful people at its heart.”

Buildbase is approaching a huge network of branches nationwide, what are your plans for the future?

We're currently in the process of being bought by Huws Gray, subject to customary regulatory approval by the Competition and Markets Authority. This is a very exciting time for us; Huws Gray has a very similar cultural ethos and business objectives as Buildbase and it's a great opportunity for sharing experience and learnings on both sides, once the acquisition is complete.



“Keystone does a fantastic job at having touchpoints in all areas of our business, so much so in fact that the Group had far and away the most nominations from our teams.”

Keystone Lintels is Buildbase’s current ‘Supplier of the Year’ and Keylite Roof Windows has been a previous winner. What do you look for in a key supplier and what is different about how Keystone Lintels and Keylite support your business?

The fundamental element is how a supplier works with us. Keystone does a fantastic job at having touchpoints in all areas of our business, so much so in fact that the Group had far and away the most nominations from our teams. Feedback from sales, finance and procurement was that Keystone just ‘makes it easy’ for us and we have a great relationship with all Keystone Group brands.

The impression we get from Keystone is that it is a well-run, professional business with helpful people at its heart. If you can make your customers’ lives that bit easier by adapting to their way of working, then this makes you a key supplier in our eyes. Conversations with the Keystone Group feel like we’re a partnership, as we’re working towards the same goal.

Supply chain has been a problem for the sector in the last 12 months. How has this impacted the business and how have your suppliers supported you through this challenge?

More than anything, the supply chain issues of the past year have created a lot more work for our teams. Everyone – whether in sales, procurement, or in-branch – has been extremely busy trying to find stock as well as fulfilling their day-to-day roles. This wasn’t something we would’ve had to spend time on previously, so it’s disruptive more than anything else.

That said, we know it’s an issue that the entire market is facing. It’s positive in one way that we’re all in the same boat... but I’m sure none of us would want to be in this boat at all given the choice! We want to be the exception when it comes to supply issues. That’s why we put so much importance on our relationships with suppliers.

How is Buildbase adapting to the digital challenge – what does the future of merchant trading look like to you?

One of our long-term strategic goals is to be ‘digitally engaged’ – but this isn’t just lip service. We’ve invested heavily in our website and ecommerce offering over the past year, especially since we saw this area explode with consumers undertaking home and garden improvements throughout 2020 and into 2021.

We’ve also put a big focus into our marketing efforts and social media channels, as well as ensuring our engagement survey is 100% digital going forward. This is not only great from a sustainability point of view, but it also helps futureproof the business by ensuring we take a much more holistic approach to digital throughout the business.

What is your outlook for 2022?

The first half of this year was very strong, but we’re conscious that so much in this industry is dictated by the market as a whole. For me, I think if we continue to invest in our people, support our teams and strengthen our relationships with our suppliers, then this will help massively when it comes to weathering whatever the market has to throw at us going forward.



Home Comforts Get Smarter



Smart technology has been soaring in popularity over recent years, with more than 30% of UK homeowners owning at least one smart home product.¹



Following the events of the past couple of years, where the UK population found itself spending a lot more time at home, it's no surprise that demand and consumer appeal for smart home tech has continued to rise.

According to their annual report on the state of the connected home (July 2021), techUK and gfK state that UK consumers purchased 21.8 million smart home devices in 2020 – a 22% rise in volume compared to 2019.² The market predicts that there is still huge opportunity for further growth, as smart home tech still only accounted for less than a fifth of all home technology purchased.

Early adopters of smart home tech enjoyed the first benefits of the connected home, with the ability to control appliances such as lights, central heating, hot water, and security. Fast forward to 2021 and the landscape continues to change. Smart speakers and TVs are commonplace and smart technology itself will soon be standard in almost every household appliance we buy.

At the same time, savvy households are making full use of smart lighting and energy control to help reduce their bills, with AI and learning technologies understanding patterns in our routines and adapting the way our homes respond.

While the pandemic has certainly seen many of us investing more in the fabric and fittings in our homes, it has also brought a sea change in how we think about their impact on our wellbeing – and the environment around us. Consumers choosing smart technologies are no longer satisfied with additional control or security; comfort, improved health and a reduced carbon footprint are equally important considerations.

KeyliteConnect®

It is these home comforts that Keylite is bringing to the fore. Fresh air ventilation, natural daylight and thermal protection are amongst the top factors in transforming a house into a healthy and comfortable home. But with daily life and energy efficiency often putting the three out of balance, our Keylite product specialists set out to enable smart home technology to align both convenience and home productivity.

The result is our brand-new smart home technology product range called KeyliteConnect®, which includes app enabled Keylite Roof Windows and Blinds, and wireless technology to transform the way homeowners experience natural daylight and fresh air in their homes.

Using the keyliteConnect® app and hub, homeowners can monitor and operate their smart, app-enabled Electric and Solar Powered Roof Windows and Blinds remotely. The app allows users to set pre-timed actions, such as airing the building for a certain duration, or automatically lower blinds in the evening, meaning users can keep their homes running efficiently and conveniently, no matter whether they're at home or away.

¹ smarthomeweek.co.uk

² The state of the Connected Home 2021: a year like no other : techUK and gfK. <https://spark.adobe.com/page/LCRPh1X14fjDM/>

