

SMG NEWS

magazine



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WILD THING YOU MAKE MY HEART SING...

LOVE STORY

Wild Silk

Rustic charm with a unique "dirt defying" fleck that helps to disguise spills and dirt.



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Hawthorn Parquet and Luxuria Velvet

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WELCOME

A few words from SMG...



Dear Members

Well, what a time we have had!

There have been, and continue to be, local and global issues which have affected us all. Despite all these problems, the customers have used their disposable income on improving their homes, as opposed to holidays or cars, which has been good for trade. We predicted, and now see signs of, this tailing off, especially at the lower end of the market, and the ongoing energy crisis has compounded this trend.

Here at SMG, we feel that this summer is time to regroup and reflect on what products we have and how we present them. Suppliers and Manufacturers have continued to develop new and interesting products over the past few years, and many of them will be rolling them out now. We are lucky enough to have seen a lot of these products during their embryonic stages, and we are excited to see more colour and adventurous designs using clever engineering coming to the fore.

For the astute member, this is a great opportunity to embrace the next generation of products for your stores. It is nothing new, but we are a firm believer in displaying the front window or entrance area to your store with unusual products that will inspire everyone that walks past the store. Try to rotate this display regularly to keep it interesting and inspiring. Engage with your ASM's and use their understanding of their products to help you guide your consumers. Your customers will trust your knowledge and will generally take your advice.

Something else I have said before is the need for a well-lit showroom. With energy prices set to rise still further, now is the time to replace your inefficient and dim fluorescent/halogen lighting and convert to the latest LED equivalent. These offer a whiter more natural light with the running costs a fraction of traditional lighting. Incidentally, we are currently talking to some of the top nationwide electrical wholesalers to get our members the very best prices to help you with this... Hopefully an announcement will follow shortly so watch this space! It goes without saying, but any work of this nature must be carried out and certified by a qualified Electrician.

After a 2-year hiatus it was fantastic to be at the Buying Groups' National Flooring Show once again! Very well attended by all of the top Flooring Suppliers as well as quality retailers – it was a brilliant two days.

Thank you to those members who attended and supported this show and for those who came to visit Wendy & Linda up in meeting room 1. If you missed it – we've reviewed the show for you on page 24.

As always, this issue of SMG News is packed with all your favourite features as well as lots of news and topical comment. We have a fabulous participant for our 'Question Time' feature – we are thrilled that James Caldwell, Sales Director at My Victoria has kindly taken the time to answer our questions. Read all about what James has to say on page 28.

Starring in our 'At the Sharp End' feature we have Frank Gallagher sales representative for Cavalier Carpets. Frank has some very interesting answers to our questions so don't miss that on page 21.

This issue our Member Focus feature is showcasing a fantastic retailer – Buckfast Carpets who have three stores in the Newton Abbot area of Devon. The flooring departments are beautifully laid out and feature a great selection of top ranges. Don't miss this on page 54

All that remains for me to say is that this summer SMG News is, as always, jam packed with the latest industry news, insights and information to keep you up to date and make for what we hope is a very interesting read. If you have any suggestions for features you might like to see in this publication, we always welcome reader feedback and ideas.

On behalf of SMG, I'd like to thank our Members and Suppliers for their continued support and to wish you a very successful summer 2022.

Kind regards

Mike Reed
Head of Group Operations



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CELEBRATING

5 YEARS



Stateside

THE GOLD STANDARD

Colour shown: Goldsboro

By popular demand we've added a rich opulent golden shade to our Stateside range. This beautiful plain dyed, **pristine cut pile** carpet comes in 18 gorgeous contemporary colourways, designed to complement today's interiors. Made using only the finest raw materials, to give the superb quality and finish for which we are renowned. Offered in 40oz and 50oz options, **in guaranteed full 4m and 5m widths**, this durable, easy to fit, wool rich carpet will stand the test of time. **Penthouse quality – naturally.**



