

PANEL, WOOD & *Solid Surface*

Issue No. 217/218

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JELD-WEN increases production by 50%

SPECIALIST door manufacturer JELD-WEN has integrated a third production line into its Penrith manufacturing facility to increase capacity and strengthen its ability to deliver doors at scale. Now fully operational, the new line enables the factory to increase production by 50% and has also created 30 new roles at the site, supporting local employment.

JELD-WEN has redesigned the factory layout as part of an efficiency drive across the entire business. The Penrith facility had previously been operating at maximum capacity, providing an opportunity for the manufacturer to scale up. The extra production line, enhanced by AI technology, will not only boost output, but also streamline workflow in tandem with the company's new Sheffield site.

The new line strengthens JELD-WEN's ability to support its customers navigate an increasingly demanding market, further helping to deliver fire-compliant doors for multiple projects with tight time schedules.

Speaking about the benefits of the third line, Dom Gaffey, VP, GM UK France and export at JELD-WEN UK, explained: "The additional line will greatly support our abilities to deliver at scale, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

"It's a true investment, not just in terms of capacity, but also for efficiency and productivity. We've integrated advanced technology into our new line, as well as carefully considered sustainable



solutions, all with the purpose of bettering our production at scale.

"The whole line will run seamlessly from end to end, which is unique compared to other production lines across our European footprint. This means we will be assembling, pressing, trimming, inspecting, packing and stacking the doors in one single piece flow, producing five doors per minute."

AI optimisation will perform autonomous quality checks as part of the process. Every door in production passes through a camera system which uses self-learning to identify any potential defects and segregate them.

Dom added: "By optimising operational efficiency, we have also

created a more productive, healthier working environment for our teams. Increasing output helps to reduce costs and, thanks to more efficient resource allocation, minimises waste. Being able to pro-

duce and deliver at increased scale will put us in a strong position to meet future demand in the markets which we serve."

JELD-WEN

www.jeld-wen.co.uk

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West Fraser raises £10k towards hospice charity's new community van

WEST FRASER has donated £10k to neighbouring care charity Strathcarron Hospice in Denny, Falkirk for a new community van, allowing the team to provide further care across central Scotland.

The funds raised by employees and the team at West Fraser have helped the charity purchase the new, specially adapted community care van, which will support it in bringing hospice care and important conversations directly into local and more rural communities across Forth Valley, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. The new van was officially unveiled as part of the hospice's 45th anniversary celebrations by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

Strathcarron Hospice provides specialist end-of-life care for people across central Scotland in its hospice, in patients' own homes and in hospitals.

It is also actively involved in research and education in palliative care, as well as promoting open discussion around end-of-life care.

Carol Brown, head of human resources at West Fraser, said: "We're thrilled to be able to support the great work that Strathcarron Hospice does in the local community. Their care, empathy and understanding of what families go through in difficult times is outstanding, and our team values the opportunity to contribute to their incredible work."

West Fraser

<https://uk.westfraser.com/>



MKM launches eCommerce mobile app

MKM Building Supplies, an independent UK builders' merchant, has launched its first dedicated eCommerce mobile app, giving trade customers and DIYers a quicker and easier way to browse products, manage accounts and place orders straight from their phone or tablet.

Andy Pickup, digital director at MKM Building Supplies, said: "We wanted to create something that genuinely helps our customers day-to-day. Our branches do a brilliant job supporting customers face-to-face, and this gives people another way to get things sorted quickly when they need to. It means whether someone is sat in the van and needs to quickly order a few bits, or they are planning the week ahead on a Sunday night and lining up deliveries for the next jobs, they can do it there and then without having to wait."

Built entirely in-house using React Native, the app marks another step in MKM's digital growth and comes alongside continued expansion across the business, with eight new branches already opened in 2026. Built for both trade customers and DIYers, the MKM app allows users to browse their local branch stock, check branch-specific pricing, build baskets and pay invoices in seconds.

Open to all MKM customers, the app can be used by both account holders and guest users. Secure biometric login through Face ID or fingerprint makes signing in quick and simple, while a short welcome flow helps new users get started straight away.

Voice search speeds up product lookups, while dedicated sections for Deals, Clearance and Timber Tally make it easy to find offers and select exact timber cut lengths.

For account customers, the app also brings together a range of useful account management tools in one place. Customers can view and filter orders and invoices, access statements, redeem credit notes and pay single or multiple invoices quickly and securely.

The app has been developed over the past year with input from MKM branches and customers to ensure it reflects how people actually use their local MKM branches.

Accessibility has also been a key focus. The app meets full AA accessibility standards, helping ensure it remains clear and easy to use for customers working in different environments, including outdoors, in low light or on smaller screens.

Behind the scenes, MKM's Central Support digital team has integrated analytics and insight tools including GA4, Bloomreach and Fullstory.

These will help the business understand how customers use the app and where improvements can be made.

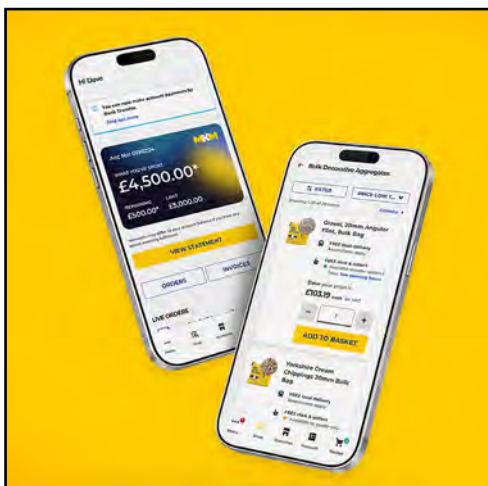
Andy added: "Because we've built this ourselves, we can keep improving it based on what customers and branches tell us."

"We're already looking at things like smoother payment journeys, helping customers find the right products faster and delivery tracking."

"Our website and app are an important part of how we support customers. The aim is simple. Make MKM easy to use wherever our customers are and however they want to shop."

MKM

<https://mkm.com/mkm-app>



Travis Perkins reaches fundraising milestone for Alzheimer's Society

THE CUSTOMERS, colleagues and suppliers of what is believed to be the UK's largest builders' merchant have joined forces to raise more than £400,000 for its nominated charity.

Travis Perkins has donated the money to Alzheimer's Society, which has been its nominated charity for the last two years.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity, offering vital support to those who need it as well as funding groundbreaking research and campaigning to improve experiences.

Dementia is the UK's biggest killer, and one in three people born today will develop dementia in their lifetime.

The money raised for the charity has come via hundreds of events held in and around Travis Perkins' branch network of more than 500 nationwide.

The fundraising has seen colleagues, customers and suppliers take part in a host of in-branch events, golf days, runs, cycling challenges, walks and abseiling challenges, amongst other activities.

Carine Jessamine, group marketing director for Travis Perkins, said: "The partnership with Alzheimer's Society has been a huge success so far and has certainly captured the imagination of all colleagues, customers and suppliers.

"The decision to support Alzheimer's Society a couple of years ago came from a colleague vote, so our team was fully engaged from the start of the partnership and those levels certainly haven't dropped."

Lizzie Pearl, head of corporate partnerships at Alzheimer's Society, said: "The money we have raised so far will be used to help fund groundbreaking research, but we are also keen to play our part in helping raise awareness and understanding of dementia.

"We are incredibly proud to celebrate Travis Perkins raising £400,000 for Alzheimer's Society over the past two years.

"Every penny raised takes us a step closer to ending the devastation of dementia. The funds raised are supporting vital dementia research, providing life-changing services and helping families affected by dementia across the UK.

"We are deeply grateful to all the customers and colleagues who have taken on challenges, shown unwavering dedication and championed this partnership. It will take a society to beat dementia and we thank all those associated with Travis Perkins making such an extraordinary impact."

Travis Perkins is part of Travis Perkins plc and is believed to be the UK's largest supplier of building materials to the building and construction industry.

Featuring a network of more than 500 branches, it supplies thousands of products and materials, including a tool hire service, to trade professionals and self-builders across the nation. It offers a wide range of quality timber, building materials, kitchens, plumbing and heating, landscaping, painting and decorating essentials and tools for the job.

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Addressing the demand through a revised supply model

AS DEMAND grows for higher specification timber and panel products, builders' merchants are increasingly being required to extend their offer beyond core commodity-focused ranges. This shift, driven by more detailed architectural specifications and changing customer expectations, raises a practical question for many businesses: how to supply specialist materials without taking on excessive stock risk.

Bradfor's Building Supplies partnered with James Latham, believed to be the UK's largest independent timber and panel distributor, to face this challenge as enquiries for bespoke and less commonly stocked products began to increase across its branch network.

The changing market

Like many merchants, Bradfor's was working with a broad range of suppliers to cover different product categories. While functional, this approach left gaps in market knowledge, particularly around pricing and availability of higher-specification materials. It also limited confidence at branch level when responding to more technical enquiries. Working with multiple suppliers made it difficult to maintain consistent stock levels without tying up significant capital. Specialist timber and panel products tend to be slower moving, making it difficult to justify



holding significant volumes across multiple locations. At the same time, customers expected access to these materials within increasingly tight timeframes.

This left the business balancing two competing pressures: expanding its range to meet demand, while avoiding unnecessary capital tied up in stock.

Finding the right fit

To address these challenges, Bradfor's moved towards a more consolidated supply model, reducing the number of specialist suppliers it relied on and working more closely with a single distributor, James Latham, with a broad, established product range.

The intention was not simply

to streamline procurement, but to create a more structured way of accessing specialist timber and panel products. By aligning with a distributor able to hold a wide variety of materials centrally, including sheet materials, hardwoods and cladding, Bradfor's was able to extend its effective product range without increasing the complexity of its supply base.

A key shift was moving away from branch-led stockholding. Instead of committing capital to slower-moving lines, branches used the distributor's inventory as an extension of their own, enabling them to respond to demand without carrying significant local stock. A strategy aligned with Latham's campaign strapline for the merchant sector: 'We stock it so you don't have to'.

Reliable delivery supported this model, allowing for smaller, more frequent orders aligned to customer requirements rather than forecasts. Alongside this, greater emphasis was placed on product knowledge. Training and technical support helped branch





teams better understand specifications and applications, enabling more confident responses to specialist enquiries.

Together, these changes combined supply chain consolidation, reduced stock exposure and improved in-branch capability, creating a more flexible approach to specialist product demand.

Building branch-level confidence

A programme of branch-level training was introduced to build

familiarity with specialist timber and panel products. This was designed to help teams better understand product applications and respond more effectively to customer enquiries.

At the same time, ordering patterns shifted. Instead of placing larger, less frequent orders, branches moved towards smaller, more regular purchases aligned with customer demand. This reduced the amount of capital tied up in inventory while maintain-

ing access to a broader range of products.

Additionally, delivery schedules were structured to support this approach. James Latham's 24/5 depot operations enable relatively short lead times and reduced the need for speculative stockholding.

A success story in the making

Andrew Jones, merchant sector manager at James Latham, describes Bradfords as their "biggest

success story", noting the business has grown significantly over the past two to three years.

Paul Crook, timber development manager, Bradfords Building Supplies says, "Access to James Latham's product range has significantly strengthened our ability to meet customer requirements, especially for specialist and hard-to-source products." The merchant has seen substantial growth in sales of decorative MDF, birch plywood and Buffalo® phenolic-faced board.

Operationally, the business reduced its reliance on holding specialist stock at branch level, while maintaining service levels. Improved product knowledge also supported more consistent customer interactions, particularly where technical specification was required.

Building long-term success

Bradfords' experience highlights a wider shift within the merchant sector. As demand for specialist materials increases, traditional stock-led models can become less viable, particularly for products with lower turnover.

In response, some merchants are adopting supply chain approaches that prioritise access over ownership of stock, supported by closer collaboration with key distributors and a greater emphasis on knowledge transfer.

James Latham
www.lathamtimber.co.uk



Success at the Wales Business Awards

LEADING UK timber supplier Premier Forest Products has celebrated victory at the Wales Business Awards 2026, taking home Manufacturer of the Year for the work of its business division PWIDF Fire Door Solutions.

The annual Wales Business Awards celebrates the ambition, innovation, and impact of Welsh businesses across all sectors and sizes. The 2026 awards ceremony, held at the Holland House Hotel, Cardiff, recognised achievements in categories like sustainability, manufacturing, and inclusive employment.

Premier Forest celebrated its win in the Manufacturer of the Year category for the work of their Business Division PWIDF Fire Door Solutions.

PWIDF is a specialist designer and manufacturer of fully compliant fire door solutions, and a comprehensive supplier of architectural hardware, with full membership of the Guild of Architectural Ironmongers.

PWIDF was recognised for its exceptional ability to design and

manufacture fully certified, triple-performance fire door sets combining fire resistance, smoke control, and security within a highly controlled, scalable production system.

Its work stands out for integrating advanced engineering, strict quality control, and specialist expertise particularly in healthcare and mental health environments to deliver safe, durable, and thoughtfully designed solutions.

Alongside this technical in-

novation, PWIDF demonstrates strong social impact through skills development and community initiatives, while setting a benchmark for compliance, collaboration, and safety standards across the construction industry.

Dave Timson, PWIDF brand director, said: "Taking home this award is a proud moment for PWIDF. We've dedicated ourselves to creating high-quality, durable, and thoughtfully designed solutions, with safety at the core espe-

cially for environments that may need it most such as healthcare, mental health, and education.

"This award is a testament not only to the strength of what we deliver, but to the relentless hard work and commitment of our team. It reflects the people behind PWIDF, whose pursuit of excellence continues to drive us forward."

Terry Edgell, co-founder & CEO of Premier Forest Products, said: "Being recognised at the Wales Business Awards is a tremendous honour and a significant milestone for us. I'm proud to see the commitment, drive, and ambition of our entire team acknowledged in this way.