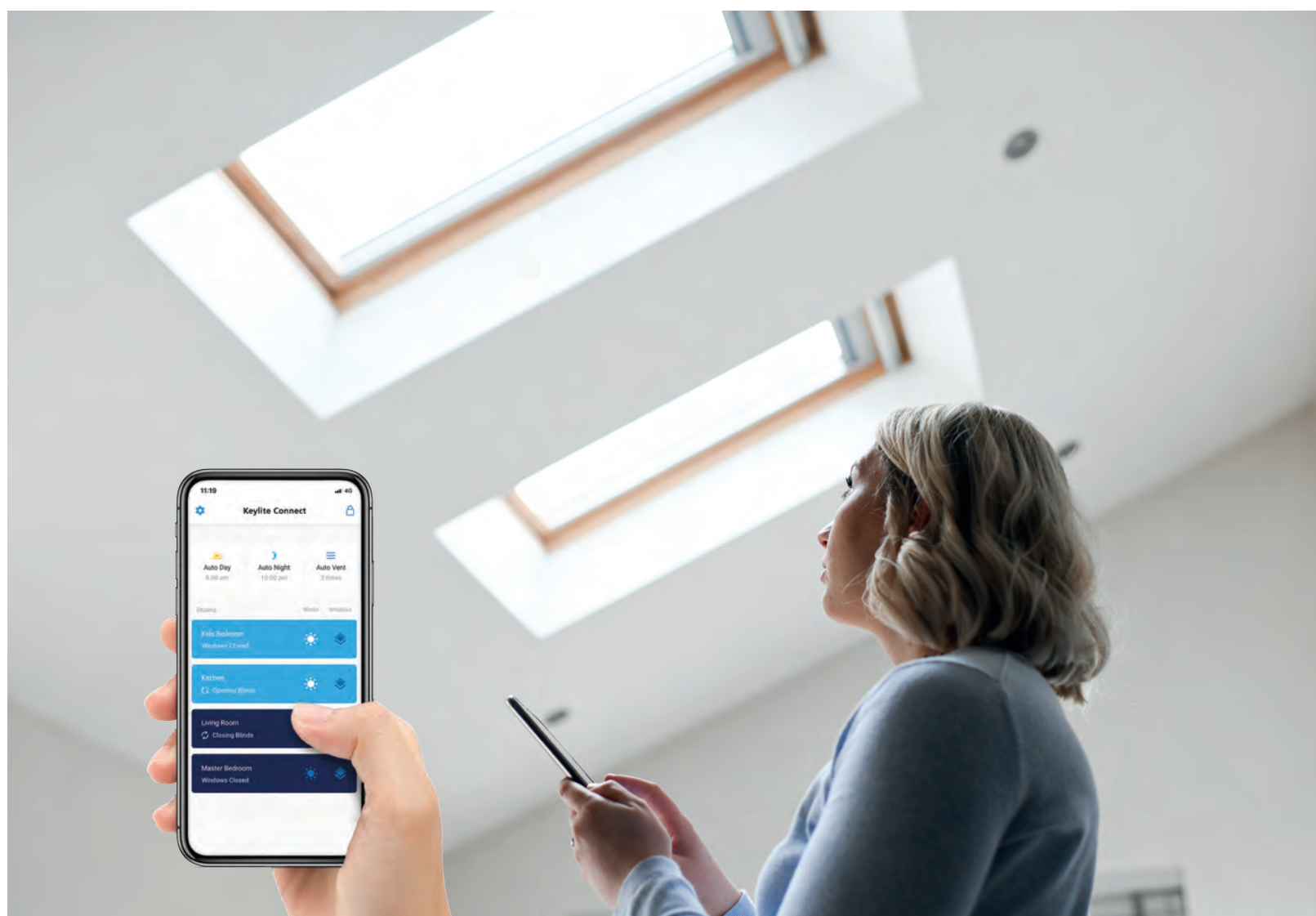
At-a-glance

- **Clean, fresh air** - Switch the roof windows to the trickle ventilation position on the app, and fresh air can circulate without compromising building safety.
- **Weatherproof** - The smart rain sensor will automatically close windows in the event of a downpour.
- **Long term cost savings** - KeyliteConnect® app-enabled Solar Powered Roof Windows and Blinds are powered completely by solar energy with no requirement for mains electricity. Harvesting solar energy, the roof windows retain power in the window's battery system, enabling operation day and night.
- **Minimal heat loss** - With a choice of double and triple glazing and an expanding thermal collar unique to Keylite, our roof windows provide excellent thermal efficiency when closed.
- **Easy to operate and install** - The app allows users to create personalised settings for individual rooms and even users.
- **Maximum security** - The KeyliteConnect® hub remains at the centre of this technology. Once connected to Wi-Fi, the hub ensures only those chosen can operate the applications remotely via the KeyliteConnect® app.

For more information on the KeyliteConnect® range
keylitteroofwindows.com/connect



Keylite has always been at the forefront of innovation, and we are extremely proud of this latest product development. With over 15 million 'smart homes' in the UK and Ireland, it's clear that the need and desire for smart technology is prevalent amongst consumers.





Merchant Milestones



Mark Setchell took up the reins as Managing Director of EH Smith Builders' Merchants just as the pandemic took hold. He looks back on a year of change, challenge... and achievement.

Tell us about your first year at the helm of EH Smith? What have been your major achievements?

It's fair to say that my introduction to the business was a little unconventional! All our branches were closed, and we were unsure when we would re-open. At the same time, I was trying to meet as many new colleagues over Microsoft Teams as possible, while securing our ongoing viability as a business and presenting our new financial year budget. It really was a baptism of fire!

Fortunately, the building materials market was being spared the downturn that was widely predicted, and the challenge became about coping with customer demand. It has been the commitment and can-do attitude from every single member of staff, working together during very challenging times that has given me the most pride. We have continued to invest throughout the year; we opened two new branches – our K&B showroom in Henley-In-Arden and our London Design Centre in Clerkenwell. There was an influx of new HGVs and tipper trucks to add to our busy delivery fleet and we saw many of our trainees successfully complete their courses – which on top of a demanding day job takes incredible commitment and determination.

In summary, it's been a year like no other. During this period of constant change, the priority was to keep our colleagues, customers and suppliers safe, and in that respect, I think that has been EH Smith's greatest achievement. In addition, we have been working on new Payroll and HR software projects and a new trading website. Our Charitable Trust has also continued to support local community initiatives and charities and we are very proud that in July we had supported over 500 projects since 2017... so you could say it's been a very eventful but rewarding 16 months!



EH Smith Kitchen and Bathroom Showroom

EH Smith celebrates its centenary in 2022. How does the company plan to commemorate this great achievement?

Reaching our 100 year anniversary is such a great milestone for a family run company, and after all the restrictions, we are keeping our fingers crossed that we are able to celebrate properly.

We have a busy calendar of events spanning the whole year, which range from a company-wide evening gala dinner and family fun day to customer and supplier events and our ongoing support for local charities and community groups.



EH Smith London Design Centre

What challenges has EH Smith faced over the last 18 months and how have you worked with suppliers to overcome these challenges?

Like every other merchant, we've faced the same sleepless nights over the impact of the global pandemic, cost inflations and product shortages.

In each of our key product categories we have dedicated personnel working closely with the suppliers to ensure we are aware of any allocation or price increase notifications. Creating a clear circle of communication between suppliers, colleagues and customers has been imperative and has meant we have been able to react accordingly whilst continuing to serve our customers.

What does Keystone offer you as a supplier and how is this relationship different?

We have worked with Keystone for many years from the early days of their entry into the UK market, resulting in a solid, transparent partnership. Their ethos and principles as a company are aligned to those of EH Smith - always striving to put the customer first.

Over the years Keystone and EH Smith have built a very collaborative way of working; their field team has worked hard to create great relationships with our branch network and their head office is in constant communication with our Commercial Team, ensuring we are aware of any changes or issues on the horizon.

Above all, it is the positive 'always willing to help' attitude of Keystone that sets them apart from others and solidifies our supplier / merchant relationship.

How is EH Smith adapting to the opportunities presented online and how does this impact traditional merchanting?

The 2020 lockdown highlighted that there was definitely a need for a better online presence. In order to re-open safely, we changed our collection service by adapting our website and branches to implement our version of a 'Click and Collect' service. This proved to be very popular and prompted conversations regarding our current online offering.

Whilst we acknowledge we are probably a little behind the times in not having an e-commerce site, we began the process of planning and developing a new trading site late last year. We're excited that the new website will be able to offer an additional service to our customers with the added capability of checking real time stock and pricing and the ability for our customers to log in and manage their account, which will add to our company values of offering great service.

What is your outlook for the remainder of the year into 2022?

I'm very positive about future trading! Our year starts in July and the first two months have been positive and ahead of expectation. I believe customer sentiment in our market remains positive and I don't foresee this changing dramatically in the short to medium term.

Keeping up with demand will obviously be one of our biggest challenges over the next 12 months, ensuring we are not putting too much pressure on our workforce. With this in mind, we have recently recruited over 40 new members of staff across the business with a new intake of trainees and apprentices to build our available skill set for the years ahead.

All in all, we look forward to a positive end to 2021 and an exciting 2022 celebrating our centenary.



Buy Better

We chat to Nick Oates, Managing Director at National Buying Group (NBG) about the benefits the Group brings to its Partners.



Tell us a bit about NBG and its history?



National Buying Group was formed in 2003 and is a LLP, a partnership of over 80 independent merchants from the building supplies market. Its focus is to buy better. This means negotiating competitive agreements with suppliers for our partners, for both parties' joint mutual benefit.

Within the group we have several specialists from across the product sectors, which brings expertise, knowledge and volumes. All agreements are approved by one of eight category teams, which comprises the specialists and merchants where the product areas are important to them.

and meetings quickly switched to online via Teams or Zoom, so in many ways we carried on as before. However, the focus was often information sharing to enable businesses to adapt to changing rules and regulations, which was then followed by stock shortages and price changes.

During the last 20 months everyone has remained incredibly busy. I'm very proud that we have stepped up and taken on the extra workload and responsibility to help our partners through some very tough periods.