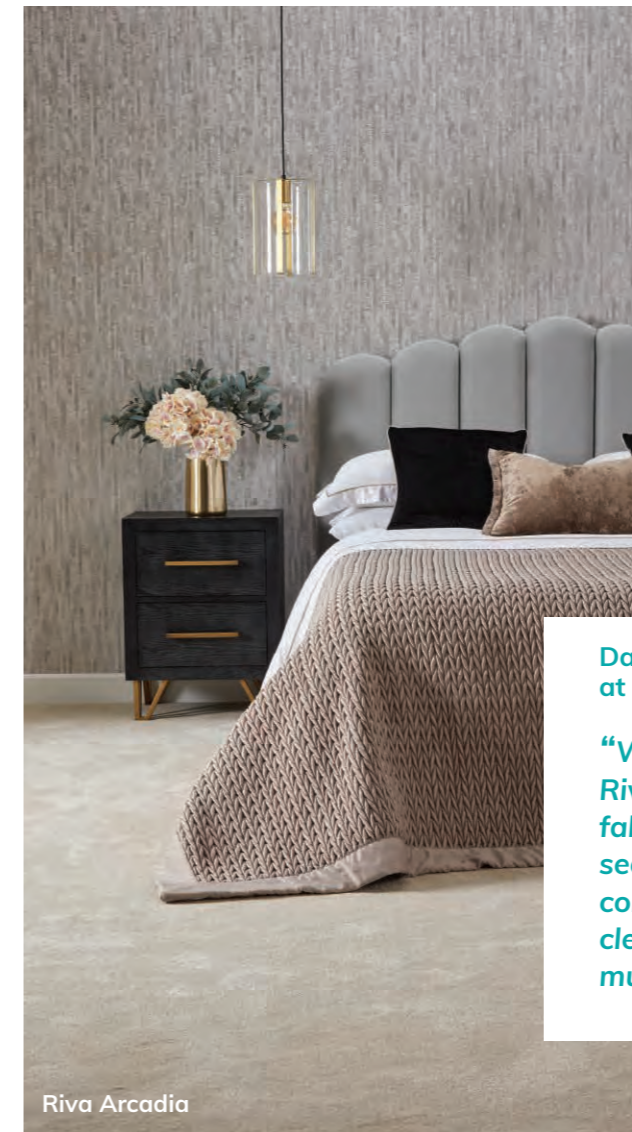
For samples and further information please call **01706 639 866** or visit [penthousecarpets.co.uk](https://www.penthousecarpets.co.uk)



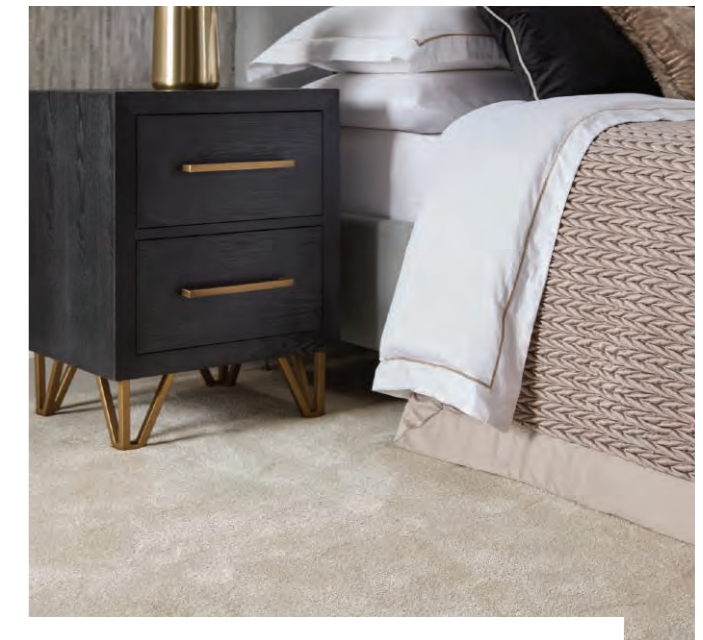
Working for independent retail

SINCE 1972

RIVA – STEP INTO SOFTNESS



Riva Arcadia



David Cormack, Marketing Director at Cormar Carpet Company said:

“We are living in a time of high inflation, so Riva is perfectly timed for the market. It offers fabulous value in the soft deep pile market sector and has great consumer appeal. The combination of the firmer handle of our easy clean carpets, together with the softness of a multi-filament yarn makes it a real winner.”

The range is available in 16 stylish plain shades including a strong collection of popular greys and warm neutrals, alongside some bolder colour choices; giving home-owners outstanding choice to complement any interior design.

Riva is manufactured from two-ply yarn and is both bleach cleanable and stain resistant. It also includes a 10-year stain and wear guarantee. Also, due to its resilient properties, Riva is suitable for use all around the home, although it is clearly a classic for bedrooms and nurseries; spaces in the home where extra softness is desired.

Cormar Carpets is proud to produce all its extensive range of carpets at its two Lancashire mills. The company delivers across the UK and Ireland from its distribution sites in Hemel Hempstead and Bury using its fleet of over 70 vehicles to ensure a fast, reliable service.