"This recognition means a great deal to us, and while we take a moment to celebrate this achievement, we remain firmly focused on the future continuing to grow, innovate, and deliver exceptional value in everything we do."

Premier Forest Products
premierforest.co.uk



West Fraser welcomes top industry bodies to Inverness

TWO of the timber industry's leading bodies — the STA (Structural Timber Association) and the PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) — visited West Fraser in Inverness recently to see for themselves the impressive SterlingOSB Zero manufacturing process in action.

Celebrating four decades of producing SterlingOSB board products, now the SterlingOSB Zero portfolio, the Inverness plant employs 140 workers and was the first facility in Europe to manufacture OSB, a panel product used in a wide range of applications, including construction materials, furniture, packaging, and art installations. Today, the site, when combined with the Genk site in Belgium, forms the largest OSB production operation in Europe. The Inverness plant is also the first OSB plant in Europe to receive the FSC accreditation, recognising its commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. In addition, the plant has benefited from sustained investment over the past 40 years, including a £95m expansion back in 2018 to install a new manufacturing line and increase production capacity.



Daniel Clarke.

Senior key account manager, Daniel Clarke explains more about the visit: "West Fraser's collaboration with the Structural Timber Association and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification represents an important alignment with the most respected authorities in timber construction and responsible forestry. We offer both PEFC & FSC OSB to this sector. These partnerships strengthen West Fraser's credibility, support its leadership position, and directly contribute to continued learning in a market where performance, compliance, and sustainability are increasingly decisive. Partnering with the PEFC and STA helps West Fraser demonstrate stewardship of natural resources, reinforce our carbon negative position, align with evolving Scope 3 reporting requirements, support clients' ESG/sustainability and life-cycle supply-chain commitments and meet regulatory expectations around traceability and responsible sourcing."

Timber frame offers compelling advantages for housebuilders, particularly around speed, cost control, and performance. The structural frame is erected quickly, reducing time on site and panels can be manufactured off-site while groundworks are being completed, allowing parallel workstreams and of course, a faster build. Earlier sales handover improves cash flow while fewer wet trades (less brickwork, concrete, plaster) means less weather dependency and often, fewer delays. Timber frame is increasingly attractive as regulations tighten toward Future Homes Standard targets and, of course, timber is a renewable material with a low embodied carbon footprint compared to masonry, so these are just a few benefits that housebuilders are embracing.

West Fraser ● 01786 812921 ● <https://uk.westfraser.com/>

Resilient Travis Perkins colleagues complete extraordinary 200 km charity fundraiser

TWO Travis Perkins colleagues have conquered gruelling physical endurance challenges to raise just under £3,000 for charity.

Eddy Webb and Brian Kemp, from Travis Perkins' Chipping Norton branch on Station Road, completed 200 km running and cycling challenges by undertaking 100 km each to raise money for Alzheimer's Society — the business's chosen charity.

Dementia is the UK's biggest killer and one in three people born today will develop dementia in their lifetime. Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity — providing help and hope to everyone affected by dementia.

Eddy, 32, set himself the extraordinary challenge of running 100 km in a day, which is roughly the same as running from the Chipping Norton branch to Bristol city centre, while Brian took to the Cotswolds hills on his bike to complete his 100 km on challenging terrain.

Eddy, who set off at 5 am, completed his task in 14 hours. The yard manager at Travis Perkins Chipping Norton did the first 80 km around the local area before heading back to his branch to complete the final stretch in front of suppliers, customers, family and friends.

Meanwhile, Brian, who is the branch manager, started his cycling challenge at 7 am, with the 100 km cycle taking the 56-year-old six hours to complete, arriving back at the branch mid-afternoon.

Speaking after completing his run, Eddy said: "I have run a long way



before, but when I set myself this challenge, I knew how difficult it was going to be, and it certainly did not disappoint from that perspective.

"I felt completely exhausted after it, but ultimately it was for a great cause in Alzheimer's Society, and it ended up being such a good day for everyone at Travis Perkins Chipping Norton. I am so grateful to all those who supported both Brian and me throughout the day."

Brian said: "Chipping Norton is a tough place to cycle at the best of times because of its hilly nature, but a 100 km ride was very challenging. I am pleased I managed to complete it, and my overriding feeling is of pride that everyone at the branch pulled together to raise a great amount of money for charity."

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Travis Perkins
www.travisperkins.co.uk

Makita launches its most powerful impact driver

EXPANDING its offering of tools for fixing and fastening, Makita has launched a new impact driver, the most powerful in its XGT line-up. The TD004G 40VMax XGT Brushless Impact Driver has been designed for superior performance for a range of applications, including heavy duty tasks.

Powered by Makita's 40VMax XGT Li-Ion battery, the TD004G offers a maximum fastening torque of 230 Newton metres (Nm), a no-load speed of up to 3,900 rpm and delivers up to 3,900 impacts per minute (ipm) for exceptional driv-

ing efficiency. Despite its power, it is still compact and lightweight making it easy and comfortable to use.

The high torque of the TD004G means it can provide enhanced speed and efficiency on fasteners that are not prone to cam-out, such as hex head and hexalobular (star shaped hole head screws). In addition, the TD004G is ideal when working with hard materials such as Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL).

The TD004G also offers excellent control. It features a variable speed trigger and four power



modes that alter the speed, impacts per minute, and torque for easy adjustment to the type of fastener and material. It also has a T mode to reduce the risk of screw stripping when driving self-drilling screws (Tek screws) into metal sheets.

The brushless motor of the TD004G reduces wasted energy and improves power delivery compared with a conventional brushed motor. This means longer runtimes on a single charge and fewer interruptions to swap and charge the battery.

For ease of use the TD004G features one-touch tool-less bit change with reduced resistance for easier fitting, and twin led job lights with pre-glow and after-

glow functions for better visibility of the workpiece.

Kevin Brannigan, marketing manager at Makita, commented: "This latest addition to our range of 40VMax XGT impact drivers has been designed to help achieve greater speed and efficiency on the most demanding fixing and fastening tasks. This alongside its simple power adjustment based on the job at hand makes the TD004G a valuable addition to many professionals' kit."

Makita
www.makita.com

Edgebanding with Altendorf under a single brand name

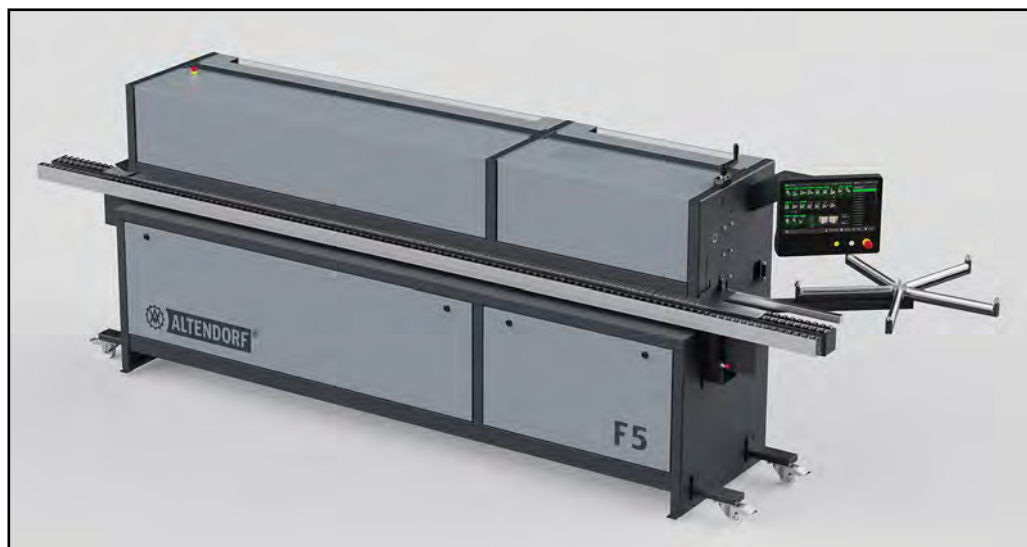
ALTENDORF is consolidating its entire edgebanding machine portfolio under its own brand name. The machines previously marketed under the Hebrock brand will continue as the Altendorf F Series and Altendorf K Series — both lines have undergone significant technical enhancements and are clearly differentiated by application. At the same time, Altendorf is relocating production: Starting in autumn 2026, all edgebanding machines will be manufactured at the main plant in Minden, where Altendorf panel saws are already produced.

This move follows the strategic realignment that Altendorf initiated in early 2026: All machines and digital solutions from the Altendorf Group will be marketed under a single name in the future — format sliding table saws and edgebanding machines from a single source, with uniform service and a shared digital infrastructure. This integration is more than just a rebranding. With the F Series and K Series, there are two technically revised product lines that serve clearly distinct applications.

F Series: Edge processing for craftsmen and flexible production

The Altendorf F-Series comprises three models — F 2, F 4, and F 5 — and is aimed at woodworking shops and carpentry businesses seeking a compact, practical edge banding machine for everyday use. With a feed rate of up to 10 m/min and a heating time of 3.5 minutes, the F-Series is also economical for smaller operations: short setup times, fast throughput, minimal downtime.

The F 2 is the compact entry-level model and, with a length of approximately 3.35 m, fits even in tight workshop spaces. The F 4



adds a corner rounding router and a surface scraper with dual sensing to the equipment profile, delivering fully finished edges in a single pass. The F 5 integrates the complete processing line into a 4.30 m unit: jointing cutter, crosscut saw, milling unit, radius scraper, corner rounding cutter, surface scraper, and finishing station. The F Series processes wood, wood-based materials, and plastics with workpiece thicknesses ranging from 8 to 50 mm.

K Series: High performance for manufacturing operations

The Altendorf K Series — models K 34, K 36, and K 37 — is designed for performance-oriented workshops and manufacturing facilities with higher production volumes. With a feed rate of up to 15 m/min and workpiece thicknesses of up to 60 mm, it sets a different standard than the F Series. The modular design allows for custom configurations — from a flexible single workstation to an automated production line. The top-of-the-line K 37 model, with a 6 m length, offers the series' maximum level of equipment

and is designed for continuous operation with high production volumes and varying material requirements.

A key feature of the K Series is the integrated edge magazine with interchangeable cassettes: The edge material changes in under 30 seconds — at hand height, without tools, and operable even while wearing gloves. The front-mounted fine adjustment allows for calibration directly during operation — particularly practical for delicate real wood veneer. The sensor-based dual trimming system automatically detects the workpiece and ensures precise trimming cuts on the front and back. The AirTronic zero-joint technology is available as an option: the edge is fused directly to the workpiece using hot air without adhesive; switching between EVA, PUR, and AirTronic is tool-free.

What sets both series apart

The F Series and K Series share a number of defining features. Both lines are controlled via a 15-inch touchscreen that offers an integrated 3D preview of the workpiece — before the first process-

ing step. Up to 40 programmes can be saved and recalled with repeatable accuracy. The Whisper-Cut jointing router with interchangeable diamond cutters uses a pulling cut toward the centre of the panel and delivers tear-free results even on delicate surfaces.

Changing the motor on the corner rounding router takes just a few seconds — no tools required, no manual readjustment. Both series do away with a central lubrication system, which keeps workpieces clean and reduces maintenance requirements. After 15 minutes of idle time, ECO Mode automatically shuts down all units, including the glue pot heater. All models are ready for connection to Altendorf NEXUS IIoT, Altendorf's digital platform — even when used in conjunction with Altendorf sliding table saws.

Production moves to Minden

Starting in autumn 2026, all Altendorf edgebanding machines will be manufactured at the headquarters in Minden. Production previously located in Hüllhorst will be consolidated at the site where Altendorf sliding table saws are already manufactured. For customers, this means a single point of contact for production and service, unified quality assurance, and — in the long term — closer technical integration between the two machine classes.

Altendorf
konfigurator.altendorf.com



Travis Perkins Managed Services to provide building materials to Wandle Housing Association



WANDLE Housing Association has appointed Travis Perkins Managed Services (TPMS) as the new supplier for building materials.

Wandle has over 7,000 homes across nine south London boroughs, representing a mix of social and affordable homes for rent, shared ownership properties, outright sales and supported housing.

The contract, which runs from 1 April 2026 for an initial period of three years, will see TPMS predominantly supply building materials from its Travis Perkins branches in Croydon and Peckham, supported by a further seven branches in the wider area to ensure a good supply of stock.

Sarah Narracott, head of business development at Travis Perkins Managed Services, said: "This is a fantastic new partnership for Travis Perkins Managed Services, and we are really pleased to be able to supply building materials across Wandle's extensive port-

folio of properties. By servicing their requirements through our network of branches, Wandle can be confident that no matter what materials they need, they'll be able to get hold of them quickly."

Wandle will be using TPMS' proprietary TPgo Data platform, which provides dynamic insights into purchases, product tracking and data analysis.

Sarah added: "With such a broad range of product material requirements across South London, the use of TPgo Data will mean that Wandle will always have the most up-to-date information at their fingertips, reducing unnecessary costs and enabling data-led decision making to improve efficiencies."

The contract was awarded through the Cirrus Framework, which supports local authorities, NHS Trusts, schools, universities, registered charities and social housing providers to access goods and services, including materials and building supplies.

The partnership will also see TPMS work alongside Wandle on several social value projects in the south London community.

Through a phased approach and analysis of the most frequently purchased products, Travis Perkins and Wandle will work together to devise van stock profiles, with a view to rolling out the TPgo Van Stock system in the future.

Van Stock ensures that operatives always have their most used products and materials in their vans, helping to ensure they have everything they need on hand.

Francis Burrows, executive director — customer and operational services, Wandle Housing Association, said: "With 7,000 properties across nine boroughs, it was vital for us to appoint a supplier who would be able to provide us with a range of materials at short notice. We were hugely impressed with Travis Perkins Managed Services, and they gave us confidence that no

matter the job, they will be able to supply us with exactly what we need. We're working with experienced management consultants Lumensol to find ways to improve our systems when managing repairs at residents' homes, and the TPgo Data platform builds on this perfectly.