As supply issues have increased, we have run allocation systems with suppliers, tracked volume shares and even sourced alternative suppliers where contracted supplier partners have struggled with the extra volumes. This has been very challenging for everyone so it's important we work together jointly to find solutions that are also well communicated.

What does NBG look for in a supply partner?

NBG's core focus is negotiating competitive buying deals that are profitable for all, and mutually beneficial to both our partners and our suppliers. Therefore, the first thing we need is a competitive agreement which ensures we can trade successfully across the market and make a sensible profit.

However, at NBG we also want a strong dynamic relationship focused on growing sales, with suppliers that are passionate about their products and solutions with innovative ideas and challenging questions.

Finally, we want suppliers with agreements underpinned by great service and support. This means products in stock and available, deliveries on time and in full, pricing product data provided promptly and accurately, clear and timely communication, reporting and rebate paid to time and proactive account management with an agreed sales plan. To be a really great supplier these basics need to be done well, consistently.

What is different about NBG and how you support members?

NBG is a united organisation that gives a voice to all partners, from which they can benefit and contribute to by having a say in decisions, strategy and negotiating agreements. NBG is democratic, one partner represents one vote.

We have an open and friendly culture which operates across strong regional communities to enable partners to actively help each other and share ideas, thereby supporting their businesses' opportunities and challenges.

How has NBG adapted and changed with the challenges and opportunities presented amidst the COVID pandemic?

NBG was already set up to work remotely with all systems being cloud-based, so switching to home working was easily achieved. All communications

How does Keystone Group, particularly Keystone Lintels and Keylite fulfil this remit?

It's fair to say that Keystone is an excellent longstanding supplier to NBG, going all the way back to 2006. Keystone is a great brand that is always bringing new products to the market. The team also enjoy a good discussion and even the occasional drink at the bar, so a good spirit exists between us.

Keylite has recently been successful in gaining an NBG agreement after many years of perseverance – I'm sure they will do well as we work together to expand sales of roof windows.



How is NBG adapting to the digital challenge – what does the future of merchant trading look like to you?

Whilst COVID has been going on, at the same time we have implemented our pioneering PIM (Product Information Management) system. PIM centrally collects high quality, accurate and timely product and pricing information from suppliers before delivering it to partners. The system is the first of its kind in the independent builders' merchant sector and we're proud to bring this to the fore.



We have also been rolling out electronic transmission of invoices with our partners NMBS, using their infrastructure to remove paper and digitise invoicing.

Of course, there is much more to do, and we need suppliers to be open and responsive to new ideas; to increase their pace of change – for example to provide timely, good quality data and images; to digitise transactions for invoicing and ordering, which will be followed by electronic dispatch notes and stock look up.

What is your outlook for the remainder of the year into 2022?

My outlook for the remainder of 2021 is positive as we recover from the pandemic. Sales have been and will remain very strong for the rest of 2021 and into 2022. But let's not forget that at some point, a slowdown will come. Investing now in new products, skilled resources and technology is key.

I also believe that there will be a significant change in product messaging in two ways. Firstly, the zero-carbon agenda will drive an increased focus on environmental credentials with a focus on lower energy use, reduced packaging, and more efficient logistics.

Secondly, any outcomes from the Building Safety Review, an output from Grenfell, will require an update to current guidance and regulations to ensure the right product is used in the right way at the right time.

Therefore, the rapid change of the last 20 months will continue with suppliers who have great relationships, brilliant service, leading products and competitive pricing; the ones NBG will work with successfully.

Extra Special Mar

Keystone's bespoke Special Steel Lintels and Brick Slip Feature Lintels provide an effective means to achieve complex shapes and create buildings with character as well as offering a unique margin opportunity for merchants.



A Keystone Special Lintel is ideal when something bespoke is required, whether to provide a unique building feature, or to carry an unusual loading condition. Offering design flexibility, the specification of bespoke Special Lintels can improve the design and individuality of a property.

These bespoke products also offer a unique high value margin opportunity for Keystone and IG merchants. For example, based on a typical 3-bedroom home a plot may have approximately £400 worth of lintels. Over a site of 30+ houses, that's an order value of approx £12,000 per site. But one self-build property featuring bespoke Specials Lintels could offer the same value of lintels in that one property as a site of 30 houses.

Special lintels offer the self-builder endless opportunities to add character to their project. Arches over front doors and windows can be achieved in a variety of styles, from the wide parabolic arch to a pointed Venetian arch, creating a welcoming and homely architectural style. Of course, the style of the arch will be largely dependent on the overall design of the building. From gothic and parabolic arches to corner, bay and sun lounge lintels, the opportunities are endless.

These bespoke products also offer a unique high value margin opportunity for Keystone and IG merchants. For example a typical site of 30 – 3 bedroom homes may have approximately £12,000 worth of standard lintels. Just one self-build project featuring special lintels could offer the same order value.




30 x 3 Bedroom Houses
 =
 £400 x 30 = £12,000

=


1x Selfbuild
 Featuring Bespoke
 Special Lintels

giving Opportunities



Keystone's team of engineers offer a free design service, onsite support and can create a bespoke solution to accommodate any design. By working with our engineers at an early stage of the design process, builders will potentially gain significantly more design flexibility for the overall project.

An extension to the Special Lintels range is Keystone's Brick Feature Lintels range. Keystone combines its outstanding structural expertise with its patented brick slip adhesion system to deliver contemporary brick detailing. The Brick Slip Feature Lintels range addresses the issue of skills shortages onsite and offers a unique way to enhance the quality of brickwork detailing in a highly labour efficient way. Each metre of Brick Slip Feature Lintel sells for up to ten times more than a Standard Steel Lintel, producing ten times the margin, so it's easy to see the opportunity.

Any project with Special, Sun Lounge or Brick Slip Feature Lintel requirements will be handled by Keystone's dedicated team of engineers. This closer partnership with the manufacturer can offer the merchant so much more margin. You can significantly improve the margin you make by simply highlighting opportunities for our added value products to us and we will happily work in partnership with you to convert these to secure orders.

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Suited & Steel Toe Cap Booted

We caught up with Lucia Di Stazio, Non-Executive Director at MRA Marketing, 20 times winner of the Construction Marketing Awards who, along with many others in the industry is helping to redress the gender imbalance.



Lucia Di Stazio

Non-Executive Director
MRA Marketing



How did your career path take you into the construction industry?

I hadn't set out for a career in construction – in fact, my route into this ever-changing, and at times, challenging sector wasn't exactly conventional!

My parents moved to the UK from Southern Italy in the late '60s and settled on the edge of the Cotswolds, where I grew up with my two older brothers. Speaking fluent Italian, I developed a passion for languages and had originally planned to study at university, but the environment didn't suit me, and I returned home within a matter of weeks.

I joined a local newspaper for two years, until, in 1997 I saw an advert for a research assistant with Michael Rigby Associates, which we now know as MRA Marketing. I didn't know anything about research, let alone the construction industry, but I went for it and much to my surprise, I was offered the job.

The first six months were hard. I didn't really understand what I was doing, but I stuck with it. Fast forward five years and I was heading up the research division! By this time the business had expanded and in 2007 I asked Mike, our CEO if I could move across to the marketing team.

Two years later I was appointed a Board Director, and then Managing Director of MRA Marketing.

I'm proud to have played a pivotal role in MRA's development into a full-service agency; in 2015 MRA reached No.1 in the Construction Marketing Awards agency league, a spot we held for five years.

“According to The Smith Institute's 'building the future: women in construction' report, women account for only 11% of the construction workforce and just one per cent of workers on site.”

“I’ve been very fortunate to work for a business that encourages development and progression regardless of gender.”