With an industry-leading trade portal and dedicated, experienced sales and customer service team, Cormar offer retailers 24/7 access to ordering, tracking, and online account management, as well as servicing its retail customers through a team of over 30 sales representatives.

For further information on the new Riva range, or any other Cormar Carpet range, visit their award-winning Trade Portal: <https://portal.cormarcarpets.co.uk/>

CORMAR
CARPET CO

www.cormarcarpets.co.uk

ADAM CURTIS ONLINE – SUPPORTING THE BRITISH WOOL INDUSTRY WITH THEIR FANTASTIC NEW COLLECTIONS



Adam Curtis Online is where high end woollen products meet colour and style. Experience exquisite comfort whilst supporting the British Wool industry.

Shop their collections to discover 100% British or Real Shetland wool throws, cushions, floor rugs, soft furnishings, accessories, duvets and pillows which have all been made here in the UK.

Whether you are looking to add an accent of colour to your home with a

100% Real Shetland Wool Throw or prefer to wrap up in the softest cashmere wool scarves, Adam Curtis Online has the perfect product for you.

Now home to The Real Shetland Company's collection of genuine Real Shetland Wool products!

For more information visit:

www.adamcurtisonline.co.uk
or contact:
sales@adamcurtisonline.co.uk
Tel: 07754 457750

AXMINSTER CARPETS NEW PRODUCTS AND NEW POS NOW AVAILABLE



Overwhelmingly well received by retailers, the Axminster offer is supported by access to a fantastic retail portal where images of all of the new products, as well as the complete stunning product portfolio, can be found.

NEW Velvet Collection
The finest velvet collection, soft to touch with an opulent wool-rich smooth finish. Luxurious underfoot comfort and a refined pile definition.

NEW Cobble Weave Collection
Textured with natural shading, this unique 100% quality wool carpet features 20% Yak wool for a heathered long fibre effect.

Handcrafted with 4 Ply yarn. Images for all Axminster collections are available on the retailer portal to allow retailers to showcase these new products on websites and social media channels.

To place orders for any of the Axminster collections and POS please contact the team on

01297 33533 or email retail@axminstercarpets.uk



Axminster Carpets were proud to unveil their new Velvet and Cobble Weave collections and accompanying point of sale at the Buying Groups' National Floor Show in May.

ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR ULSTER CARPETS

Ulster Carpets – one of the most recognisable names in the residential flooring industry - have been granted a Royal Warrant by Her Majesty The Queen.

Nick Coburn CBE, Group Managing Director, said, "To receive the Royal Warrant in Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee year is a real honour. This achievement has taken several years of dedicated work by our staff and it further underpins the huge success and progression of Ulster Carpets, particularly as we look forward to celebrating our 85th anniversary next year."

Still based on the same site that Nick's grandfather founded the company on, Ulster's forward-thinking and innovative approach has helped them to maintain their manufacturing base in the UK.

"One of the key reasons behind this success is that we are the only fully integrated manufacturer of woven carpet operating entirely in the UK. From sourcing the highest quality wool and spinning and dyeing the yarn through to the bespoke design and weaving of our luxury carpets, we have complete control over every step."

"We are continuing a significant investment programme to create and secure jobs in the UK, which will grow our business across the world."

To mark this year's Jubilee, the Northern Ireland Office have launched a competition for primary school children to design a rug, which will be manufactured by Ulster Carpets before being presented to The Queen.

Ulster Carpets are also continuing to work closely with the Royal Household to develop designs for Royal Residences.

www.ulstercarpets.com



Nick Coburn CBE, Group MD with Joyce McIvor, Contract Sales Director



Industry leading sustainable underlay production

As part of the Vita Group – who have been awarded a Silver EcoVadis sustainability rating – all Ball & Young PU underlays are made from recycled material and are recyclable at the end of their life. They have also passed stringent indoor air quality tests and feature 'Ultrafresh' for anti-microbial protection.

Cloud 9 underlays have excellent heat and sound insulation properties, saving energy and money. With over 25 years of sustainability and innovation consumers can rest assured they've made the greener choice.

It's in our DNA.



Scan the QR code to see our sustainability story.





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NEW COLOURS FOR POPULAR CARPET RANGE



CORMAR
CARPET CO



'Meteorite' from The Apollo Plus range

This Summer, Cormar Carpet Company is relaunching its popular Apollo Plus range with brand new colour options.

First launched in 2010 and popular ever since, the Apollo Plus range will now be available in an extensive palette of 22 heather and plain shades. Introducing 9 brand new colours including statement reds and steel blues to extend the appeal for consumers seeking to introduce a practical, yet stylish carpet into their home.