"We can track where our team are purchasing products and ensure that whatever they need for a job is available for pick up straight away, helping to keep residents informed, improve first time fix rates and reduce both our costs and carbon footprint."

Travis Perkins Managed Services is a leading UK supply chain solutions and procurement partner to the repairs and maintenance sector, delivering efficiency through quality, at an affordable price.

Travis Perkins Managed Services
www.tpmanagementservices.co.uk

Travis Perkins opens fourth Glasgow branch

MORE tradespeople in Scotland will be able to access what is believed to be the UK's largest builders' merchant after a new Travis Perkins branch opened in Glasgow — the fourth in the country's largest city.

The branch on Helen Street, which contains a Benchmark Kitchens & Joinery showroom as well as a Travis Perkins Hire, has created 15 new jobs in the local area and was opened by former Scotland international footballer and Soccer Saturday broadcaster Alan McInally.

The new branch, which occupies a prime 2.6 acre site, will stock over 25,000 products including a large landscaping, drainage and lintel range as well as an extensive array of timber, bricks and blocks, giving tradespeople in Glasgow all the essentials for any building project.

With a big summer of sport on the horizon, new customers were invited to take part in a trade triathlon with tickets to the Commonwealth Games later this summer up for grabs.

Liam McIntyre, branch manager at Travis Perkins Helen Street, said: "After months of planning and preparation, we are absolutely delighted to have opened the doors to our branch for the very first time.

"We have a strong presence in the city already but we are pleased to add another branch to our network, enabling us to provide even better service to the tradespeople who rely on us daily for their building materials.

"There are 17 staff members in the new branch, 15 of whom are new to Travis Perkins and everyone has undertaken extensive training to enable them to provide the outstanding customer service the business is so well known for.

"As well as a new Travis Perkins, we also have a Benchmark Kitchens & Joinery showroom to service trade kitchen fitters and a Travis Perkins Hire, extending our tool hire operation which has the

largest branch network across the UK with 273.

"It was great to have Scottish football star Alan McInally in the branch to cut the ribbon, and our customers really bought into the trade triathlon with the winners having the chance to secure tickets to the Commonwealth Games."

The branch's operating hours will be from 7am-5pm Monday to Friday and 8 am-12 pm on Saturday, which will be mirrored by its Benchmark showroom.

To celebrate the opening, Travis Perkins donated £1,000 to Alzheimer Scotland, the business' chosen charity.

Liam added: "We were thrilled to be joined by Tom Pavey from Alzheimer Scotland on the day, and it is a pleasure to be able to make a donation to charity. It does tremendous work for those suffering with dementia and for us to make a small contribution to mark the occasion of us opening a new branch is a great feeling."

Travis Perkins
www.travisperkins.co.uk



Join the team

To find out more and apply



YOUR PERFECT PARTNER

Buyer wanted

Decorative Panels is seeking an experienced Buyer to source materials, manage suppliers, negotiate costs, and ensure stock availability across its Components and Furniture divisions.

KBB experience is preferred, though candidates from furniture, interiors, construction products, or similar manufacturing sectors are welcome.

Very attractive salary package commensurate with industry experience. Strong negotiation, supplier management, and commercial skills are essential.

Full-time Elland, West Yorkshire

To apply, please send your CV to HR@decorativepanels.co.uk.

Company pension scheme • Attractive salary package • Supportive & dynamic environment • Support two established manufacturers

Stabila launches LAX 60 G greenbeam cross line laser



STABILA, a leading designer and manufacturers of exceptionally high-quality precision measuring equipment, has launched the new LAX 60 G cross line laser — a compact and versatile solution for accurate marking and alignment work in interior construction and installation.

The Stabila LAX 60 G gives professionals a compact, versatile and immediately ready-to-use

cross line laser for accurate marking and alignment in the horizontal and vertical plane. Thanks to GreenBeam technology, it projects extremely bright, razor-sharp green laser lines which are visible at a distance of up to 30 m, even in daylight. In manual mode the lines can be flexibly positioned at any inclination, while in pulse mode the working area can be enlarged to as much as 80 m with the aid of a receiver.

Long line visibility at any angle

Whether in drywall construction, tiling, decorating, joinery, electrical installation or plumbing/heating/AC installation, the LAX 60 G cross line laser makes professionals' work much easier when it comes to marking, aligning and assembly. With a levelling accuracy of ± 0.3 mm/m, it offers high precision. Moreover, with powerful magnets and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " thread, it can be attached to steel beams or radiators or mounted on a tripod (such as the Stabila ST-K-S). In order to mark diagonals, in manual mode the pendulum can also be locked to fix the laser lines at the required angle. In large, brightly lit spaces, the pulse-modulated laser lines can be activated to enlarge the working area of the laser to as much as 80 m with an optional receiver.

Immediately ready and easy to operate

Thanks to the pendulum technology, specially designed for use on the construction site, the LAX 60 G self-levelling cross line laser is immediately ready for use and is easy to operate with two buttons. Powered by three AA 1.5 V bat-

teries (supplied), its high-performance laser diodes have a long operating time of up to 15 hours. The user can check the charge status on the LED battery display and extend the operating time by switching the lines on and off.

Designed for tough everyday use

Protected against the accumulation of dust on the inside and spray from all directions (IP 54), the LAX 60 G features shock-absorbent Stabila soft grip casing which also protects against impact. The pendulum locking mechanism prevents damage and stops the laser's accuracy being affected during transportation.

Coming with a sturdy belt pouch for safe storage, other accessories include a target plate with magnetic holder and cross-hair, which makes it easier to align the laser with a target point. For suspended ceilings, the target plate can be easily attached to metal rails with the magnetic holder.

The Stabila LAX 60 G cross line laser including belt pouch, target plate and three AA 1.5 V batteries is available from retailers.

Stabila
www.stabila.com/en/home.html



Makita's new work lights turn up the brightness on jobsite efficiency

MAKITA has expanded its cordless lighting range with the 40VMax XGT® ML013G and 18V DML819 LXT Magnetic Work Lights. These lights can be attached and fixed to any metal surface with the powerful magnet, providing unparalleled flexibility, for instant, hands-free illumination and can be used when undertaking maintenance work on construction machinery and heavy equipment. Designed to enhance visibility, productivity and jobsite flexibility, both models combine robust construction with advanced LED technology.

The versatile cordless work lights both deliver a maximum luminous flux of 1,200 lumens to provide high visibility for maintenance tasks and demanding worksite environments. Developed to maximise efficiency, these lights offer varying runtimes depending on the battery capacity used. When selecting the 4.0 Ah 40 V Max battery on the ML013G, the run times offer 12 hours of power on the high setting, 18 hours on medium and 29 hours on low. Alternatively, when selecting the 6.0 Ah 18 V battery on the DML819, this delivers 9 hours of continuous operation on high, 14 hours on medium and

22 hours on low. Both lights provide a warning when the battery is running low, indicated by a reduction in illuminance.

Both Makita work lights are equipped with an LED head with a diffusing lens to soften the output, reduce glare and provide widespread illumination. The LED head also rotates 300° horizontally (90° right and 210° left) and 180° vertically making it both practical and flexible for awkward work areas. When not in use, this can be folded down, resulting in the automatic shutdown of the work light to reduce its overall size, enhancing portability and convenience.

The work lights join Makita's new DML817 — a compact LED light which features three lighting modes, as well as a memory function, so users can pick up work from where they left off. The DML817 has been designed for a variety of uses including a stationary light and handy portable hanging light. It's incredibly practical as it also features a USB lighting port, to double up as a portable power bank.

Kevin Brannigan, marketing manager at Makita UK, commented: "All new work light additions deliver powerful illumination, impressive runtimes and versatil-



ity. They also offer ultimate convenience as they can be moved around easily in the workspace, helping users to stay productive,

safe and efficient from the start of the job through to completion."

Makita
www.makitauk.com



Premier Forest Products relaunches NTS Sheffield to strengthen national timber engineering network

LEADING UK timber supplier Premier Forest Products has confirmed the full relaunch of the National Timber Systems (NTS) Sheffield manufacturing site following its acquisition of NTS out of administration at the end of 2025.

The 25,000 sq ft facility, which has supplied innovative timber engineering products to housebuilders and contractors for more than two decades, is once again producing roof trusses and engineered joists. Its return restores a key hub within NTS's national network between Newcastle, Bristol and Catterick.

A central focus of the relaunch has been the retention of skills and continuity of service. Many roles have been restored, including a core group of experienced shop floor, transport and office staff. The planning and customer service function has also been re-established, maintaining continuity for existing customers.

The temporary shutdown enabled a comprehensive operational reset at the Sheffield site, with a strong focus on enhancing accuracy, reliability, and overall customer experience. The site now benefits from a reconfigured yard with clearly defined loading areas, creating a more streamlined and controlled dispatch process.

A robust two-stage checking system has been introduced, ensuring every order is verified both in the loading bay and again on the vehicle prior to departure. This right first-time approach is designed to give customers greater confidence that deliveries will arrive complete and as expected.

In addition, increased time has been allocated to the loading process, reducing operational pressure and further strengthening consistency and quality. Together, these improvements support a more dependable end-to-end service,

ensuring customers receive the full and accurate package to site, every time.

Terry Edgell, co-founder & CEO of Premier Forest Products, said: "Re-establishing Sheffield was a strategic priority for the business. Without it, there is a clear gap in the network that impacts both efficiency and customer service.

"Our focus has been on retaining the expertise on site while taking the opportunity to strengthen processes. The result is a facility that combines proven capability with an improved and disciplined customer-focused approach to delivery."

Lee Bottley, Sheffield branch manager, said: "The pause in operations gave us the opportunity to rebuild the site in a more structured and efficient way.

"We have retained a highly experienced team, redesigned the workflow through the yard and introduced more robust checking processes. The focus is on improving customer communication and delivering consistently reliable service."

From a network perspective, Sheffield provides a critical central hub, reducing delivery distances to key markets across Yorkshire, the Northwest and the Midlands, and supporting improved lead times.

Nick Kershaw, managing director of National Timber Systems, added: "The return of Sheffield is important not just operationally, but in terms of customer confidence.

"Reintroducing the site with the same location, largely the same team and enhanced processes demonstrate our commitment to long-term investment and dependable service."

The site has been fully restocked and is positioned to support demand through the peak construction period.

Premier Forest Products ● premierforest.co.uk



Next generation of builders graduate from landmark FMB skills programme

STUDENTS have graduated from Build Academy, a landmark pilot programme developed by members of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), funded by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and delivered in partnership with Shooters Hill Sixth Form College, to create a new pipeline of skilled tradespeople.

The graduation ceremony at Shooters Hill Sixth Form College celebrated a major milestone for the programme, which was purpose-built to tackle one of the biggest threats facing British construction: a chronic shortage of site-ready workers entering the industry, with 61% of FMB member firms struggling to recruit skilled tradespeople.

Build Academy takes a radically different approach to construction education. Rather than a traditional college setting, students spend their time in a purpose-built workshop environment that mirrors a real working day on site, developing practical skills across bricklaying, tiling, plastering, painting and decorating, and carpentry. The curriculum was designed and executed by FMB members, ensuring graduates leave site-ready for work.

The programme forms part of the CITB's RMI (retrofit) Sector Skills Plan, launching in July 2026, which sets out a national framework for growing the pipeline of tradespeople needed to deliver Britain's retrofit and repair ambitions.

For many of Build Academy's first cohort, the programme has been transformational not just professionally, but personally. Holly Bennett arrived at Shooters Hill Sixth Form College in September 2024 having enrolled on a Level 1 multi-trade course. When Build Academy tutors spotted her potential and encouraged her to apply, she seized the opportunity. At the graduation, she said: "Before I joined, I would never have imagined being capable of producing work to such a high standard. Carpentry has become my passion and I'm especially proud of the projects I've completed. The Academy completely transformed me, my confidence, my skills, my ambitions. Teamwork was something I always struggled with, but working alongside others on real, hands-on projects taught me the value of communication, co-operation and supporting the people around you. To any young person wondering whether to join, I would recommend it without hesitation. It has had a lasting impact on my life and I will always be grateful for the opportunity."

Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders, added: "Build Academy is proof that when the industry takes ownership of the skills challenge, real change is possible. We cannot build the homes we need without the tradespeople to build them and for too long, we have failed to show young people that a career in construction is something to aspire to. Today's graduates are an inspiration. The FMB will keep pushing to scale this model across other sites, to give other young people a chance to take up a career in construction."

Tom Peardon, London director at the Federation of Master Builders, added: "These graduates have done something remarkable. They came in as young people who had never set foot on a building site and they left as skilled, site-ready tradespeople who London's builders will be

lucky to have. Build Academy works because it was designed by builders, for builders and because the young people who came through it gave everything. We now need more London firms to step up and offer these graduates the apprenticeships they have earned."

Tim Balcon, chief executive of CITB, concluded: "Programmes like the Build Academy show what can be achieved when employers take a leading role in shaping how we train the next generation of construction workers. Giving young people the opportunity to develop real, site-ready skills in a working environment is crucial if we are to tackle the skills challenge facing our industry.

"We know there is no single solution to closing the skills gap, but initiatives like this play a hugely important role. The focus now needs to be supporting learners into long-term careers and ensuring employers continue to create the opportunities that allow them to progress. If we can replicate this approach at scale, it will mean a much brighter and stronger future for the construction workforce."