What steps should the industry make to ensure career success for women?

I’ve been very fortunate to work for a business that encourages development and progression regardless of gender. So, I have never felt that our sector has consciously excluded women or stifled progression, but I recognise my experience may not be the norm.

It is incumbent on all of us who work in the industry to recognise the need for change. When I first came into the industry, women were in the minority, especially around the board table. At events, it was a sea of men in grey suits. Now, it’s much more diverse.

The industry still has an image problem and suffers from low awareness. This will take time to change but it’s vital we keep striving to be better and to make it easier for all our employees – by building a flexible working environment and demonstrating the huge potential in career development.



What advice would you give to young females starting their careers?

Just like when I started out, I would say one of the most empowering things you can do, is to just go for it! Whatever path you take, believe in yourself, have clear goals and stay focused.

If you feel you can do it, do it. Regardless of gender, give the job time to develop and don’t be impatient. Construction is a fantastic people industry. There is much to learn, and there’s so much variety – each day is different.

After a longstanding career with MRA, you are moving on to explore opportunities client side. What are your future career ambitions?

My time with MRA has been so rewarding. I’ve learnt so much, experienced huge amounts, and had lots of fun along the way. The business is in a great place and there’s a fresh team to drive it into its next phase.

Working in a full-service agency you learn very broad skills, gain exposure to different sectors and different types and sizes of business, and acquire extensive knowledge and experience. Having helped many of my customers to grow, I’m relishing the opportunity to work in-house and really focus on helping one business achieve great things.

“I would say one of the most empowering things you can do, is to just go for it! Whatever path you take, believe in yourself, have clear goals and stay focused.”

What is your outlook for the construction industry for the remainder of the year and into 2022?

Last March, the Government deemed the construction sector to be essential and encouraged it to stay open. This triggered a boom in RMI and new house building that hasn’t eased.

Despite difficulties in supply, I expect demand will remain high well into 2022 and beyond. Many people have decided to remain working from home and many others are escaping city life for a different work-life balance. This mass migration is likely to keep construction busy for the next ten years or so.

Let’s use this opportunity to demonstrate that construction is an attractive industry to work in, with the best opportunities for learning, training and building careers.

Running with Success

We speak with our very own Hayley Lowry, Marketing Director for Keystone Group about life, work, hobbies and success.



Hayley Lowry

Marketing Director
Keystone Group



Can you tell us a bit more about yourself?

I was born and grew up in Northern Ireland surrounded by a fun and loving family. I went on to study at Queens University, Belfast and Ulster University where following an Honours Degree in Geography I went on to complete an MBA and since then continued my professional development with a CIM Diploma and Diploma in Digital Marketing.

Family is the centre of my universe and the most important thing in my life – both at home and at work. I feel blessed to have a very supportive husband. Hugh has been so encouraging throughout my career. We have two amazing daughters, Eve and Aimee. They truly are my inspiration and my motivation to achieve and be better.

I am also fortunate to be part of the Keystone family. It is a privilege to be part of such a vibrant, progressive company. With a culture of collaboration at the heart of the business, the enthusiasm is infectious and provides an environment where we can all succeed.

I love to run and have been a member of County Antrim Harriers running club for quite a few years now. Running is so good for mental health and well-being. I run 3 times a week, around 18-20 miles and find it an essential part of my routine to keep me mentally and physically on top of my game.



I have worked in marketing for over 20 years now. I am a creative thinker, being a Piscean might have something to do with it. What I love about marketing is the variety, no two projects are ever the same. I thrive on a challenge and have been described as driven and passionate. My career has spanned a variety of different sectors including soft drinks, media, horticulture and construction and I have learned a great deal from the people and teams I have been fortunate to work with along the way.

“There is a lot circulating in the media around the question, ‘can women have it all?’ I can assure you that a woman can successfully have a family and a career. You don’t have to put your career on hold if you don’t want to.”

How did your career path take you into the construction industry?

I was head hunted for Head of Marketing at Brett Martin, another vibrant home-grown Northern Ireland business. Following thirteen years tenure in this business I was attracted to the role of Marketing Director at Keystone. The timing was right for a new challenge. There is never a dull moment in construction, it is fast paced, innovative and an exciting area to work in.

“I received a great piece of advice from a valued mentor and tutor when I graduated from university. He told me to target a great company and start at the bottom, work hard and prove my ability.”

What advice would you give to young women starting their careers?

It is important to have self-belief in your ability. Set your goals, aim high and shoot for the stars – but know you need to put in the groundwork at entry level to earn your stripes. I received a great piece of advice from a valued mentor and tutor when I graduated from university. He told me to target a great company and start at the bottom, work hard and prove my ability. He said it was the only way to get started as a fresh-faced graduate. I took his advice on board and managed to get an entry level position and within 9 months a marketing executive role was advertised internally which I secured mainly on the recommendations of my line manager at the time.

There is a lot circulating in the media around the question, ‘can women have it all?’ I can assure you that a woman can successfully have a family and a career. You don’t have to put your career on hold if you don’t want to. However, it’s not easy and there are difficult times, but you are strong and can do it.

I’ve been through the juggling of sick children alongside the delivery of time critical projects. I’ve had to deliver presentations and host customer visits on zero sleep. I know all too well what this is like. A good support network is essential. I have had great childcare and my husband has always shared our parenting responsibilities equally. This has made a big difference and I feel this has also benefited my daughters by dispelling any myths around traditional role stereotypes.

Tell us about your time with The Keystone Group

I have been with Keystone as Marketing Director for just under two years now. I was attracted to the role by the passion the business has for marketing.

It is at the forefront of the business and the appointment of a senior marketing position at board level is testament to the value Keystone places on my function.

It is also an honour to lead and mentor the Keystone marketing team. They are an extremely talented and enthusiastic group of people and I enjoy working alongside them very much. I am excited to see what the future holds for us. We have ambitious plans – digital transformation, marketing automation and sustainability are all critical strategic considerations for our business as well as the wider industry, and the marketing team have a fundamental role in bringing these plans to fruition.



What are your goals for the next five years?

I’m currently building the marketing team and making several new appointments to strengthen an already successful function. I’m looking forward to supporting the ongoing development of the team over the coming years and in the personal development of each individual to achieve their goals and career aspirations.

Keystone Group is a thriving business with exciting growth plans and I’m excited to explore my own career development within this vibrant organisation.

Personally, a marathon is definitely on the cards. This is only a matter of timing and location – oh and a good coach. Anyone have Mo Farah’s number?

#KickItWithKeylite



Earlier in the year, Keylite Roof Windows challenged its Irish merchant partners and friends to #KickItWithKeylite in the name of raising money for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice and Children's Health Foundation Crumlin.

The initiative was a huge success, subsequently being rolled out to the rest of the UK and Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity was also brought on board.

The challenge was simple. Participants recorded themselves kicking, throwing, putting or batting a ball through a Keylite roof window and once the challenge was complete, individuals nominated three friends to get involved and made a donation through Keylite's Just Giving page for the charities.

Merchants joined the likes of GAA All Ireland Champion Cathal McShane, presenter Adrian Logan, Northern Irish footballer Samantha Kelly and Rugby Union stars Tommy Bowe and Stephen Ferris in taking part in the challenge, then shared their attempt on social media along with the hashtag #KickItWithKeylite.

Passionate about raising as much money as possible for two brilliant causes, Keylite pledged £7,500 to all three charities and encouraged participants to get involved and lend their support by donating.

Hundred's of builders' merchants, suppliers, and tradespeople have been involved in the #KickItWithKeylite charity challenge already – with the wider UK roll-out to follow. In just three short months over £10,000 has been raised for the three incredible charities and a lot of fun has been had by everyone.