As with most of Cormar's easy clean family, Apollo Plus is made from 100% Excellon Polypropylene, providing uncompromising quality alongside a competitive price. Loved by retailers and consumers alike, the range is also bleach cleanable, has a 10-year stain and wear warranty, and will be presented on their new look point of sale.

David Cormack, Marketing Director at Cormar Carpet Company said: "Having had such a great reaction to our Apollo range since it first launched in 2010, we're excited to be introducing even more colour options to this enduringly popular range.

"Apollo Plus is suitable for use all around the home and those looking for an affordable carpet that is both hard-wearing and stylish. It ticks all the boxes and with the new colour additions, we are confident the range will remain a firm favourite for years to come."

The range will be delivered by Cormar's own nationwide delivery fleet of over 70 vehicles, meaning orders arrive at retailers' doors often within 48 hours, with an on-time delivery figure of 99%, providing a prompt, reliable delivery service to retailers throughout the UK and Ireland.

The company's investment in service isn't just limited to their delivery offering as Cormar continues to enhance their online Trade Portal, providing a one-stop-shop for their retailers to check stock, place and track orders. And now with their new aftersales area, you can see why Cormar remains a manufacturer of choice.

For further information on the relaunched Apollo Plus range, or any other Cormar Carpet range, visit: www.cormarcarpets.co.uk

IN A REGULAR FEATURE RICHARD RENOUF HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANT BUSINESS ISSUES TO HELP MEMBERS STAY UP TO DATE!

Richard has worked in floorcoverings and furniture retail for more than thirty years. His experience includes independent family businesses and a major national retail chain. In 1992 Richard established the Qualitas Conciliation Service (now the Furniture Ombudsman) to help resolve disputes about furniture and floorcoverings and is now working as an independent consultant and is a consultant member of the Contract Flooring Association.



There are some things you don't expect to see when you visit a customer. Like the Rat Beetle (or was it a slug bug?) that I parked next to last week.

The VW Beetle – a classic car made to look old and rusty, with ropes around the bumpers and vintage stickers to complete the USA West Coast look (and it was left-hand drive) looked so authentic it could have been dumped, but it belonged to the homeowner who was proud to open it up and show it off to me. He'd parked it a little away from his drive just to show it off!

In the customer's open-plan living space was a beautifully carved antique chair that clearly once graced a stately home. The chair was doubtless uncomfortable to sit in for any length of time, and the customer's wife didn't like it one bit and felt her friends hated it too. Her husband grinned and she was shocked, when I explained to her the characteristics that showed it was authentic and of considerable value, although her husband was not so happy when I explained the new leather was spoiling it.

But the third thing to catch my eye was in the hall. I was there to look at the kitchen flooring but it ran through to the hall. There, in the direct eyeline of anyone not using the tradesman's entrance, was a sight unlike anything I had ever seen. A bullnose step that was neither 'capped and banded' nor hand-stitched.

It was a sort of combination of both, and to add to the visual ugliness, the carpet had been damaged when the installer of the vinyl had carelessly used a heat gun and melted the pile in several places.



You've probably read this far because the photographs made you curious. But imagine the effect such a visual nightmare is likely to have on every visitor to the customer's home. Bullnose steps are almost always in the hallway and visible from the front door. A well-fitted step can be an effective 'advert' for the installer.

Why not take the time and trouble to get it right? In the UK we traditionally fit stair carpets in 'waterfall' style, unlike in the States where carpets are fitted with the treads stapled under each nosing. In the States, cap-and-band looks the same as the stairs above it, but in the UK it ruins the consistency of a staircase's appearance.

Many fitters shy away from learning hand-stitching as they fear it will cost them too much time, but in reality a few extra minutes (no more than 20 extra minutes, as demonstrated at the Flooring Industry Training Centres in Loughborough and Kirkcaldy where they do one-day courses on the process) can make all the difference between a good job and an excellent one that generates ongoing recommendations.

If the fitter of the bullnose shown is reading this, please understand I have some admiration for your efforts to improve on the average. Sadly, it's pretty-near impossible to achieve a good finish in the way you've tried as there will always be bagginess where the curve of the step begins; and loss of tufts is guaranteed.

But it would take very little to progress from this to a superb standard that will mark you out in the eyes of every visitor to every home you work in.

Richard Renouf

In partnership with



POS available to order now.