FMB ● www.fmb.org.uk



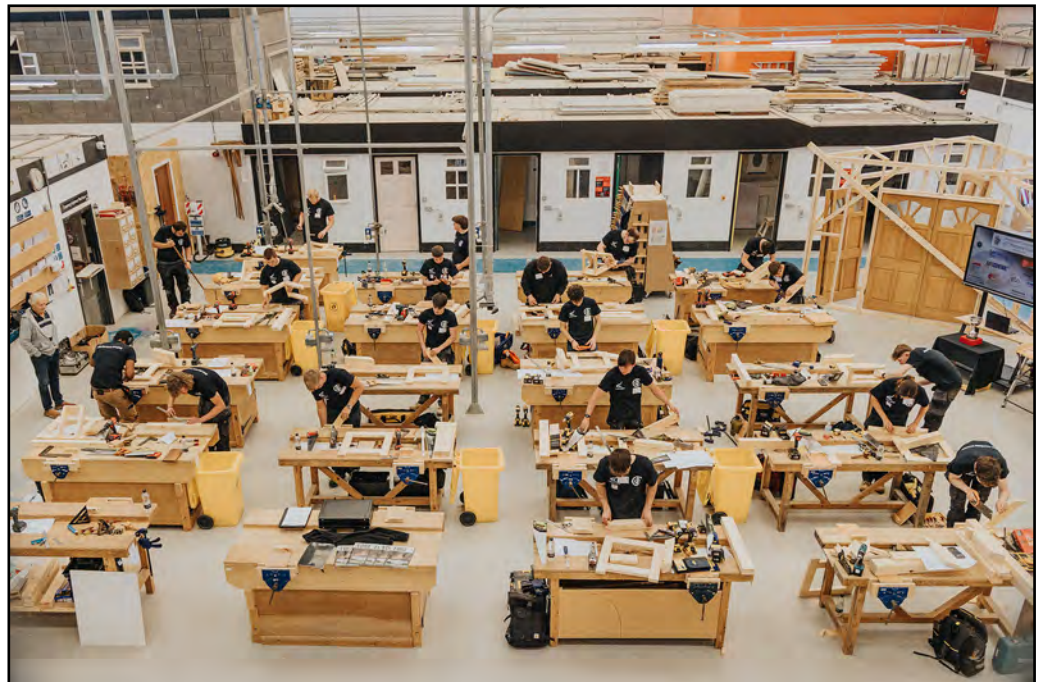
Derby College Group hosts esteemed Merlane Trophy as student makes history

Derby College Group (DCG) proudly hosted the 47th Merlane Trophy on 29 April 2026, welcoming some of the region's most talented carpentry and joinery students for a highly respected industry skills competition.

Organised by the Institute of Carpenters, the Merlane Trophy is a flagship event for apprentices across the Midlands, challenging competitors to complete a complex four-hour practical task. This year's challenge required participants to demonstrate exceptional craftsmanship by constructing a detailed model of a hipped roof, alongside other advanced joinery techniques.

Nine colleges from across the Midlands took part, showcasing the very best emerging talent in carpentry, joinery and shopfitting. The competition continues to play a vital role in raising standards, fostering healthy rivalry, and preparing students for successful careers in the construction industry.

Derby College Group celebrated outstanding success on home soil, with student Jack Henley of Seamers Specialist Joinery securing first place for the second consecutive year. In doing so, Jack becomes the first competitor in the competition's 47 year history to achieve back to back wins, marking a remarkable milestone for both the student and the College. The victory also represents a hat trick of wins for Derby College Group, underlining its strength in delivering high quality technical education.



The Merlane Trophy competition in full swing. The event, which took place at Derby College Group, was organised by the Institute of Carpenters.

Alongside Jack, DCG students Haydn Fletcher and Louis Alsop also represented the College with distinction, contributing to an impressive overall performance.

The event brought together students, employers, judges and industry leaders, reinforcing the importance of practical skills in a sector critical to the UK's future growth.

Robin Cleveit, leading carpentry influencer and presenter on Fix Radio, attended the event and said: "It's inspiring to see young learners performing at such a high level. This industry offers incredible career opportunities, and

it is vital we continue to invest in skills like these. In an increasingly digital world, there is something powerful about creating something real with your hands. With the right support and investment, these learners can help drive the future of housebuilding and construction in the UK."

The arrangements for the competition were organised by Ben Hirst at Derby College Group, with the event itself delivered by the Institute of Carpenters. He said: "It has been a real honour to host the Merlane Trophy at Derby College. The standard of work has been exceptional, and I am incredibly proud of all the students who took part. Events like this give learners the chance to test themselves, build confidence, and connect with the wider industry."

Richard Galbraith, President of the Institute of Carpenters, added: "The Merlane Trophy continues to highlight the exceptional talent coming through our colleges. The level of skill, focus and professionalism on display today has been outstanding. These students represent the future of our industry, and competitions like this are essential in supporting their development."

The event was supported on the day by David Winson from the Institute of Carpenters, who ensured everything ran smoothly.

Derby College Group also extended its thanks to sponsors whose support helped make the event possible, including Seamers Specialist Joinery, Whitehouse Construction Co Ltd, Browns Builders Merchants Ltd, Rustic Rural Ltd, Tilgear, Screwfix, and Elwood Enterprises.

Derby College Group offers a wide range of carpentry and joinery courses designed to equip students with the practical skills and industry knowledge needed to succeed in the construction sector. From entry-level qualifications through to advanced apprenticeships, students benefit from expert teaching, industry-standard facilities and strong employer links.

The Merlane Trophy, founded in 1977, remains one of the most respected skills competitions for carpentry apprentices in the Midlands, continuing to inspire the next generation of skilled professionals.

Derby College Group
www.derby-college.ac.uk



New webinar series launched to supercharge skills development for timber in construction



IN SUPPORT of a major new initiative, the Timber in Construction Skills Programme, a new series of webinars has been launched to equip the industry with essential skills — Timber in Construction 101 — completely free for anyone interested in using timber.

Skills development is a core theme of the Timber in Construction Roadmap. The Timber in Construction Skills Programme is a key project in this landscape, as a two-year initiative backed by the CITB and delivered by a powerhouse partnership including TDUK, BE-ST, Edinburgh Napier University, NMITE, the STA, and Donaldson Timber Systems.

Alex Goodfellow, CEO for Donaldson Timber Systems, said “The Timber in Construction Roadmap highlighted the importance of developing the workforce alongside the growth of timber construction, and this CITB-funded initiative is an important step in helping address that challenge.

“By bringing together industry, education and innovation partners, we have an opportunity to create a long-term skills framework that supports better project outcomes, attracts more people into construction and helps the sector deliver the high-quality, low-carbon homes the UK needs in the years ahead.”

David Hopkins, chief executive for Timber Development UK, echoed this message, saying: “As offsite approaches and low-carbon materials like timber gain significant market share, the professionals who understand wood — and can work with it confidently — will be the ones who lead the industry into the next decade. We are proud to work with our network of partners, members and industry experts to launch this webinar series — made free to all — in support of the wider programme, and bring the industry knowledge to support this skills evolution.”

The series — Timber in Construction 101 — features six intervention-led webinars, mirroring the course content currently being developed. With the series covering the entire timber value chain, learners will be able to engage in skills they can use on-site or in the factory the very next day, including around core concepts such as:

- Material Intelligence: Understanding timber performance and properties.
- Design and Specification: Navigating fire safety and structural integrity.
- Offsite Manufacturing: Optimising factory-to-site delivery and precision.
- Onsite Excellence: Mastering logistics and sequence management.
- Navigating Compliance: Building confidence in our regulatory landscape.
- Constructing Carbon: Evidencing your carbon claims on timber.

Learners can enrol into the webinar series from 15 May 2026 with the first webinar in the series, Material Intelligence, beginning on 3 June 2026. The series, which will persist through to March 2027, will be made available on demand to learners, to help cultivate a new network of students and educators for timber.

Help shape the future of timber construction skills

The organisers are looking for individuals and organisations who want to actively contribute to the Timber in Construction Skills Programme. Express your interest in getting involved in a way that suits your expertise and capacity by completing the online form with BE-ST.

You can get involved by:

- Reviewing and strengthening programme content
- Contributing new knowledge, case studies or teaching materials
- Championing the programme within your organisation or institution
- Supporting educators to embed timber content into learning
- Taking part in events or contributing to podcasts

All you need to enrol into the webinar series is a free Timber Development UK account.

Timber in Construction Skills Programme
www.be-st.build/timber-in-construction-skills

Prize winning student wall cabinets

LIBERON Finishing Oil has been put to the test by learners at a prestigious furniture school for professional woodworkers.

Robinson House Studio introduced a competitive element to a Finishing course for seven learners, tasking them each to produce a wall cabinet. Each cabinet had to measure 65 cm x 40 cm, and feature two doors. Learners

were allowed to incorporate laser-cut veneer or some kind of pattern. Liberon's Finishing Oil was then applied to the completed cabinets, which were then judged by Robinson House Studio staff to determine a winner and runner-up.

Theo Cook, vice principal and senior tutor at the furniture school said: "This project is one of the

most challenging for the students to achieve, and is a good test of a variety of skills in addition to its finishing element. These include veneering, lipping, hinge application, carcass construction and the production of back panels. The project provides a good grounding for students to be able to scale up later to larger furniture carcasses. We find that Liberon's Finishing Oil is a good 'all-rounder' that's easy to apply for both professionals and beginners."

The winning design by Piers Reid was produced to an exceptionally high standard and demonstrated a high level of skill. The use of a laser cutter to create a compass design on both the inside and outside of the door was particularly impressive.

The runner-up was Will Franklin whose cabinet was also completed to a very high standard. While more understated in appearance, it featured a hand-cut starburst veneer pattern on the back of the doors. This is an extremely challenging technique and was executed with great precision and craftsmanship.

Both students are attending a 50 week course at RHS furniture school, during which they complete training on finishing.

Richard Bradley, UK head of marketing with the competition sponsors, Liberon, says: "Congratulations to Piers and the runner up, Will. The cabinet designs showcase the beautiful effects that can be achieved using our Finishing Oil. The students produced something of which they can be really proud."

The cabinets were judged by staff at the college, and the winner and runner-up each won a £50 Amazon voucher provided by Liberon. The winner was also presented with a bundle of Liberon woodcare products.

Liberon is renowned for excellence in products such as dyes, waxes, oils and varnishes. In addition, there is a broad range of solutions available for tackling all kinds of wood preparation and repair to ensure users achieve perfect results and keep them looking good.

Liberon
liberon.co.uk



Left to right with the cabinets they made: winner Piers Reid and runner-up Will Franklin.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Interpon launches Eco+ Cure energy calculator

INTERPON, a brand of AkzoNobel Powder Coatings, has launched the Eco+ Cure energy calculator — a new expert-led, advanced analysis tool designed to help manufacturers uncover practical ways to reduce energy consumption, lower operating costs, and shrink their carbon footprint across powder coating operations.

Manufacturers across industries are prioritizing energy efficiency and emissions reduction alongside productivity and product quality. By unlocking deeper insights into coating processes, Eco+ Cure can help them optimise performance and drive more sustainable operations.

The Eco+ Cure energy calculator is used as part of an assessment carried out by Interpon's Technical Services team, providing customers with clear insight into their curing process and how to improve energy efficiency and performance. The calculator is part of Interpon's Eco+ Services — a suite of technical, digital and data-driven services that help manufacturers better understand, measure and improve the sustainability of their coating operations. By analysing real operating data — including gas usage, oven temperature and throughput — it reveals optimisation opportunities that are often invisible in day-to-day production. It also helps manufacturers better understand the potential impact of innovations such as lower cure technologies.

Eco+ Cure combines advanced analytics with expert interpretation. Interpon's technical experts

work directly with customers to translate data findings into practical recommendations that can be implemented quickly and effectively, helping reduce energy consumption, lower carbon emissions, improve productivity and enhance overall line performance. This hands-on approach means customers can make informed decisions with confidence, giving them the clarity and control to own their impact while turning sustainability efforts into measurable operational gains.

Jorrit van Rijn, global marketing director at AkzoNobel Powder Coatings, explains: "Manufacturers don't just want to be more sustainable; they need solutions that improve performance at the same time. But without clear data, it's difficult to know where to start. The Eco+ Cure energy calculator changes that. It gives customers real insight into their operations, helping them identify what works, what doesn't, and where they can improve. It's about making sustainability practical, and delivering real business value."

A simplified version of the calculator can be found on Interpon's energy-saving page.

To unlock the full Eco+ Cure assessment and receive tailored, in-depth operational insights business should contact their local Interpon sales representative or use the contact us form on Interpon's energy-saving page.

Interpon
www.interpon.com/gb/en/insights/energy-saving



SAVE ENERGY REDUCE COSTS

In many manufacturing facilities, extraction fans operate continuously, at full power, throughout the working day.

Even when some machines are not in use, and often during factory breaks, the powerful, energy-consuming fans continue to run at full speed – wasting valuable energy... and money!

With ECOGATE, the extraction system responds in real-time to variations in machine use. When a production machine is switched on, the greenBOX Controller opens a motorised damper to provide extraction for that particular machine.

With ECOGATE technology installed, an extraction fan will consume the minimum power required to provide optimum extraction – reducing electricity bills by 68% on average.

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Wards Builders and Developers specify CaberShield ECO for new townhouses

WEST FRASER has introduced CaberShield ECO, an ecofriendly flooring solution engineered to meet the practical demands of residential, commercial and refurbishment construction. Providing a high performance, waterproof floor during the build phase, CaberShield ECO creates a slip resistant working platform while protecting floors below from the elements. BBA certified for up to 60 days' weather exposure, the system combines CaberFloor P5 with a factory applied, solvent free, UV cured resin coating which helps contractors keep programmes moving in all weather conditions.

Tom Ward, co-founder of Wards Builders and Developers, talks about his experience of using the product.

Can you tell us about Wards Builders and Developers?

The business was set up by my Dad, my brother and myself in November 2020. My Dad subsequently retired in 2022, and we now employ 15 people and cover London, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire. We work across a range of sectors including extensions, renovations, newbuild housing, commercial projects, healthcare, and education.

What type of project did you use West Fraser products on?