Children's Health Foundation is a new unified children's healthcare charity, which exists to raise funds to support the vital, life-saving work that takes place every minute of every day in Children's Health Ireland (CHI) hospitals and urgent care centres.



L-R

Stephen Ferris & Tommy Bowe
Former Ireland / British & Irish Lions Rugby Players

Samantha Kelly
Glentoran FC / Northern Ireland Football Player

Sean Og Coyle
Commercial Director Keystone Group

Cathal McShane
Keylite Roof Windows Specification Executive / GAA All-Star / All Ireland Champion



“ There was a great buzz about the place due to the event and it was really great to see such a high level of interaction and participation amongst the staff and customers. Having All Ireland medal winner Cathal McShane was a big hit with everyone. The setup of the day was fantastic and the fact that there are worthy charities benefiting makes it even better, it is great to help Children’s Foundation Crumlin and The Northern Ireland Children’s Hospice. We were delighted to host it and we’d be delighted to have it back again in the future.”

Ross O’Connor – Manager Chadwicks

The Northern Ireland Children’s Hospice works both in the community and in their facilities to provide high quality, person-centred, holistic palliative care. Offering care and support for infants, children and adults who are adjusting to living with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.

The #KickItWithKeylite challenge also helped Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity fundraise for an interactive projector for patients to use in the Queen’s Hospital Burton children’s wards. Costing around £6,000, the equipment is fantastic for developing social and communication skills, encouraging collaboration and group play, building motor and proprioceptive skills, improving wellbeing and mental health, as well as motivating physical activity.

Cathal McShane, GAA All-Star and Specification Executive at Keylite, commented: “The Keylite team and I have been super enthused to see how well this initiative has kicked off! These are three fantastic charities that do amazing work, so to be able to support them in fundraising – and in such a fun way – is an absolute pleasure.

In the period July-September, there was an impressive 170,000 opportunities to see the #KickItWithKeylite campaign in the press. In the same period, over 400,000 people saw the initiative via Facebook, there was 175,00 impressions on Twitter, 130,000 impressions on LinkedIn and over 9,000 impressions on Instagram.



We want to say a huge thank you to all merchants who got involved in the campaign and donated to make a difference to these charities.

Movie Magic

An offer you couldn't refuse? Our recent 'Movies from Home' lead generation campaign saw many merchants win new orders and boost turnover. We look back at what can be achieved when we work in partnership.

Merchant Support

Our recent 'Movies from Home' campaign had a simple message for merchants: Tell us about any live projects in your area and our sales team will do the rest; helping you to secure those vital orders and grow your sales.

The initiative which ran from October 2020 to June 2021 saw Keystone and IG Lintels' dynamic sales teams follow up on leads provided by their merchant customers. Once ready to convert to an order, the details were passed back to the merchant, resulting in a direct sale for that branch.

A Win-Win Situation

As an added incentive, merchants could win movie themed prizes, all which could be enjoyed in the comfort of their home during the pandemic. We awarded:

- 1 42 NOW TV boxes, 42 Amazon firesticks and 42 movie hampers
- 2 8 sound bars and 16 movie projectors as quarterly spot prizes
- 3 Not forgetting our incredible grand prize draw entry with an incredible 8no. 65" HD TV's



The Power of a Lead

We've spoken to many merchants during the campaign, and they've all agreed that it was the focus on securing sales, in partnership, that really paid dividends.



“Keystone Lintels has developed a well-deserved reputation for customer service and our 'Movies from Home' campaign has demonstrated what we can all achieve when we foster a culture of working together.”

Chris Hemmington-Green
Keystone & IG Lintels Sales Director

“The campaign certainly motivated me to be proactive by asking the right questions to obtain drawings, which in turn gives more options to customers and hopefully leads to increased future business with them. It also gave staff a chance to win some fabulous prizes, so thank you!”

Phil Wheatley - Buildbase



Billy Turner - JP Corry

Stephen Byrne - Ganly's

Tammy Ives - Civils & Lintels



Sam Wright - Bradfords

Peter Batey - Joseph Parr

Kim-Marie Wild - Buildbase

Graham Ward - Buildbase

Alec Murray - Macblair

Results that Speak for Themselves

The campaign proved to be a great success, delivering some high-value sales from numerous local building projects. Here's a small sample of some of the results achieved:



“From the start of the campaign our lintel sales have increased overall by 40% compared to 2019. Not only did the campaign motivate the team to be very proactive in identifying future projects, but it also gave staff a chance to win some fabulous prizes –adding a bit of healthy competition among branch staff.”

Paul Morris
TG Builders Merchants Ltd



“The campaign has been a bit of fun, motivating our team to get involved, has increased the relationship with our local ASM and has also reaped results in terms of orders. One of the leads we submitted resulted in an order worth £86k which is a fabulous result for our team.”

Elizabeth Whittle
Civils and Lintels



“The Movies from Home campaign offered some light relief in the context of all the negativity surrounding us at the time, but it also had an important message. Working together with a supplier and keeping the communication regular can offer some fabulous opportunities. One example of this is a site we identified in Watford which Keystone then followed through to schedule and order resulting in £179k.”

Gareth Dowling
Parker Building Supplies



A Customer-First Approach

JP Corry is one of Northern Ireland's leading suppliers of building materials and timber products. We chatted with Managing Director, Ciaran McConnell about his plans for the future.

With more than 200 years in business, JP Corry is one of the oldest companies in Northern Ireland. What is the secret of your success?

It may sound a bit of a cliché, but it's our people! For centuries now, we have fostered a 'customer-first' culture, and our team really are at the heart of making this happen.

Tell us about your career progression. Is there any advice you would give your younger self?

I left school a few months before completing my A-Levels when I realised it wasn't the right path for me. I talked to my parents, and I was swiftly told to 'get out and get a job!' Tough love you might say, but it was a great life lesson in the importance of hard work – and what has led me to be Managing Director at the age of 35.

I had started working at Texas Homecare (now Homebase) while I was still in school at age 16, so I went straight into full time work there, learning valuable retail and customer service skills.

I knew that I wanted a change but didn't know what I wanted to do, and my partner (wife now) applied for JP Corry on my behalf, unbeknown to me. I was successful and started on the counter in September 1999 at the Springfield Road site in Belfast – and I've never looked back!

If I was to give my younger self advice, it would be to always focus on the customer and listen very carefully to their requirements. You'll learn a lot. Keep it simple and don't over complicate things!

Sustainability is high on the agenda in the construction sector. What role has the merchant to play in the journey to net zero?

As merchants, we are speaking to customers all the time, so we have an important, frontline role to play in advising on the latest product innovations that can help improve our impact on the environment.



By partnering with our supply chain, providing solutions in logistics and by supporting training and development we can make a positive impact on our sector.

Sustainability does not just encompass carbon reduction and energy improvement programmes. We should also encourage young people and women into our industry. This is a thriving industry in which people can have a successful career and make many friends along the way.

Build Aviator is an exciting digital initiative. What are the benefits to JP Corry, your customers and end users?

Over the past two years, digital tools and websites have moved on at pace and the Build Aviator estimating tool is no exception.

It enables our customers to quantify, price jobs from drawings, and provide detailed product lists alongside work schedules, providing a full cost analysis of the job ahead. In turn, we can then help our clients to plan and schedule requirements in advance to help avoid delays.

What challenges has JP Corry faced over the last 18 months and how has the business adapted to overcome them?

March 23rd 2020! That first week in which we had to close the business was tough. Supporting our staff and their families who were uncertain about their future and safety was a mammoth challenge.

Over the following weeks and months as we reopened our stores safely, our priority was the health and wellbeing of our staff. Their resilience and support were superb.