New **Aura**

Our popular EasiCare Aura (Northern Lights range) has just got even better with a new colour refresh. It showcases 16 stunning new colours, including blues, pinks, greens and neutrals. Now with a 12 year wear warranty, Aura is a great carpet for anywhere in the home.



To find out more, contact 01562 749300 or email sales@myvictoria.co.uk

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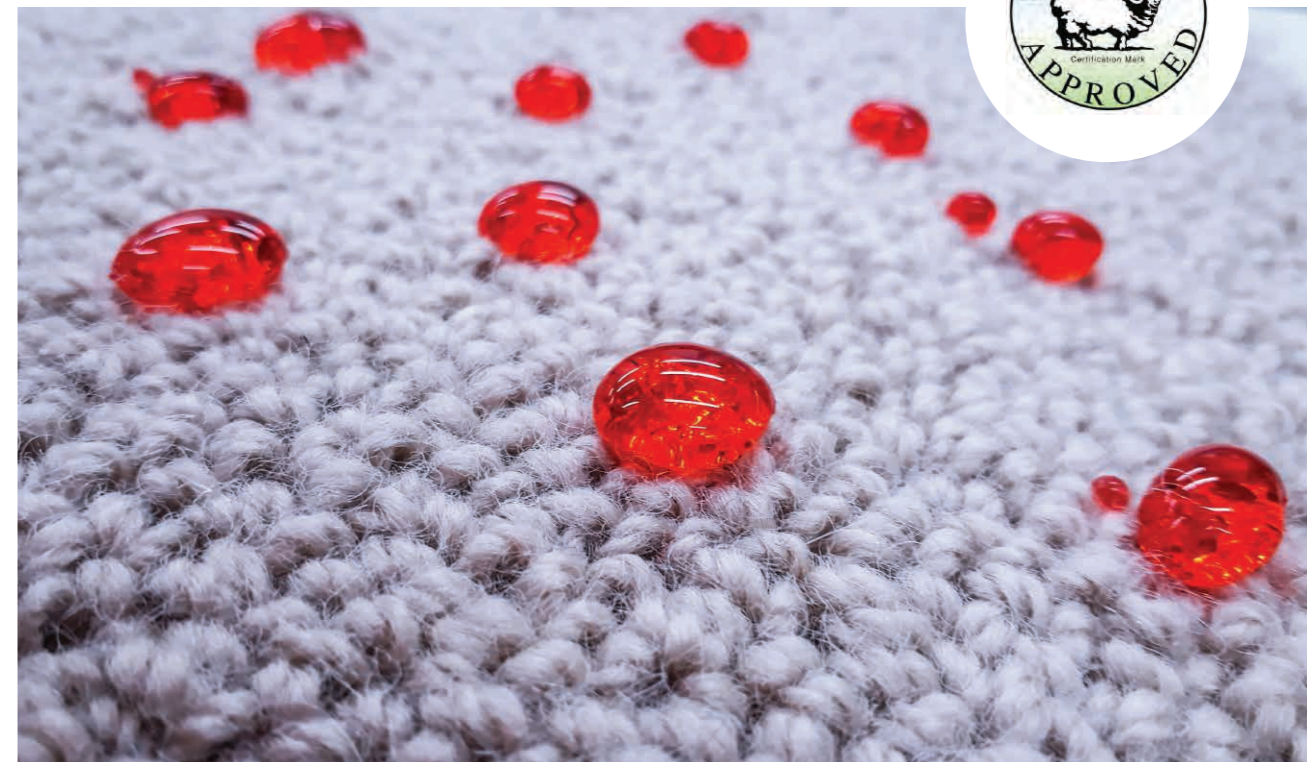
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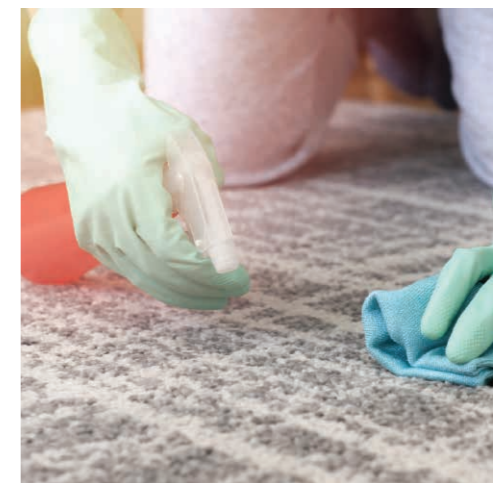
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USING WOOLSAFE APPROVED PRODUCTS AND NOT?