We used West Fraser products on a newbuild residential project; specifically, a phase of six townhouses.

Why was CaberShield ECO chosen for this project?

CaberShield ECO was chosen because it was part of the architect's design specification. Jewson supplied the product, and CaberShield ECO met the same specification requirements while offering excellent protection qualities, which was important for this build.

What stood out to you about CaberShield ECO?

The main things for us were the durability and overall quality of the product. It performs exactly as you'd want on a live construction site.



What are the key benefits of using CaberShield ECO?

One of the biggest benefits is that you can install it early and leave it in place throughout the build and it doesn't need to be changed at any point. The product is there for the long term. It's also resistant to water, UV exposure, and all weather conditions, which gives real peace of mind during the build programme.

How did CaberShield ECO perform on site?

It performed very well. Once installed, it stayed in excellent condition throughout the build, despite being exposed to the elements.

Was the product easy to work with?

Yes, definitely. It's just as easy to use as other CaberDek flooring products, but with the added advantage of being more durable and more resistant. That makes a big difference on busy sites.

Do you plan to use CaberShield ECO again?

Yes, absolutely. We've already started using it elsewhere, including on restoration projects, because it's such a good product and delivers consistent performance.

Would you recommend CaberShield ECO to other contractors?

Yes, we would. It's a reliable, high quality product that performs well in real site conditions and supports long term build quality.

All West Fraser panel products produced in the UK are net carbon negative and manufactured in mills that have obtained the coveted environmental ISO 14001 accreditation. Responsibly sourced, the panels are FSC certified and created from locally grown timber, cutting the embodied carbon associated with transportation.

West Fraser ● 01786 812921 ● Uk.westfraser.com

MEDITE SMARTPLY invests €75 million to future-proof manufacturing operations

MEDITE SMARTPLY has announced a €75 million investment programme to support the next phase of MDF manufacturing at its Clonmel facility, as the company marks 50 years of MEDITE.

The investment reinforces MEDITE SMARTPLY's long-term commitment to panel manufacturing in Ireland and will strengthen supply resilience for customers across the UK, Irish and European construction and interiors markets.

At the centre of the programme is the replacement and renewal of the production factory's existing biomass boiler system, alongside upgrades to fuel handling, dryer systems and associated infrastructure that are central to the site's manufacturing operations.

Operating 24 hours a day, seven days per week, the Clonmel facility produces approximately 400,000m³ of MDF products each year. The biomass boiler system generates the thermal energy required to dry wood fibre during panel production, helping the factory maintain consistent product quality across continuous production lines.

"MEDITE has been a long-standing part of the Clonmel community, and this investment — the largest current investment in MDF production in Western Europe — reflects our intention to continue manufacturing here long into the future," said Neil Foot, CEO of MEDITE SMARTPLY. "This is a significant commitment not only to the site itself, but to the skilled workforce, supply chain and wider regional economy connected to the factory. It ensures the facility remains competitive, reliable and capable of supporting future market demand.

"By renewing critical infrastructure across the site, we are strengthening process control, supporting consistent product quality and investing in the long-term reliability of one of Europe's leading MDF manufactur-

ing operations. As we mark 50 years of MEDITE, this project demonstrates our long-term confidence in the business, our people and the markets we serve."

The programme forms part of MEDITE SMARTPLY's wider renewal strategy and will modernise several critical manufacturing systems across the site. Leading European players, including Dieffenbacher and Sunds Fibertech, will supply the project's core technologies, supporting upgrades to energy generation, fuel handling and fibre drying operations.

The project has already secured planning consent through Ireland's Strategic Infrastructure Development process and includes measures relating to environmental protection, waste management, water supply and ecological monitoring.

The new infrastructure is expected to improve process control, reduce downtime and strengthen overall plant reliability, helping to future-proof manufacturing operations against increasing operational and regulatory demands.

Alongside operational improvements, the new system will eliminate natural gas usage, transitioning fully to renewable biomass as the primary heat source.

This is expected to materially reduce fossil fuel-related CO₂ emissions and support MEDITE SMARTPLY's efforts to reduce Scope 1 carbon emissions and broader climate action commitments.

MEDITE SMARTPLY
www.mdfosb.com



West Fraser champions carbon-negative production in support of World Environment Day 2026

WEST FRASER'S UK operations are officially verified as carbon negative, demonstrating industry leadership at a time when the world is rallying around the 2026 World Environment Day (5 June) theme: Restoring Land. Building Resilience. Securing Our Future.

For 70 years, West Fraser has recognised its responsibility to the environment and society. Today, that commitment is reflected in a sustainability strategy that integrates science-based action, global standards, and forward looking innovation.

Leading with carbon-negative production

All UK manufactured West Fraser wood panel products are certified as net carbon negative — locking up more CO₂e than is emitted during their production. For specifiers, developers and builders, this means the simple choice of a West Fraser board can actively contribute to carbon reduction in construction.

- This performance is supported by substantial carbon sequestration:
- 1.1 million tonnes of CO₂e are stored annually within West Fraser's European operations.
 - West Fraser's UK made OSB products hold an A+ rating in the BRE Green Guide — the highest possible achievement.

Advancing renewable energy and circular manufacturing

Reducing reliance on fossil fuels remains central to the company's strategy. Globally:

- Three-quarters of the company's renewable energy usage is derived from biomass.
- An additional 4.5% comes from renewable sources such as solar.
- Across Europe, 100% of grid purchased electricity is certified as renewable, sourced from wind, hydro and solar generation.

These actions directly support the restoration and resilience objectives of World Environment Day 2026 by promoting low-carbon production and improved resource efficiency.

Sustainable forestry supporting global land restoration

A cornerstone of West Fraser's environmental stewardship is responsible forest management, contributing to long-term ecosystem health and land restoration:

- 72.4 million seedlings are planted annually in Canada, with an additional 2 million in the United States.
- Less than 1% of the company's managed forest areas are harvested each year, enabling natural regeneration and sustainable harvesting cycles.
- The company has achieved a 22% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions, alongside a 13% reduction in Scope 3 emissions.

These results demonstrate meaningful progress toward restoring landscapes, strengthening ecosystem resilience and supporting a low-carbon future.

Building with purpose

West Fraser continues to encourage the construction sector to take part in climate positive building practices.

"Build with purpose — All our UK made engineered wood panels are proudly net carbon negative and can offset building emissions."

As the world marks World Environment Day 2026, West Fraser stands ready to partner with industry, government and communities seeking measurable, science-driven solutions to land restoration, carbon reduction and climate resilience.

West Fraser
Tel 01786 812921
<https://uk.westfraser.com/>



ESG Report 2025: Lower climate impact per acoustic panel and more renewable energy at Troldekt



DANISH wood wool acoustic panel manufacturer Troldekt's ESG report for 2025 highlights positive initiatives for both the environment and people. Key highlights include an 18% reduction in Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e) emissions per produced square metre, 98.8% renewable energy in production and fewer workplace accidents for the second consecutive year.

In 2025, through the use of renewable energy and new types of cement, Troldekt A/S succeeded in producing each square metre of wood wool panel with an 18% lower CO₂e footprint than in 2024. This was primarily achieved with the use of CO₂e-reduced cement, which is reflected in Troldekt's new Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) from 2025.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the most important focus area for the construction industry when it comes to lowering its climate impact. We are therefore pleased to see that emissions have declined for both of the cement types we use. This has a direct impact on our customers' CO₂e accounts when they choose Troldekt acoustic wood wool panels for their projects," comments Cécile Vassort, head of product, marketing & sustainability at Troldekt A/S.

Cécile Vassort also highlights that Troldekt in 2025 increased its total use of renewable energy to a record 98.8%. The company installed its first solar panel system on the roof of its logistics centre in Troldehede, meaning that solar energy now complements the use of wind power and biomass in production.

Long-term focus pays off

The 2025 ESG report is the 16th since Troldekt joined the UN Global Compact back in 2010. As a member, the company commits to docu-

menting progress annually within corporate responsibility. This consistent focus is key to creating both value and a more competitive business, according to CEO Michael Heeager Nystrup.

"In a turbulent world with rising prices and pressure on supply chains, it can be tempting to prioritise the short-term and scale down ESG investments. However, through years marked by financial crisis, pandemic and other disruptions, we have learned that long-term ambitions pay off," he comments. He further adds, "Focusing on climate and social responsibility is essential for the future of the planet — even when it is difficult. At the same time, our strategic approach to responsibility and ESG has had a significant impact on the growth we have experienced over the same period."

Troldekt forms part of the Kingspan Group whose global sustainability programme, Planet Passionate, sets ambitious targets within CO₂e, energy, circularity and water across its companies in more than 80 countries.

Safety is the highest priority

ESG is about both the environment and people at Troldekt, with employee safety the highest priority. New initiatives over the past few years range from courses and workshops on safe behaviour to regular factory inspections and systematic registration of key observations.

"The goal is zero workplace accidents, and although the number of accidents has decreased in both 2024 and 2025, we are not yet there. Changing behaviour takes time, so it is important that everyone continues to pause, observe and involve colleagues if they identify risks in production," comments CEO Michael Heeager Nystrup.

Troldekt ● www.troldekt.co.uk

AkzoNobel Powder Coatings launches Eco+ Services to help manufacturers measure and improve sustainability performance



AS PART of its sustainability offering, AkzoNobel Powder Coatings has introduced Eco+ Services — a suite of technical, digital and data-driven services designed to help manufacturers better understand, measure and improve the sustainability of their coating operations.

Eco+ Services combines digital tools, technical expertise and verified environmental data to give customers a clearer understanding of their coating processes and environmental footprint. From assessing carbon footprint and energy consumption to identifying opportunities to enhance performance, the services provide practical insights that help manufacturers translate sustainability ambitions into measurable operational improvements.

The services address several key priorities for manufacturers today, from improving operational efficiency and optimising coating processes to lowering energy consumption and increasing transparency around environmental performance. By making sustainability metrics clearer and easier to measure, Eco+ Services enables manufacturers to own their impact, with insights that show where operational and environmental gains can be achieved.

“Customers today are looking for more than high-performance coatings,” said Jorrit van Rijn, marketing director of AkzoNobel Powder Coatings. “Manufacturers want partners who can help them run more efficient coating operations and better understand their environmental footprint. Eco+ Services gives customers the insights they need to improve performance and make informed decisions about their operations.”

The Eco+ Services span three areas: application optimisation, energy savings and access to verified environmental data.

Application optimisation helps manufacturers improve coating consistency, reduce material consumption and increase operational efficiency. A key example is Flightpath Pro, an AI-based solution developed in close partnership with coatingAI that optimises spray gun settings

during application. Using cloud-based data analysis, the software helps reduce defects and overspray while delivering more consistent coating thickness and lower material consumption.

Energy savings are supported through energy and carbon footprint consulting, using data-driven assessments of curing operations to help manufacturers improve coating line efficiency and identify opportunities to reduce energy use and emissions.

Verified environmental data supports customers’ sustainability reporting and project requirements. This includes a third-party certified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for the Interpon D powder coatings range, developed in accordance with ISO 14025:2006 type III declaration and EN 15804:2012+A2:2019/AC:2021. The EPD transparently reports the environmental impact of the coatings across their life-cycle, helping customers better understand the footprint of their coating choices and support green building certification schemes such as LEED and BREEAM.

In addition, AkzoNobel provides product carbon footprint data calculated in line with ISO standards, offering further insight into the emissions associated with its powder coatings products.

“Our technical expertise has always been central to how we support customers and we continue to expand how we help customers improve the sustainability and performance of their operations,” adds Mr van Rijn. “By combining our specialist knowledge with digital tools and environmental insights, Eco+ Services helps manufacturers improve coating performance, reduce carbon footprint and gain clearer visibility of their environmental impact. It’s about turning sustainability into measurable operational improvements and giving customers the confidence and information they need to own their impact.”

AkzoNobel
www.interpon.com/gb/en/service

Big Brew tour comes to the boil at Travis Perkins branches

TRADESPeOPLE are enjoying a brew to help tackle mental health in the construction sector in a major tour of Travis Perkins branches.

Travis Perkins, Tarmac Blue Circle and Band of Builders have entered a partnership for the 'Big Brew' tour, an initiative designed to provide a safe space for construction workers and tradespeople to take a break, talk openly about any mental health challenges they face and encourage conversation.

More than 75 Travis Perkins branches are due to host events in 2026. The tour kicked off with three Big Brews on the same day with events in Yorkshire, at Brighouse branch, and in East Anglia at Ipswich and Martlesham Heath branches.

During the events, tradespeople are invited into branches to have a chat with fellow workers 'over a cuppa', as well as having access to the wellbeing services

of leading construction charity Band of Builders. Research has revealed construction workers are almost three times more likely to die through suicide than workers in other industries, with two construction workers losing their lives to suicide every day in the UK.

Carine Jessamine, group marketing director for Travis Perkins, said: "We are proud to be at the heart of the Big Brew tour with Tarmac Blue Circle and Band of Builders once again this year. We hosted events in around 30 branches last year and received fantastic feedback so we wanted to reach even more people. We are delighted to be more than doubling the number of events compared to last year. The statistics around the mental health challenges facing construction workers and tradespeople are very concerning and we have a duty of care to ensure our customers — and our colleagues — are equipped with the information to assist them and their families as and when they need it. Band of Builders does a fantastic job in general, and specifically with the Big Brew, so we are thrilled to be able to support an event which is crucial to our industry and those operating within it. Lots of our branches will be getting involved and information will be provided on a branch-by-branch basis before the events they are hosting."

Garry Gregory, packed products director at Tarmac, said: "Following the success of last year's tour and the positive impact it had within the community, we're proud to be supporting the Big Brew Tour once again. Mental health remains a hugely important issue across the construction industry, and initiatives like this help create the space for open and honest conversations. By working alongside our partners at Travis Perkins and Band of Builders, we're able to reach an even wider audience this year and continue supporting tradespeople who may be facing mental health challenges."