This effort continues today as the market recovers and we enjoy continued growth. We fast tracked our digital platform to support the increased level of enquires, improved our external and internal communications and above all, continued our customer-first focus.

JP Corry has a longstanding relationship with Keystone spanning 20+ years, what is special about this relationship?

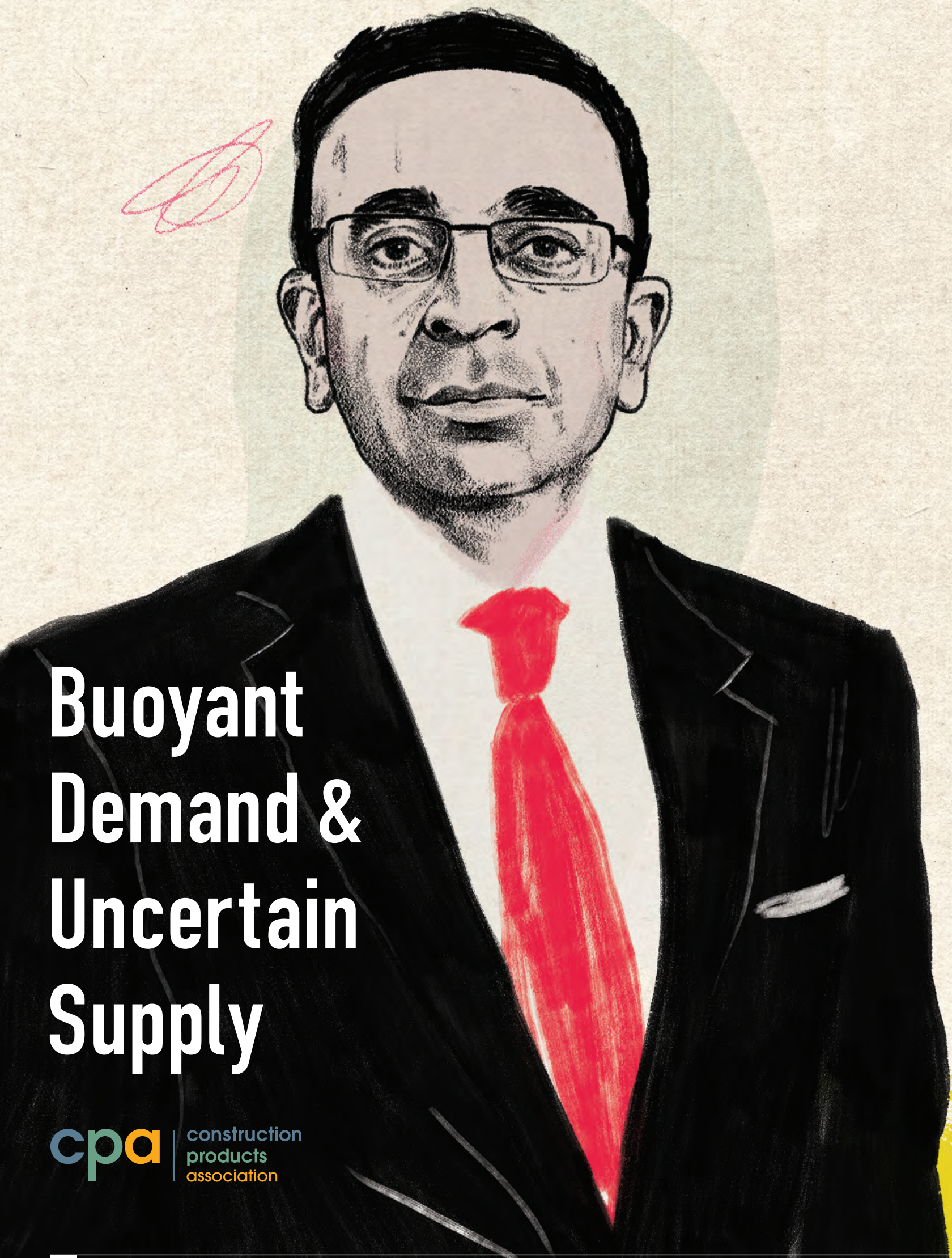
The family atmosphere in both organisations and trust that we have in each other is paramount. We have a shared aim of growing the businesses together whilst always putting the customer first. These core values demonstrated by Keystone fit the JP Corry ethos perfectly!

What is your outlook for the remainder of the year into 2022?

As we continue to remove restrictions locally and regain a sense of normality, the challenges we have faced from COVID have moved in a different direction. Demand continues to be unprecedented; stock allocations remain low in places, labour and skills shortages are an ongoing concern and logistics and inflation remain a significant challenge ahead.

Yet, these challenges bring a new purpose to the business, to our sector, customers and supply chain, and planning remains a key focus over 2021 and into 2022. Our business continues to flourish, and I see an opportunity for merchants and suppliers to grow together into 2022 and beyond.





Buoyant Demand & Uncertain Supply

Noble Francis, Economics Director at the Construction Products Association gives his views on the future demands for the industry as we head back on the road to recovery.

Construction has gone through a very challenging last 20 months; from widespread site closures at the start of the pandemic through to unprecedented demand, which is now outstripping supply.

It has been a 'V'-shaped recession and recovery for construction. Activity was affected badly by the initial lockdown, with output hitting a low point during April 2020 that was 45 per cent lower than the same month a year ago, according to the Office for National Statistics.

However, the supply chain (architects, contractors, merchants and manufacturers) was able to continue largely unhindered in the second and third lockdowns. Output in March 2021 was already back above pre-Covid-19 levels with recovery driven by two key areas; housing new build and repair, maintenance and improvement (RM&I).

Housing starts during 2021 Q1 were 36.3 per cent higher than a year earlier, while private housing RM&I output at the end of 2021 Q1 was 19.3 per cent higher than at the start of 2020, pre-Covid-19.

“The most high-profile issue over the last 12 months has been the cost and availability of construction products. However, shortages of HGV drivers and particularly a lack of skilled labour on site are just as important and, in the longer-term, could provide greater constraints to growth.”

Demand is likely to continue to be strong for the next 9-12 months and the majority of contractors have a healthy pipeline of projects. Our forecasts predict that housing starts will rise by 20.9 per cent in 2021 and 9.0 per cent in 2022, while private housing RM&I output is forecast to rise by 16.0 per cent this year and three per cent next year. However, despite this, supply issues are restricting growth rates. These issues are not expected to lead to significant declines in activity from current levels, but they will constrain further growth and push back activity, particularly for SMEs, which are more likely to be affected by supply issues.

“Demand is likely to continue to be strong for the next 9-12 months and the majority of contractors have a healthy pipeline of projects.”

The sharp recovery in construction in the UK and globally has led to a rapid rise in demand for globally traded products such as copper and steel, paints and resins, timber, cladding, plastics and polymers as well as roofing products. Demand persistently exceeds supply, and this has been illustrated by the sharp cost inflation and extended lead times. However, it is not only imported construction products that now have supply issues. Some domestically made products are also in short supply, such as bagged cement as well as some types of bricks.

Larger contractors have been less affected by these supply issues than small builders, especially those on fixed price contracts. Larger firms tend to have a greater certainty of demand over the next 12 months and are better able to plan and purchase in advance, as well as having priority when supply is limited.

Smaller builders tend to be focused on the current project and have less visibility over future demand, plus they also tend to have limited resource to purchase in advance. Smaller contractors tend to purchase from merchants on the day that the product(s) are required, so are more likely to be affected by availability issues.

The lack of haulage capacity is also exacerbating supply issues for manufacturers and merchants. The Road Haulage Association (RHA) estimates that there is now a shortage of 100,000 drivers and this has had a large impact on supply chains. The structural shift to online shopping within the retail sector over the past 18 months has also meant that haulage drivers can command higher salaries working for major retailers such as supermarkets or Amazon.