At the recent Buying Groups' National Flooring Show WoolSafe was impressing carpet retailers with an impactful new video that they have produced. The video shows in graphic detail, how the use of unsuitable cleaning products can have a detrimental effect on the performance of wool carpet.

“Wool has a natural resistance to liquid stains – they will sit on the surface for quite a while, giving carpet owners time to easily blot them up – but the wrong cleaning product can degrade the fibre and jeopardise this,”

says Steve Bakker of WoolSafe.



WoolSafe is promoting the use of carpet care products which it has approved and certified after extensive testing to ensure that they perform effectively for the life of the wool carpet.

The video is on the homepage of WoolSafe and is a real eye-opener!

See the link below.

For more information contact WoolSafe on:

01943 850817
www.woolsafe.org

“Once that invisible damage has been done, the wool loses its repellency allowing spills to soak into the fibre which makes them much more difficult and time consuming to remove.”

The best option at this stage is to improve the carpet's performance by having a WoolSafe Approved Service Provider apply an approved carpet protector, which restores the repellency” says Steve.



A LETTER FROM

MARTIN CURTIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE WOOL CARPET FOCUS GROUP



“Not many people know that!”

If you read the article “what I wrote” (in the inimitable words of Ernie Wise) in the last edition of the SMG Magazine you will recall that I borrowed the theme from William Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar. This time I am inspired by none other than Sir Michael Caine.

You see, I was sitting with my granddaughter, Calet, and she asked if she could draw another picture for inclusion in the SMG Magazine? She was so proud to see her drawing featured in a previous edition. I had a think and I said, “How about we tell the story of how wool comes from the sheep and follow the progress all through the different processing and manufacturing operations to get to the finished product?”

She started to draw but didn’t have time to finish but the seed was sown.... Believe it or not, not many people know how we get wool from the back of a sheep into a beautiful carpet or rug. I used to take visitors, farmers through to carpet manufacturers, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Countess of Sussex and all in between and showed them the early stages of the process at Haworth Scouring Company in Bradford.

The story starts with the humble sheep. I coined the phrase “The original free range animal” as they tend to roam the hills and dales of the countryside and some aren’t seen apart from tugging, time lambing and shearing. They are very hardy and their fleece protects them from the extremes of the weather.

Come springtime they are ready to get rid of their winter coats and grow a new one for next year. Shearing the sheep is a wonderful skill and shearers are expertly trained. The fleeces are wrapped and bundled into sacks for grading at one of the British Wool depots situated around the UK.

Graders handle every fleece and put it into one of many grades - specific to breed of sheep, quality of wool and such like. The wool from different farms is put into bins with other farmers wool clips of the same grade.

From there the wool is sold at auction sales held by British Wool. The wool clip is currently running at just over 20million kgs per annum but it used to be much larger. Buyers will generally scour the wool (wash it) in huge linked baths with each bath taking out more grease and dirt from the fleece. Haworth Scouring is, according to Dr Mike Madden of ENCO Ltd the environmental research organisation (which specialises in wool textiles), the most environmentally sound scouring plant of its type in the world. At full capacity they can scour 1m kgs of wool each week. (Note, the UK clip is 20m kgs so wool is imported for processing alongside the UK clip and is

sometimes blended with it). Interestingly, when the wool is scoured it loses weight! Dirt, swint and grease is washed out of the fleece and is dealt with according to what it is.

Haworth extract the grease and it goes to various different end uses and is a valuable natural product. Lanolin can be made from it, for lipsticks, soaps and such like or it can go into a natural food source for shrimp and fish farms and it can be made into vitamin D! There are industrial uses also. The dirt etc goes to the land as a soil replenisher (never landfill, far too valuable for that) and sometimes fertiliser. Nothing goes to waste.

After washing the wet wool has to be dried and then machined to open it up. It goes into huge bins and is then packed into bales for shipment to UK or overseas customers. Home grown wool is highly prized around the world because it has special characteristics that make it especially good for use in certain products, like carpets and rugs. However, there are other grades of UK wool that go into clothing, hand knitting, machine knitting, bedding, furnishing fabrics and more. It is wonderfully versatile.

After scouring, the wool goes down one of two main routes; the woollen route which is favoured by most carpet manufacturers and tweedy looking yarns and cloths, or the worsted route which is a slightly more complicated process which combs the mixed up fibres into parallel slivers and tops.

As after washing the fleeces lose their weight (30-35%), the value of the wool rises to compensate. If we stick to the woollen process in this article the clean wool often goes to the dye house. Wool takes dyes extremely well and some of the shades are fabulous. Heathers are a combination of different dyed shades and even with white or undyed natural wools mixed in.