Left to right: Tim Height (Band Of Builders); Kirstin Burgess, Matt Pepper (both Travis Perkins Martlesham); Andy Beasley (Tarmac Blue Circle).

Tony Steel, operations director for Band of Builders, said: "The Big Brew is solely designed to help construction workers and tradespeople and we have been humbled to support many tradespeople at each event. Having the backing of Travis Perkins and Tarmac Blue Circle is a huge boost to the campaign and really helps ensure we are reaching as many people as possible in 2026."

Travis Perkins is part of Travis Perkins plc and the UK's largest supplier of building materials to the building and construction industry.

Featuring a network of over 500 branches, it supplies thousands of products and materials, including a tool hire service, to trade professionals and self-builders across the nation.

It offers a wide range of quality timber, building materials, kitchens, plumbing and heating, landscaping, painting and decorating essentials and tools for the job.

Travis Perkins
www.travisperkins.co.uk

FMB calls for inclusivity for deaf builders

THE FEDERATION of Master Builders (FMB) marked Deaf Awareness Week (5-11 May) by calling on the construction sector to improve accessibility and inclusivity for deaf and hard-of-hearing builders.

Martin Sneddon, an FMB award-winning member from North Ayrshire, who has been profoundly deaf since working in the construction sector long-term, says the construction industry still has “some way to go” in understanding the needs of deaf tradespeople, despite making up a skilled and capable part of the workforce. Research shows that around one in five adults in the UK are deaf or hard of hearing, yet deaf people remain significantly underrepresented in skilled trades. Communication barriers on noisy building sites, limited awareness of BSL (British Sign Language) and workplace adjustments, and assumptions about capability all contribute to exclusion from the sector.

Martin Sneddon, FMB member from Martin and Son Builders said: “Since becoming deaf and still working as a builder, I rely on visual cues, written instructions and people around me being patient enough to face me when they speak and be prepared to explain instructions more than once. The construction industry has brilliant tradespeople who happen to be deaf — we just need the sector to meet us halfway as it has some way to go to support people who have hearing issues. Simple changes can make a massive difference like better lighting for lip-reading, using messaging apps for site instructions and site managers who understand the struggles deaf people face on site.”

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, added: “Deaf Awareness Week is an important reminder that the construction sector must do better on inclusivity. We have a chronic skills shortage in this country we cannot afford to exclude talented tradespeople because of outdated attitudes or a failure to make reasonable adjustments. Martin’s experience shows that with relatively simple changes to communication practices on-site, deaf builders can — and do — deliver excellent work. But too often, they’re fighting against assumptions rather than getting on with the job they’re trained to do. As an industry, we need to challenge those assumptions and create working environments where everyone can thrive.”

Gordon Nelson, FMB Scotland director, concluded: “Martin is a brilliant communicator and he is proof that disability is no barrier in construction. His passion for building sees him engaging with local schools in Ayrshire, inspiring the Master Builders of the future. He is a great example for inclusion and professionalism in the construction industry. Employers and leaders from across the sector would do well to listen to Martin’s advice on improving accessibility and inclusivity for deaf and hard-of-hearing builders.”

FMB ● www.fmb.org.uk



Martin Sneddon

FMB highlights mental health in podcast

AN FMB member has opened up about his own mental health struggles in an FMB podcast urging the construction sector to break its culture of silence, during Mental Health Awareness Week (11-17 May 2026).

David Gutierrez, director of Nest Building Group and FMB London director, described how he experienced a “mini breakdown” after two years of struggling in silence. “If you love getting up in the morning, going to work, as soon as you feel that you’re in bed and you wake up and you feel sick or you feel scared. I felt like I just didn’t want to get out of bed. I didn’t want to move,” he said.

David Gutierrez recalled a bricklayer he followed online who seemed to have everything going for him. “What a fantastic bricklayer he was. Personality wise, he was fantastic. Everything just was all there. And he took his own life. Why? Because we don’t talk. We’re in our own heads.”

His co-host Aidan Cropper, managing director of Ipsum UK, echoed the sentiment: “You can be slipping down this slippery slope of depression really and get

yourself into a real unhappy situation. And often you might not feel like there’s a way out.”

The episode comes as figures reveal the scale of the mental health crisis facing construction workers. Research from the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) shows 94% of construction workers experienced stress over the past year, with 83% suffering anxiety and 60% experiencing depression. Nearly three in ten reported experiencing suicidal thoughts in the past year.

Brian Berry, chief executive of

the FMB, said: “Mental health in construction is no longer something we can sweep under the carpet. The statistics are stark and sobering. Too many skilled tradespeople are suffering in silence because they don’t feel they can ask for help. Small building firms are the backbone of this industry, and employers have a responsibility to create environments where workers feel safe to speak up. That means having honest conversations, training managers to spot the warning signs, and making sure everyone knows what sup-

port is available. Breaking the stigma starts with us.”

For David Gutierrez, the turning point came when he opened up to was actually my wife, which was the biggest step,” he said. “My children need a dad and my wife needs a husband. Before it gets any worse, I needed to make a change.”

Sarah Bolton, CEO of the Lighthouse Charity, the FMB’s charity partner, added: “Mental Health Awareness Week helps shine a spotlight on all of the amazing work that is being done to promote a positive mental health culture in our industry. Our key message is to encourage individuals to reach out for support at an early stage, no matter what the issue. We have a number of routes to support including our 24/7 helpline and live web chat service along with a self support app and our Lighthouse Beacons.”

The FMB has developed mental health resources for small building firms, including toolbox talks, signposting to support services, and guidance on creating mentally healthy workplaces.

FMB
www.fmb.org.uk



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Altendorf develops HAND GUARD safety system

IN GERMANY alone, an average of nine reportable accidents occur per workday on table and sliding table saws (Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung, DGUV). This figure underscores the responsibility that manufacturers, companies, and users bear when it comes to machine safety. With HAND GUARD, Altendorf is pursuing a clear vision: The safety assistance system is designed to help prevent these accidents — in daily workshop operations, in industrial manufacturing, in training facilities, and wherever people work with sliding table saws.

Safety that intervenes earlier

HAND GUARD is the world's first and only certified AI- and camera-based safety assistance system for sliding table saws, according to the company. The system detects hands in the monitored work area and triggers a protective response even before contact with the saw blade occurs. Its functionality can be compared to modern driver-assistance systems in cars: A collision warning system does not react only upon impact, but recognizes a critical situation in advance and supports the driver in a timely manner. HAND GUARD



applies this principle to the sliding table saw. The system helps defuse dangerous situations early on and prevent injuries.

Optical system with artificial intelligence

HAND GUARD operates using a dual-camera optical system and artificial intelligence. The cameras monitor the area around the saw blade, synchronize with each other, and are continuously mon-

itored. The system recognizes different hand shapes as well as suitable gloves and can be used with any material — including wood, plastics, and aluminum. If a critical situation is detected, the saw blade is lowered and slowed down in a controlled manner. The advantage: The system protects people, machines, and materials without fundamentally changing the work process.

Greater protection in real-world work environments

Different safety approaches on sliding table saws are based on various operating principles. While capacitive systems only react when the distance to the saw blade is very small, optical systems such as HAND GUARD monitor a significantly larger work area and can therefore provide support earlier. A study by the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Engineering and Automation (IPA) compared camera-based and capacitive safety assistance systems, focusing in particular on rapid hand movements, as these frequently lead to serious injuries in practice (Fraunhofer IPA).

The findings from this study show that optical systems enable earlier intervention in the work process and thus make a decisive contribution to prevention — because the hand does not become a risk only when it is immediately adjacent to the saw blade, but can be detected as early as during the course of the movement.

Improvements for greater safety and productivity

Altendorf continues to advance HAND GUARD consistently. Since August 2025, all newly delivered machines equipped with HAND GUARD come as standard with the latest generation of the safety assistance system — featuring targeted improvements derived directly from real-world use.





tribution to preventing serious hand injuries and for advancing machine safety.

Making AI Visible in the Skilled Trades

HAND GUARD is also an example of how artificial intelligence can be applied in the skilled trades. Within the framework of the KI.NRW initiative, HAND GUARD was showcased as a practical example. KI.NRW is the central competence platform for artificial intelligence in North Rhine-Westphalia and was initiated by state ministries and the Fraunhofer IAIS, among others. The goal is to make AI applications from research, industry, and technology transfer visible and usable. Thus, HAND GUARD stands not only for a technical solution but also for a broader development: AI is effective where it concretely protects people and makes work processes safer.

Safety as part of the Altendorf vision

Altendorf views safety as a core task of modern woodworking. HAND GUARD combines this commitment with concrete technology: The system helps prevent accidents before contact with the saw blade occurs. Thus, HAND GUARD directly contributes to Altendorf's vision: to make the trade safer, more productive, and simpler—with machines that protect people and support businesses in their daily operations.

Altendorf

www.altendorf.com/en/machines/altendorf-hand-guard/

Key enhancements include an optimised infeed area for more comfortable handling, as well as the option to temporarily disable the safety function for clearly defined applications. A gentle shutdown process protects system components and extends service life. An expanded AI database reduces unintentional activations — a key factor for everyday acceptance. In addition, the so-called HAND GUARDing Zone is now clearly defined and visually marked for operators through precise laser identification.

These developments demonstrate how consistently Altendorf integrates user feedback into product development: the system becomes easier to operate, more robust in use — while remaining true to its core principle of not trading safety against productivity.

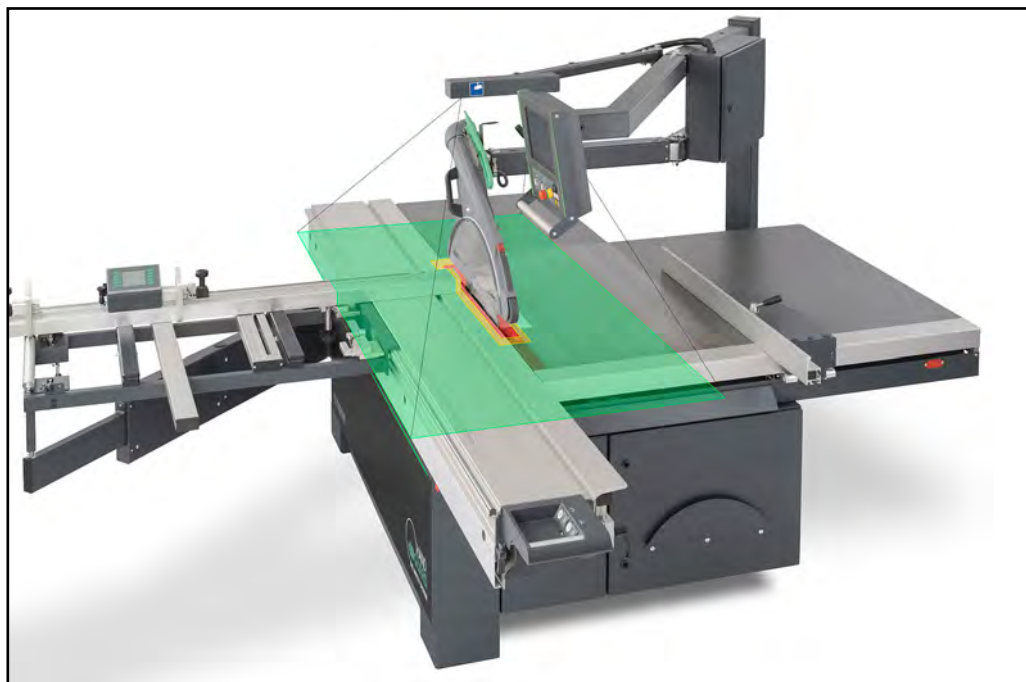
Particularly relevant for training and inclusive settings

HAND GUARD supports not only experienced users. The system also helps people who are just learning how to safely operate sliding table saws or who require special support. Especially in vocational schools, training workshops, and inclusive facilities, HAND GUARD can help make work processes safer. Trainees, career changers, and people with varying levels of experience can practice the correct use of the sliding table saw in an additional safety-enhanced environment. HAND GUARD is a system that supports every skill level — from beginners to experts.

Award-Winning Safety Innovation

HAND GUARD has received multiple awards. These include the prestigious German Occupational Safety Award, which HAND GUARD won in the "Workplace" category. The award is presented by an independent jury and recognizes solutions that make work safer and healthier.

In addition, Altendorf was honoured with the ISSA Safety Award — the leading international award from the International Social Security Association (ISSA) for outstanding solutions in the field of machine and workplace safety. The ISSA "Machine and System Safety" section thus recognises innovations that make a measurable contribution to improving safety. HAND GUARD was honoured in particular for its con-



The right tool for the job: how one Combilift has delivered safe operations for 28 years

AS NATIONAL Forklift Safety Day (9 June 2026) highlights the importance of safe material handling practices, the story of the first-ever Combilift C-Series demonstrates the lasting value of choosing the right tool for the job.

Still in operation after 28 years at J.G. Kelly Supplies in Monaghan, Ireland, the original multi-directional forklift has helped transform the company's handling of long loads, improving safety, increasing efficiency, and proving that purpose-built equipment can deliver exceptional returns for decades.

Before the company started operating a Combilift, traditional forklift methods created significant operational and safety challenges.

Long PVC stillages measuring up to six metres had to be moved through a doorway only four metres wide. Conventional counterbalance forklifts could not handle the task safely or efficiently.

Operator Tony McManus explains: "Before, we just used to use counterbalance trucks. We had to reverse a lorry in here and were on a main busy road in the town." He adds: "But now, it just pulls up in the loading bay. We can offload it safely, both sides if needed, with



Left to right: operator Tony McManus and managing director Paul Kelly

minimal obstruction to traffic."

The C-Series' multi-directional capability provided the ideal solution, allowing operators to move long loads sideways with greater control and stability, while navigating tight spaces and narrow doorways safely and efficiently.