“In the longer-term, skills shortages may be the largest constraint to construction growth.”



On a Mission

According to the Builders Merchants Federation's training division: one of the major challenges merchants face today is finding talented people who will fit-in with your ethos and produce results.

We all know the barriers to training our teams – cost and time pressures soon mount up – yet it's important to keep your staff up to speed with the latest products and services that can help you win new customers and convert valuable leads into lucrative sales opportunities.

Recognising this need for your employees to train at a pace, and a place that works for them, we launched our new Special Agent campaign, offering merchants the chance to learn and win through our exclusive online Merchant Training Portal, Keylite Academy.

Delegates simply need to complete each module in the Keylite Academy and become Keylite Super Agents, for a chance to win some great gadgets!

The campaign began in June and is running all the way through to the end of this year. It has proved hugely successful already, with over 600 merchant staff signed up to take their staff through the 10 training modules and 36 separate sessions available.

Gadgets Galore!

Agents who complete their 'mission' successfully, are entered into our prize draws, with some great gadgets up for grabs.

Mission Modules

STAGE 1

- Product Overview
- Roof Windows
- Loft Ladders
- Drive for 5
- The Basics of Specification

STAGE 2

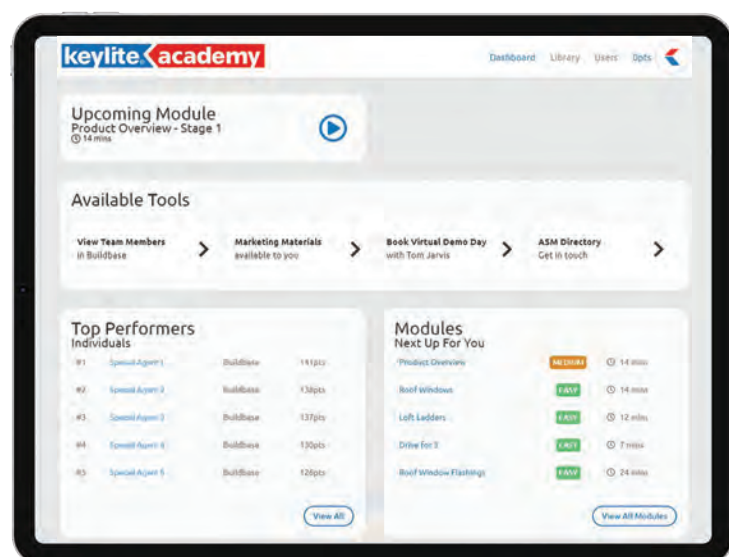
- Roof Window Flashings
- Flat Roof Systems
- Pitched Roof Systems
- Flat Roof Lanterns
- Keylite Connect

“Keylite Academy was a very useful learning aid. It meant I could look at it in my own time and complete the learning without interruption in the comfort of my own home, whilst also taking in 100% of the information.”

Simon Vann – Assistant Branch Manager, Bradfords Building Supplies

Train to Gain

The Keylite Academy was created with merchants in mind, ensuring vital product training on our roof window product and services continued throughout the pandemic, in short and easily digestible online learning modules.



Join over
600 merchant staff
and 74 merchant
groups training on
Keylite Academy.

We've all had to sit through training sessions where there seems to be reams of information to absorb. That's why each module is designed to be a fun and light-hearted learning experience – so your staff come away with all the important information they need to help advise your customers.

- Specific modules on Keylite Roof Windows, Keylite Blinds and Keylite Loft Ladders
- These modules can be accessed at a time that suits and completed when convenient, through the 10 training modules and 36 separate sessions available
- Gain a deeper insight and understanding of Keylite products and services, to help increase sales



To register for the Keylite Academy, speak to your local area sales manager.

“Keylite Academy modules are easy to navigate and allow you to learn at your own pace. Learning the everyday basics, to some of the lesser asked for products, all packaged together to help give you the tools needed to confidently talk to the customers about Keylite, plug the USPs and hopefully improve on sales.”

Chris Hartley – Assistant Branch Manager, Myers Building Supplies

Championing Change



Kate Tinsley CEO of MKM Building Supplies will shortly be opening the business's 92nd branch. We chatted to her about the key to successful leadership of a rapidly growing business where everybody is welcome.



We offer a full product portfolio in each branch, focusing not only on building materials and plumbing and heating supplies, but also fantastic kitchen and bathroom showrooms.

Have you seen many changes in the construction market in your time in the industry and how do you respond to these trends?

I've been working for more than 20 years in the industry now; primarily within the merchant market but have also had a couple of stints working for manufacturers, namely British Gypsum and Ibstock Brick. You would expect that during these past two decades, I would have witnessed significant change, but I have found that change has tended to be more gradual.

When embarking on a building project, most contractors would agree that you can't predict with 100% certainty the issues you may face along the way. In that respect, the same challenges that have always existed; problems with groundworks, supply disruptions, labour and skills shortages, still remain today and it's our role as merchants to try and help solve them.

I think it's fair to say that one of the areas that hasn't changed is that the merchant industry remains focused on building great relationships. The adage that 'people buy from people' still rings true today, and I believe this is where merchants have a key role to play in offering that friendly, helpful and knowledgeable point of contact.

Can you tell us a bit about MKM Building Supplies and what sets it apart in the market?

We have built the business around the concept that skilled, local people best understand the needs of their customers and as a result, each of our Branch Directors have a share in their own business. This means that each branch has the freedom to deliver the products, services and resources that its local customer base requires.

It also means our people are more engaged in the business as they have a direct influence and can impact on its success in a much more personal way.

“If I could pass on any of my 20 years' experience in the industry, it would be that it's a great place to have a career. There is something quite straightforward about the sector – it's meritocratic and I feel people are judged primarily on their abilities.”



You're one of the driving forces behind #YesSheCan. Can you tell us a bit about the initiative and why you got involved?

I got involved with the #YesSheCan campaign, as I wanted to try and give something back. The initiative was established to inspire, empower and engage women to help them reach their career aspirations, I thought I should try and help if I could!

For me, I just want the construction industry to attract the very best people. I think things are shifting and the focus is becoming much more centred on attracting the right calibre of candidate for the role, regardless of any of their personal characteristics.

What else do you think we need to do as an industry to attract the best people?

The construction industry doesn't always have the best image which in many ways is unfair. We need to keep promoting our industry to ensure that we can keep attracting the very best people. If I could pass on any of my 20 years' experience in the industry, it would be that it's a great place to have a career. There is something quite straightforward about the sector - it's meritocratic and I feel people are judged primarily on their abilities. So, it doesn't matter where you went to school or where you come from. In that respect, it's actually a perfect place to be more diverse!

For Merchant Margin Maker, we interview many business leaders. What do you think are the most important attributes for a leader in the current economic climate, where new working models and patterns are emerging?

Certainly, the pandemic has changed the way that many businesses operate, but not necessarily the key attributes that a leader should possess. I do think with the current shift to more hybrid ways of working and potentially, a more remote workforce, we need to change the way that we connect with our teams and find new ways to engage our people.

However, despite all of the changes in the last 18 months, leadership qualities remain the same. I believe leaders should have complete integrity, a desire to help and support their teams and also the willingness to seek counsel from others - none of us have all of the answers. Furthermore, we should treat each other with respect and kindness.

“Certainly, the pandemic has changed the way that many businesses operate, but not necessarily the key attributes that a leader should possess.”