Wool from naturally coloured sheep is usually undyed and I actually once made a colour range from naturals alone! My son, Adam runs Adam Curtis Online and makes naturally coloured Real Shetland Wool yarns which are incredible (do contact him if you need some, no minimum orders but there are maximums because the clip is small).

Some manufacturers actually spin the yarn undyed and then dye it later which results in a solid shade yarn. It all depends on what the carpet manufacturer is making. Some ranges include both solid shades and heathers.

The dyed and blended wool then goes through the spinning process. The wool is carded into a roving or sliver (carding gets out bits of grass and twigs that may be left in after scouring) and is twisted into yarn. You really should try to visit a mill and see the operation first hand. The technology is fantastic and high speed computer monitored equipment is the norm - the wool textile industry has invested and innovated in order to survive. The yarn itself varies greatly according to what is required in the end product. Hard twist yarns make long lasting and practical carpets and wool ones generally looks better for longer than synthetics. Softer twist yarns can make velvets, plush piles and the like.

Yarns can be single ply, 2 ply or 3 or 4 ply - this means that the single yarns are twisted together to make bulkier yarns and special effects.



The yarn then goes to the carpet tufter or weaver. Designers have already selected their colour palettes and patterns. You wouldn’t believe the rigorous research that is done prior to selecting shades and other details even in plain carpets. Fashion trends are monitored and you will know yourselves what is selling this year as opposed to last and the manufacturers take this information and reassess what they are making. I am sure everyone remembers the “any shade as long as it is beige” fashion that lasted for years, then the greys, greens and such like. Fashion designers tend to dictate what colours we should wear this season and next and it is a never ending merry go round. Carpets are not quite the same as manufacturers create a range of shades in the same brand / quality of carpet so the consumer has more choice. If shades don’t sell they are replaced.

As touched upon earlier the carpet manufacturer will present their ranges often in different weights, pile heights and types of construction. The choice for the consumer is huge and this is where the experienced retailer will come into their own. Is the customer looking for a particular type of carpet? Plain or patterned? Cut pile or loop pile or indeed cut and loop or flat weave? Axminster, Wilton or tufted?

I honestly believe that the best carpets and rugs are made either predominantly or wholly from wool as opposed to synthetics. I also believe wool is better for the environment, not only outdoors but also inside our homes (see an earlier article “what I wrote” about the way in which wool carpets lock in dangerous toxins from the environment and never releases them!). I am sure the experienced retailer is the perfect guide for the family making a very significant purchase for their home and family. I am always happy to help explain the various processes in more detail should they so wish. Like a puppy, a good wool carpet can last a lifetime not just for Christmas!

Not many people know that!

**Best Regards
Martin Curtis**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL
PATRON: HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES

Wool Carpets #Naturally



WOOL CARPET FOCUS GROUP

Museum of Carpet Kidderminster

Magnificent Design

An exhibition of historic carpets
and contemporary designs

2nd July – 3rd September 2022

www.museumofcarpet.org.uk

Stour Vale Mill, Green Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1AZ

at the

SHARP END

Each issue SMG puts ten questions to professionals in the furnishing industry to hear their thoughts from 'the sharp end'.



Frank Gallagher is the sales representative for Cavalier Carpets covering the South West, South Wales, West Wales, Wiltshire, Dorset, West Hampshire, West Berkshire and the Channel Islands. He has been with Cavalier Carpets for almost six years but has been in the flooring trade for more than 35 years. With all of Frank's industry experience, we are very interested to hear his thoughts from the 'sharp end'.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE TRADE?

To be honest, I got into the carpet trade because it was a convenient and easy thing for me to do at the time! I left college at the age of 18 in 1984 with no idea of what I wanted to do. I had a friend who was working at the time for Allied Carpets in Taunton and he told me there was a vacancy for a full time warehouse person. I thought I might as well apply as it was a job and full time and "naturally!" I was offered the position. I worked my way up through various sales roles and got onto the Allied Carpets' Management Development Training Program and took my first store manager position in Exeter at the age of 21. I worked for Allied for 12 years after which, I left the industry for three years, only to return as a store manager for both Allied Carpets and Carpetright in the South West, until joining Cavalier Carpets in 2017.

WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN CHANGE MOST IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS?