For nearly three decades, the C-Series has transformed the site operations and the way the com-

pany used to handle long loads. And the benefits extend beyond traffic disruption. It has also shortened unloading times and significantly improved safety for operators, pedestrians, and passing vehicles.

Mr McManus continues: "With the C-Series, it's less labour intensive than it used to be. It would take a lot of people to offload

containers before, but now, one operator can offload a container in a short space of time compared to before."

An additional safety feature is the forklift's integrated platform, which has further enhanced load stability when handling such long products. Operators can now safely support lengthy stillages during transport, reducing the risks associated with moving oversized loads and making the entire process more controlled and efficient.

Mr McManus adds: "We know that it's a lot safer, once you get the load on the platform, you can sort of relax almost. You've got that stability of it being on the rest beds."

Safety on site has been greatly improved by the introduction of the C-Series, but equally remarkable is the machine's longevity.

Managing director Paul Kelly highlights: "I never expected we'd still be using the same forklift nearly three decades later. But it's a testament to the build quality of the machine as it's still running after 28 years."





While multiple conventional forklifts have come and gone over the same period, the original C-Series remains in operation. Its continued performance is attributed to robust engineering, regular preventative maintenance, and responsive local support.

Mr McManus mentions: "It doesn't really take much maintenance. We have changed filters or timing belts over the years, but it's still got the original engine from when it arrived here."

Routine checks of oil, coolant, hydraulics, tyres, and greasing have helped keep the machine operating reliably, while major repairs have been rare throughout its 28-year lifespan. Having a machine out of action can have a major impact on day-to-day operations. However, according to Mr McManus, that has rarely been an issue.

"In 28 years, it's very rarely had to be taken away for repairs," he says. "Any issues we've had have usually been fixed on site, and quickly. That's the main thing, because if the machine is out of action for any length of time, we're in trouble."

The success of the original C-Series led J.G. Kelly Supplies to expand its fleet with additional Combilift products, including other Combilift models, such as the pedestrian Combi-CS and an Aisle Master in their Limerick warehouse. The company continues to value Combilift's ability to tailor equipment to specific operational requirements rather than offering a one-size-fits-all solution.

Mr Kelly highlights: "Combilift are very good at having a look at what you need and then



they can tailor the product to suit you. We had the height of the mast and weight limit tailored to what we needed in our Combi-CS"

Today, the first-ever multidirectional C-Series stands as a powerful example of how investing in the right material handling solution delivers lasting returns.

Nearly three decades after it was manufactured and operated for the first time, the forklift continues to enhance operations, driving productivity, improving safety and maximising storage space while proving that quality engineering and preventative maintenance can stand the test of time.

Combilift
www.combilift.com



The Combilift C-Series pictured in 1998 at J. G. Kelly Supplies Ltd.

West Fraser products reinforce the Construction Safety Week 2026 message

AS THE industry united for Construction Safety Week 2026 (4-8 May), West Fraser — a leading UK manufacturer of engineered wood-based panel products — highlighted how its carefully designed solutions help contractors, developers and housebuilders advance the week's core mission: putting safety first, every day.

From reducing slips and falls to improving the stability and durability of working platforms, West Fraser's portfolio — including SterlingOSB Zero T&G, CaberDek and CaberShield Eco — is engineered to make construction sites safer, more reliable and more productive in all weather conditions.

SterlingOSB Zero T&G: strength and stability that protects workers

Widely used across the UK for pitched and flat roofing, timber frame applications and flooring, SterlingOSB Zero T&G provides a safer surface for trades working at height. Unlike traditional wooden boards, its precision-engineered construction contains no voids or knots, meaning it will not delaminate or weaken unexpectedly. This inherent structural integrity offers a major safety advantage. When laying decking or flooring on elevated platforms, workers benefit from stable, predictable boards that minimise the risk of sudden failure.

CaberDek: safe cutting and safe installation

Contractors concerned about the safety impact of cutting boards on site can be confident when using CaberDek. Its protective film is not woven, ensuring fibres do not clog circular saws, and removing a potential hazard without requiring any compromise on performance.

Slip-resistant solutions to reduce slips, trips and falls

Falls from height continue to be one of the leading causes of injury in construction. West Fraser directly addresses this with products designed from the outset to support safer working practices. Many panels come with integrated slip-resistant coverings, enhancing grip even in challenging weather and on busy sites. This built in safety feature helps protect carpenters, installers and multitrade teams during both temporary and permanent floor installations.

CaberShield Eco: safer floors in all weather conditions

The upgraded CaberShield Eco takes site safety a step further. Offering all the structural benefits of CaberFloor P5, it provides a high performance, weather resistant flooring system that supports safe working, even when construction must continue through prolonged wet conditions. Designed for both temporary platforms and permanent floors, CaberShield Eco maintains its slip resistant surface under heavy traffic, giving health & safety teams peace of mind that safety standards remain consistent day after day.

Supporting a safer future for UK construction

West Fraser's product development philosophy is grounded in simplicity, practicality and safety. By selecting materials that offer enhanced durability, robust slip resistance and safer handling characteristics, construction teams across the UK can directly align their daytoday work with the goals of Construction Safety Week 2026.

West Fraser

Tel 01786 812921 ● <https://uk.westfraser.com/>



Bushboard unveils refreshed Omega range for modern housebuilding projects

BUSHBOARD, a leading manufacturer of innovative kitchen and bathroom surfaces, has unveiled a refreshed identity for its long-established Omega range of laminate kitchen worktops, designed to support housebuilders through fast installation, consistent design and dependable performance.

Part of Wilsonart UK, a market leading designer and supplier of laminate engineered surfaces, Bushboard's relaunch of Omega enables housebuilders to deliver premium aesthetics at a competitive price point, without compromising on quality or reliability.

The Omega range of kitchen worktops is built around three core collections, each developed with the specific needs of residential projects in mind. The Sleek 22 mm square edge collection features seven design-led marble and stone-inspired decors, offering housebuilders a high-quality, low-maintenance alternative to quartz. The Modern collection presents a carefully curated selection of eighteen contemporary wood, marble and stone decors, all available with a modern 38 mm square edge profile. Completing the range, the Classic collection includes sixteen 38 mm postformed surfaces, created for



timeless kitchens that balance attractive design with everyday practicality and long-term performance across wood, marble and stone styles.

Omega's refreshed branding and broad range of product formats, including worktops, splashbacks, upstands and breakfast bar surfaces, allow housebuilders to achieve visual continuity across kitchens and throughout the home. This standardisation sup-

ports consistency in design, specification and pricing across developments, while ensuring reliable availability of matching components when required.

Chris Brown, national account manager at Bushboard, said: "Omega has been developed to address the practical pressures facing housebuilders today, from tight budgets and build speed to the need for continuity and consistency across projects.

Housebuilders typically take a considered approach to changing specifications, so Omega enables them to achieve the looks they already know work well, such as light marbles, clean stones and natural oak effects, through a dependable and flexible laminate solution.

"The range offers a genuine get-the-look-for-less alternative to materials such as quartz or real wood, without the limitations those materials can bring in terms of cost, maintenance and ease of replacement. With consistent availability, nationwide supply, and formats designed for fast on-site templating and installation, Omega gives housebuilders the confidence to standardise designs, simplify aftercare, and deliver premium interiors built to stand the test of time."

With a wide selection of wood, marble and stone decors available in both modern square-edge and traditional postformed profiles, Omega offers contemporary and classic options ideally suited to new housing developments. The collection supports cost-effective specification without compromising on durability, ease of maintenance, or long-term appeal.

Bushboard
www.bushboard.co.uk/omega-laminate/omega



Supporting UK offsite construction

A STRONG and reliable supply chain is essential to the continued growth of offsite construction in the UK, and the collaboration between West Fraser and Kirkwood Timber Frame Ltd is a clear example of how aligned partnerships are helping to deliver high-quality timber build-ings at scale.

Founded in August 2021, Kirkwood Timber Frame has quickly established itself as a dynamic manufacturer of open and closed panel timber frame systems, supplying projects across Scotland, the Highlands and Islands, and Northern England, with reach extending across the wider UK. Today, the business produces around 1,000 plots per year, serving a diverse client base including self-builders, SME developers, housing associations, and national housebuilders. Since partnering with West Fraser in 2023, Kirkwood has standardised on the manufacturer's panel products, embedding them across its offsite production process. According to managing director, Malcolm Thomson, this has been key to maintaining quality and consistency at scale. "West Fraser supplies all our OSB and chipboard flooring. Their products run right through everything we produce — it's fundamental to our system," he said.

SterlingOSB Zero plays a cen-



tral structural role within Kirkwood's systems, used in wall panels, roof applications, floor and roof cassettes. Its consistent performance and reliability support the precision manufacturing environment required for timber frame construction.

Alongside this, CaberDek is also used across floor cassette systems, offering a robust, moisture-resistant decking solution with a built-in protective layer, reducing on-site labour, and protecting floors during installation. The products are delivered directly into Kirkwood's manufacturing

facility, where they are incorporated into factory-built kits before being transported to developments across Scotland and Northern England. These systems are used in a wide range of applications, including residential housing, care homes, sports pavilions and community buildings. Included among the company's recent work, Kirkwood also contributed to the DIY SOS project in Manchester, helping to expand the Joshua Tree Family Centre in Cheshire, doubling the size of the facility to better support families affected by childhood cancer.

Kirkwood's supply relationship with West Fraser is managed through both direct engagement, working with Nigel Morris, and through merchant partners including Jewson and Huws Gray, ensuring a consistent and flexible procurement route. The collaboration was further showcased during the Timber Learning Journey, an industry initiative supported by the Structural Timber Association (STA). Designed to provide a holistic understanding of the timber supply chain, the programme brings together industry professionals to explore each stage of the process — from responsibly sourced raw materials through to manufacturing and installation. As part of the tour, participants visited both West Fraser and Kirkwood Timber Frame, gaining first-hand insight into how engineered wood panels are produced and then transformed into complete timber frame systems.

"It really shows how everything connects," Mr Thomson added. "You see the materials being made, and then how they become finished structures ready for site. With the number of kits we're producing, everything has to work together," said Mr Thomson. "West Fraser products allow us to deliver consistently, project after project."

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'Curve Appeal' with Rotpunkt rounded corner panels

ROTPUNKT, a leading manufacturer of climate friendly German fitted furniture, embraces the latest trend for custom curves throughout the home with the launch of its new rounded corner panels.

Matt Phillips, head of UK operations at Rotpunkt says, "Modern and beautifully inviting, the introduction of curved furniture in the kitchen and living space continues to answer the market shift towards softer, organic forms, with key pieces in the home helping to establish better flow and movement. From curved handleless furniture to rounded islands, and floating wall units, top interior designs in 2026 are using curved panels and doors to create a more homely, welcoming aesthetic throughout the home."

For example, a kitchen island unit with rounded corners not only provides a more organic workflow in the main cook zone but also brings softness to hard, structural lines while balancing standard base and wall units, which are traditionally box-shaped. Curves are naturally more inviting, and so whether you're working with a compact space or large, open-plan kitchen environment, a curved island unit will en-



courage greater social interaction in a key area of the home.

A slimline wall unit with rounded curved edges is a creative solution when adding storage to a bare wall. With the ability to customise both height and placement, a curved wall unit can be used to provide a seamless transition between the kitchen and living room thanks to the

soft, rounded angles that make high-traffic areas safer, and more visually calming.

Available now, the new rounded corner panels by Rotpunkt make it possible for end users to create fluid furniture arrangements in the company's comprehensive range of door colours, hardwood timbers, and fluted fronts like the pictured design

concepts in Sandy Beach or Forest Brown Oak.

Rotpunkt furniture is available in a variety of cabinet heights, widths, and depths including the company's exclusive XTend collection, which allows the creation of full height 2,470 mm units or a 910 mm island with rounded corners. Plus, each end panel can be designed to either match or work in combination with all Rotpunkt cabinets and counter tops to ensure a visually harmonious aesthetic from room to room.

Whether light or dark, grooved, flat or textured, Rotpunkt rounded end panels will highlight the most popular materials which today are focused on enhancing the natural rhythm of the home. From vertical woodgrains and fluted design details that bring architectural depth to furniture through to rounded worktops that optimise the user experience, Rotpunkt now make it possible to bring the principles of curved geometry into the home with its brand-new rounded corner panels.

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West Fraser's CaberDek specified in Essex

WEST FRASER'S CaberDek structural flooring has been specified by Essex based housebuilder Bocking Homes on a 10 home residential scheme, helping to protect floor quality during construction while supporting programme efficiency and high standards at handover.

Founded in 2017, Bocking Homes is a privately-owned, SME housebuilder delivering small to midscale residential developments across Essex. The business focuses on creating high quality family homes, with robust construction, practical layouts and consistent attention to detail forming a core part of its approach. At the company's Farmstead Manor development, CaberDek was installed across multiple plots as the structural floor deck, primarily to upper floors. The product provided a secure, protected working platform throughout the build and ensured readiness for final finishes. According to Nick Marquez, managing director of Bocking Homes, CaberDek was chosen primarily for its performance during the construction phase.

"We chose CaberDek for its durability and practicality. The protective film is great as it keeps the deck clean and protected throughout the build, reducing damage before handover," he said.

Bocking Homes identified CaberDek's factory applied protective film as a key benefit, particularly on busy residential sites with multiple trades operating simultaneously. "The protective film saves a lot of time at the end of the job and keeps the floors in good condition despite heavy site traffic," added Nick. "Furthermore, it reduced damage and snagging issues, saving time and cost on cleaning and repairs, and helped us to hand over a better-finished home to our clients."

CaberDek is a moisture resistant structural particleboard flooring solution, designed for use in demanding site conditions. For Bocking Homes, its performance aligned well with the practical requirements of traditional housebuilding: "It's strong and reliable as a structural decking board, and the moisture resistance means it holds up well before the building is fully sealed," said Nick Marquez.