Onsite with Keylite Roof Windows

Bringing Light to Edinburgh Luxury Living

Merchant: Thistle Timber & Building Supplies

56 Keylite Conservation Roof Windows have been installed as part of the careful renovation of Edinburgh's B-listed Boroughmuir High School into 87 luxury apartments by CALA Homes (East). The sensitive refurbishment included the preservation of 430 sash and case windows, which provide each home with an abundance of natural light and views across the city. Keylite Conservation Roof Windows are ideal for use in a period style property, replicating the look of a traditional skylight and accommodating the flow of natural light to the interior below.



Keylite takes Margate Housing Development to New Heights

Merchant: Buildbase

Over 60 Keylite Roof Windows have been installed to new homes and flats in the Roman Fields housing development in Margate, offering clean and modern aesthetics as well as peace of mind for the building contractor, PCR Projects Ltd. Tony Cooper, Site Project Manager at PCR Projects said: "We've been extremely happy with our decision to use Keylite's Roof Windows in the homes on the Roman Fields development and we would 100% use them again for future projects."



Innovative Thinking for Future Homes

Merchant: Murdocks

Prioritising low energy and running costs, the 'Automated Home' features seven electric Keylite Roof Windows which work with the property's smart home system and weather station to help ensure the building remains well ventilated. Controlled via an app, the weather station can also detect rain or heavy wind and automatically instruct the windows to close. The homeowner, Mark McCall comments: "The electric roof windows are a perfect addition for a property that contains all the features needed for a low energy home."



The Barn at Elms Farm

Merchant: Buildbase

The Barn at Elms Farm is a Grade II listed building dating back to the 18th century, installed with 15 Keylite Roof Windows which bring a plethora of light into the home. Builder Ken Tansley from Interbuild Ltd said: "Usually, roof windows can pose an issue for listed buildings, as they sit higher than the roof tiles and therefore cause compliancy issues. However, Keylite Roof Windows are recessed as standard, enhancing the overall appearance and improving the thermal performance of the window."



Onsite with Keystone & IG Lintels

Keystone Creates Open Living Spaces at Berkshire Mansion

Merchant: Buildbase

Hills End is a magnificent Palladian mansion located in Sunningdale, offering 17,534 sqft of luxurious accommodation arranged over three levels by Consero London. Set within 1.75 acres of mature landscaped gardens, this six-bedroom residence features a double height Roman pediment entrance with Ionic style columns and a west facing sky terrace. Keystone's bow lintels provide a tangible link between outdoors and indoors – flooding rooms with natural brightness and creating open living spaces with splendid views.



Tailormade Solutions for Bellwood Homes' Riverpark Villas

Merchant: Grant & Stone

Bellwood Homes wanted to create a sense of individuality and character for the Riverpark Villas development in Marlow. Keystone's technical team designed heavy duty and extra heavy-duty lintels for window and door openings which accommodated brick span openings between 675mm to 2475mm. Keith Perfect, Project Manager at Bellwood said: "Keystone's prefabricated brick slip feature lintels facilitated a faster build schedule on site. The offsite construction solution helped achieve the desired intricate brick detailing for the exterior of the property, and in the process saved on time and costs."



Fabric First Approach at Barwood Homes Development

Merchant: Civils & Lintels

Barwood Homes' Manor Leys development, in the beautiful village of Harlaston in Staffordshire, uses IG's Hi-therm+ lintels, brick slip feature segmental arch lintels and lightweight segmental arch brick headers on an exclusive collection of fourteen three and four bedroom homes. James Pratt, Senior Buyer at Barwood said: "We use Hi-therm+ lintels across our developments to assist with the thermal envelope of the building. Hi-therm+ lintels reduce carbon emissions through a fabric first approach and offer a maintenance free alternative to other sustainable solutions."



IG Lintels Bring Light to Native Bankside

Merchant: TG Builders Merchants

IG's brick feature arch lintels feature on the front elevation of the former derelict 19th century Empire Warehouse in the bankside conservation area of Bear Gardens in London, which has been replaced and linked into a 75-room boutique aparthotel. The massing arrangement across each floor ensures that natural light is maximised throughout the building, with the intricate brick detailing prominent at street level appearing above impressive double height foyer windows.

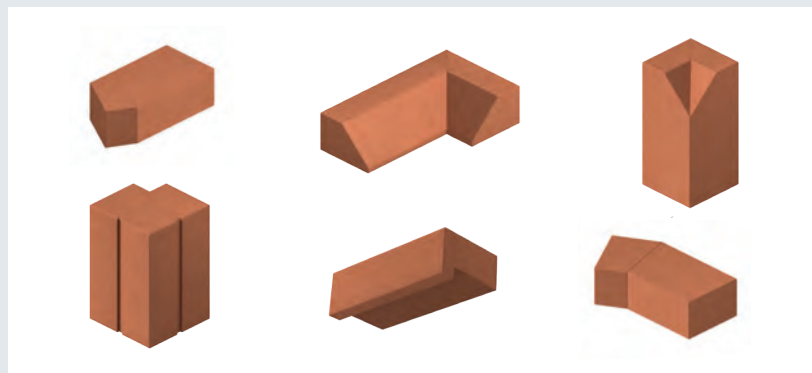


What's New?

Brick Cutting Service

Fast, Reliable, Cost Effective

IG Masonry Support now offers specialist brick services from our dedicated brick cutting facility in Overseal. The latest technology provided by our automated brick cutting machines facilitate fast turnaround for slip brick and shelf angle cuts, offering a cost effective alternative to purpose made specials on shorter lead-times. Our specialists are on hand to discuss your specific requirements.



Non-combustible Solutions



Non-combustible Cavity Tray

Keyfix is setting new standards in the delivery of non-combustible cavity systems for projects requiring Document B compliance. In buildings utilising steel frame systems in the external cavity, the innovative Keyfix Non-combustible Cavity Tray System is a practical solution to provide protection over lintels, masonry supports, soffit systems and other elements in the cavity such as fire barriers. Manufactured using Class A1 non-combustible stainless steel, the Keyfix Non-combustible Cavity Tray is a 'Fix & Forget' solution, featuring a self-supporting single-piece tray that clips together for fast and easy installation. No additional fixings, sealants or onsite fabrication are required by the installer.

Non-combustible Cavity Tray Lintel

In buildings over 18m in height, Document B prevents the use of plastic DPCs. Galvanised lintels cannot be used without a DPC, as the DPC protects the galvanised surface against attack from chemicals present within mortars etc. Keystone's Cavity Tray Lintel offers a non-combustible stainless steel single leaf lintel with combined Cavity Tray. For use in an exterior masonry skin in conjunction with a non-masonry inner leaf such as a steel frame system, the cavity tray lintel is a highly efficient and practical solution to the challenge of non-combustible cavity detailing.

B.O.S.S. A1

B.O.S.S. A1 is a lightweight, carbon neutral, prefabricated brick slip soffit system designed to be quickly and easily bolted to IG's Welded Masonry Support to create deep reveals, soffits and flying beams on masonry facades. This BBA certified unit is manufactured completely from A1 fire rated materials and is Document B: Fire Safety compliant. Manufactured offsite, the prefabricated components are delivered to site complete with brick slips adhesively bonded and mechanically secured to the brick carrier unit.

Brick Panel System

The IG Brick Panel System is a lightweight, mechanically fixed, A1 Fire Rated prefabricated brick slip cladding system, which enables designers and specifiers to achieve a deeper soffit which blends seamlessly with brickwork constructed on site. This BBA certified unit is manufactured completely from A1 Fire rated materials and is Document B: Fire Safety compliant. Manufactured offsite, the prefabricated components are delivered to site complete with brick slips adhesively bonded and mechanically secured to the brick carrier unit. The lightweight system facilitates fast and efficient installation of masonry without the need for specialist trades onsite.