From an installation perspective, CaberDek required no change to standard practices, allowing trades to work efficiently from first fix through to completion. As Nick explains, "It installs like standard T&G chipboard. It cuts cleanly, fixes well and the joints go together easily. The protective film doesn't get in the way, and overall, it's straightforward for the trades to handle."

Following the successful use of CaberDek at Farmstead Manor, Bocking Homes has confirmed plans to specify the product again on its next scheme: a nine home residential development in Shenfield.

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Versatile SterlingOSB Zero from West Fraser

WEST FRASER'S SterlingOSB Zero is a high-performance, sustainable panel solution that meets the demands of modern construction. Manufactured in the UK and engineered to exacting standards, the panel offers exceptional strength, versatility and environmental credentials, making it the go-to choice for a wide range of building applications.

The precision-engineered oriented strand board (OSB) panel is designed for structural use in humid conditions, giving builders confidence across a variety of projects and environments. Its robust composition ensures consistent strength and reliability. On roofing projects, it provides a solid and dependable base for tiles, slates and membranes in both pitched and flat systems. In wall construction, particularly within timber-frame builds, it contributes significantly to racking strength and structural integrity. When used in flooring, OSB forms a durable subfloor or structural deck capable of withstanding everyday loads with minimal deflection.



Beyond primary construction uses, SterlingOSB Zero also proves its versatility in more temporary and practical applications on site. Builders frequently rely on it for hoarding and protective barriers due to its durability and cost-effectiveness, while its inherent strength makes it equally suitable for packaging and pallet tops where resilience is essential.

Unlike traditional plywood, SterlingOSB Zero is manufactured through a controlled process that precisely aligns wood strands in layered formations. This approach creates uniform mechanical properties throughout each panel, eliminating the inconsistencies or weak spots that can sometimes occur with other materials. As a result, builders benefit from dependable load-bearing performance, excellent dimensional stability and strong, reliable fixing characteristics. This consistency translates directly to efficiencies on site. Panels are easy to cut, handle and install, helping to reduce material waste and minimise delays, while delivering predictable results that support quality construction from start to finish.

Sustainability is at the heart of SterlingOSB Zero. Produced using responsibly sourced timber, the product is certified as net carbon negative, meaning it stores more carbon than is emitted during its manufacture. This makes it an attractive choice for builders and developers focused on reducing the environmental impact of their projects. In addition, SterlingOSB Zero contains no added formaldehyde, contributing to improved indoor air quality and supporting compliance with increasingly stringent building and health standards. All West Fraser panel products produced in the UK are net carbon negative and manufactured in mills that have obtained the ISO 14001 accreditation. Responsibly sourced, the panels are FSC-certified and created from locally grown timber, cutting the embodied carbon associated with transportation.

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West Fraser products: the natural choice for MMC

OFFSITE construction has moved from niche curiosity in the 1990's to mainstream necessity today as the industry is being reshaped by the demand for faster build times, higher energy performance, and precision engineered components.

This shift places Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) at the centre of the transformation — driving manufacturers, developers and material suppliers to rethink how homes are designed, manufactured and assembled. Against this backdrop, products that deliver accuracy, consistency and reliability — like those from West Fraser — are becoming essential to meeting the new expectations of an industry that's rapidly evolving. **David Connacher**, marketing manager at West Fraser (pictured), discusses the right products for the MMC market.

What is MMC?

Let's start by explaining that the phrase 'Modern Methods of Construction', known as MMC, was coined in the 1990's though the building process started way earlier when products such as timber roof trusses and precast concrete panels were constructed offsite. Today's MMC world is flourishing through the increased number of timber frame systems, many of them from Europe or Scandinavia, being used for housebuilding. Greater emphasis on improving energy performance, as well as reducing waste in the building industry, has pushed developers towards using MMC or 'Offsite' building techniques.



What categories of MMC do West Fraser products suit best?

While there are still some companies supplying basic 'Open' timber frame systems, ever more are moving to offering 'Closed Cell' alternatives which feature a sheathing board and factory-fitted insulation in the cavity which saves time on site for the builder. Also popular now are more advanced components including flooring cassettes and roof cassettes, or complete room-in-the-roof modules, which can be craned onto both new-build and existing wall structures. These could use high performance panel products for the floors, fixed to rafters as sarking boards, or to clad the cheeks of dormer windows. In addition, Structural Insulated Panel systems (SIPs), with their own association, are ideal due to their high standards of airtightness as well as thermal insulation. SIPs normally feature a substantial thickness of expanded foam insulation between two layers of a timber-based board product.

Why do offsite manufacturers specify West Fraser board products?

There are a couple of basic commercial considerations as to why manufacturers choose to buy panel products from West Fraser, price and availability; yet, it also comes down to a combination of technical factors.

Quality and dimensional accuracy crop up most often in comments from leading manufacturers, both because they have built their businesses on ensuring clients have no concerns about the speed of installation and alignment on sites, and also because they are using highly automated production lines where irregular sizes or structural weakness can cause costly problems. West Fraser boards are produced under similarly stringent processes in a modern plant; complying to very high tolerances and can be relied on to cut cleanly when computer-controlled saws, routers or even laser cutters are being operated. And, once in use, the different boards will offer the required racking strength (sheathing boards), spanning capacity (flooring), impact strength or all-round durability.

Which West Fraser boards can be seen in MMC systems?

Several of the company's tried-and-tested panel products have become firm favourites with manufacturers across the offsite industry, utilised for a wide variety of MMC systems including closed panel production, SIPs and modular solutions.

They include SterlingOSB Zero which is bought by a number of SIPs companies who commend it for the dimensional accuracy as it would stick out like the proverbial sore thumb if the opposite faces of the insulated sandwich panel didn't match up. CaberFloor P5 and CaberDek also feature fully amongst companies specialising in floor cassettes and larger modules, used as a surface which can be left exposed or covered with carpet and other flooring finishes.

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SCM at Xylexpo 2026: technology, software and digital services to build the manufacturing ecosystems of the future



SCM CONFIRMS its role as a strategic partner for the woodworking industry at Xylexpo 2026, presenting an evolved vision of the factory of the future based on the integration of machines, automation, software and digital services.

The event provided an opportunity to meet customers, partners and industry professionals (60% of whom came from Italy) and highlight the key strategic areas guiding SCM's development: from the design of increasingly flexible and automated production systems to the digital transformation of companies, up to the creation of services capable of supporting customers throughout the entire lifecycle of their investment.

"We confirmed our participation in Xylexpo because we strongly believe in the value of the Italian manufacturing system, both as a market and as an industrial and technological platform," said Pietro Gheller, SCM Group wood division director, speaking to journalists hosted at the stand. "As pioneers in the sector, we consider this exhibition an integral part of the ecosystem that supports the growth and competitiveness of our industry."

Innovation, customer value and markets

Xylexpo was also an opportunity to take stock of SCM's performance and strategic development plan for the woodworking industry. Despite an international scenario still marked by geopolitical uncertainties and cautious industrial investments, SCM continued to strengthen its market position in 2025.

The Group closed the year with revenues close to €900 million, while

the Wood Division exceeded €500 million, increasing its market share. Positive performances were recorded in Italy and in several European countries, including Spain, France, the UK, Scandinavia, Belgium and South-Eastern Europe, also thanks to engineering projects developed together with key players in the industry.

"The first quarter of 2026 confirms a market environment that remains cautious and characterised by different dynamics depending on geographical areas and technology segments, but positive signals are emerging in several strategic markets," explained Gabriele Patti, SCM commercial director.

Particular attention was given to investments in France, with the opening of the new branch headquarters in Lyon on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, and in North America, with a new strategic governance structure and the strengthening of the sales and service teams.

"Our growth is supported by a clear strategy that has remained consistent over time: today customers are no longer simply looking for a machine, but for complete solutions," added Pietro Gheller. "This is why SCM continues to invest in the four pillars that drive the Group's development: engineering and automation, servitization, technological innovation and digital software systems."

Mr Gheller also highlighted the Group's recent acquisitions, which further expand and strengthen SCM's portfolio of products and services for the woodworking industry: Tecno Logica, which has further enhanced the Group's ability to develop integrated systems, advanced robotics and complete production lines even in highly variable environ-

ments, and Tecnest, specialised in advanced software solutions for production planning, manufacturing management and Supply Chain management.

accord 500 edge: the new frontier of integrated processing

The main highlight of the SCM stand was accord 500 edge, the latest innovation in SCM's accord range.

The new CNC machining centre stands out as a complete and multifunctional solution that also integrates edge banding technology, meeting the most advanced production requirements both in solid wood processing and in the furniture industry.

Designed for medium and large-sized companies, accord 500 edge ensures high performance and maximum flexibility. These characteristics make it particularly suitable for applications such as contract furniture, bedroom furniture, marine and caravan sectors, as well as just-in-time production, where combining customisation, speed and efficiency is essential.

Among its key strengths is the H80C "Compact" edge banding unit, equipped with multiple magazines for tools, glue, edges and pressure elements, enabling fast and reliable automatic changes between different processing operations. Independent-motion operating units ensure high productivity even in limited spaces, while extraction systems guarantee cleanliness and efficiency under all operating conditions.



The new accord 500 edge is also equipped with the SCM Maestro software package, featuring the Maestro active interface, and with Maestro lab CAD/CAM programming software, making production process management simpler and more efficient. The solution is completed by Maestro lab edge, the new evolution of the CAD/CAM system dedicated to panel edge banding processes, which allows users to manage all edges and related application strategies, optimising programming and machining operations.

Technological innovation remains one of the key pillars of SCM's strategy. Every year, the Group invests 7% of its revenues in R&D and in 2025 it was con-

firmed for the third consecutive year among the Italian companies with the highest number of patent applications filed with the European Patent Office.

The only company in the top ten among woodworking technology manufacturers, SCM filed 23 patent applications and currently holds a total of 800 active patents dedicated to the woodworking industry.

From connected machines to the smart factory: IoT Solution and WinMES

At Xylexpo, SCM also presented the evolution of its digital ecosystem, designed to transform data generated by machines into strategic operational decisions.

The goal is to overcome the fragmented management of production processes that is still common in many companies and support manufacturers in their transition towards smarter, connected and more sustainable factory models.

At the centre of this vision is IoT Solution, SCM's digital platform that today connects more than 5,400 machines worldwide and enables real-time monitoring of key parameters such as availability, utilisation levels and production flows. By integrating sensors, network connectivity and intelligent algorithms, the platform transforms operational data into actionable insights throughout the entire asset lifecycle.

Measurable impact on industrial performance. The adoption of IoT Solution enables companies to achieve higher levels of operational excellence, with tangible benefits in terms of efficiency and cost optimization: SCM's IoT Solution can increase efficiency by up to 20% and reduce operating costs by up to 30% by enabling a smarter, more proactive approach where data becomes a strategic asset.

The evolution of assistance: proactive remote support. Through the Control Room, which manages the continuous real-time flow of data generated by machines installed at customer sites, SCM moves beyond the traditional reactive assistance model and identifies potential issues before they occur.

By leveraging Cloud and Edge Computing, Artificial Intelli-





gence and Machine Learning, SCM continuously analyses large volumes of data to detect minor anomalies and early warning signals related to component wear. This enables SCM technical experts to proactively contact customers and validate corrective actions remotely before production interruptions occur.

Data-driven monitoring and predictive maintenance. Thanks to the integrated Machine Monitoring functions and the Maintenance Planner tool, daily workshop management becomes predictive and collaborative.

Continuous monitoring of asset health allows maintenance activities to be planned according to the actual wear level of components and the production cycles performed.

Scientifically planned maintenance not only prevents costly machine downtime and reduces repair expenses, but also extends the useful life of the equipment, keeping it constantly in optimal operating conditions to ensure maximum machining accuracy.

The ultimate and decisive step towards a fully connected factory is represented by WinMES, the Manufacturing Execution System presented by SCM at the exhibition, developed in collaboration with Tecnest.

WinMES is the “digital brain of the factory”: a MES/MOM platform natively integrated with SCM machines, while also capable of connecting third-party technologies, creating a fully interconnected, automated and

data-driven production environment. The solution integrates the entire manufacturing ecosystem, connecting machines, ERP systems, CAD/CAM software, cutting optimisation systems and business applications.

Thanks to its APS (Advanced Planning and Scheduling) component, WinMES enables companies to organise and simulate production scenarios, improving machine utilisation, delivery reliability and overall efficiency.

On the AI front, WinMES also integrates Viki, the intelligent assistant developed by Tecnest to make MES interaction increasingly conversational, accessible, fast and intuitive.

WinMES is not just a software

solution, but the core of a broader industrial digitalisation vision supported by highly specialised process consultants who accompany companies throughout their digital transformation journey.

With WinMES, SCM connects the worlds of manufacturing and software, creating a smart factory model where processes and data become the true link between different technologies.

A complete offering for every production requirement

At Xylexpo, SCM presented a comprehensive overview of its solutions for every stage of the production process.

Visitors particularly appreci-

ated the new exhibition area dedicated to samples manufactured with SCM's most advanced technologies: panels finished with the latest innovations in edge banding, sanding and surface treatment, as well as applications produced with systems for windows, doors, flooring and timber construction.

Among the showcased projects was “Re Wood — Material Recirculation through Data and Machines” presented by SDU CREATE of the University of Southern Denmark at Dropcity during Milan Design Week. The project explores the reuse of recovered wood to create new architectural elements.

For woodworking professionals, the “blade off” system, combined with SCM circular saws, was once again a key highlight. The solution is designed to increase safety levels thanks to an intelligent detection system and an efficient blade exclusion mechanism.

With its participation in Xylexpo 2026, SCM confirmed its commitment to supporting companies in the woodworking industry with an increasingly integrated offering, where technology, digitalization and expertise become concrete tools for building the future of woodworking together.

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