The sheer choice now available in terms of carpet colours in both plain and trendy modern patterns, along with natural flooring and synthetics has never been so plentiful for customers out in the marketplace (a far cry from back in 1984). The biggest change I believe is the massive increase in availability and popularity of LVT and hard flooring products in general, which continue to have a bigger presence than ever in retail flooring outlets, both large and small. This has obviously had a somewhat detrimental effect on good old carpet sales over the years, but we have to work in harmony with these other products and accept this is the reality of how consumers are in this modern society.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE CAVALIER CARPETS' PRODUCT?

Cavalier's 'Country Collection', without hesitation! A heavily flecked carpet in two widths and two weights. It's all about texture being 5/32nds gauge and has stood the test of time. Originally 20 colours, more recently we have added an additional 4 colours due to its success. This is the best-selling wool product on my area and definitely worth a look!

AS A REPRESENTATIVE WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

As a sales representative for Cavalier Carpets I would have to say (as would all reps) that from time to time, simply getting from A to B due to delays caused by road works and traffic volume can be a pain. As I live in Somerset, traffic issues are even more problematic during the summer months when the volumes of traffic are at their highest in the South West. Probably more relevant and challenging, is occasionally when I discuss the quality of products, a minority of retailers seem to only have the concept of low prices at the forefront of their minds. Cheap is not always what consumers are looking for. Many people will invest more in a carpet if it is explained to them why a product is better, and the benefits to them of investing in a quality product.

OF ALL THE RETAILERS YOU VISIT WHAT COMMON DENOMINATOR CONTRIBUTES TO THEM BEING SUCCESSFUL?

Good product knowledge and the ability to comfortably show all types of products that meet the needs and expectations of their customers. They will have a good selection of varied products available and give good honest customer service. They are not afraid to talk quality and the price isn't always the key factor in determining a sale.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY MARKET CHALLENGE FOR RETAILERS AT THE MOMENT?

The conversation that I seem to be having more frequently is regarding the hire and retaining of good carpet fitters. Many fitters work for more than one retailer, added to that many fitters run their own flooring business alongside. Their priority will often be satisfying their own customer so leaving less availability for retailers. Also, it appears to be the case that young people don't seem to be particularly interested in getting involved in becoming a trainee fitter or taking apprenticeships!!

IF YOU COULD ASK RETAILERS TO CHANGE ONE THING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Please do not be put off by a higher price point quality products, your customer may not be!!!

OUTSIDE OF WORK, WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

Living in Somerset we are surrounded by beautiful countryside and near the coast north and south of us, so my wife and I, when we get the opportunity, like to get out and about for walks and fresh air. We like meeting up with friends socially for a meal or go to a music venue or mix the two. We are also very much into Formula One and will watch every live race. Our son is starting university in Cardiff in September so that will definitely become an outside interest (also an expensive one)



IF YOU DIDN'T WORK IN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING NOW?

This is extremely hard to answer as I have been in flooring for the last 35 years by chance. If I had to do something different now, maybe I would have a look at making a difference in the community by getting into the caring profession, possibly working with people with learning challenges.

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

Always treat people the way you would expect people to treat you!! Don't take life too seriously you'll never get out of it alive!!

Cavalier
Carpets

CAVALIER CARPETS STARTED OUT FROM A HUMBLE MARKET STALL, BEFORE BUILDING A REPUTATION AS A LEADING BRITISH MANUFACTURER IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES. CAVALIER'S COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING THE HOMEMAKER WITH THE FINEST RANGE OF QUALITY FLOORCOVERINGS IS AS STRONG TODAY AS IT'S EVER BEEN. EVERY ONE OF THEIR RESIDENTIAL PRODUCTS GOES THROUGH THE SAME RIGOROUS PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT AND PRECISE MANUFACTURE AS A BESPOKE ORDER, TO ENSURE THE CUSTOMER RECEIVES THE CARPET THEY DESIRE.



The Museum of Carpet
'Magnificent Design' exhibition
received financial assistance from

Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
Kidderminster Town Council
The Elmley Foundation
William A Cadbury Charitable Trust

ABINGDON FLOORING EXPANDS THE STAINFREE FAMILY



The new Stainfree Finesse and Stainfree Caress expand the popular Stainfree family of bleach-cleanable carpets.

Leading the way in carpets designed for the modern home, Abingdon Flooring has announced the launch of two brand-new ranges to join its Stainfree carpet family.

Finesse and Caress offer a 1/10th gauge quality in a well-rounded spectrum of shared colourways, from subtle beiges to cool greys and bold brights. The palette provides versatility and the perfect colour to all sorts of interior styles and predicted colour trends.

Finesse has been designed to add effortless style in the blink of an eye. This twist carpet is tight in pile, making it perfect for high traffic areas. Designed to be practical and hard-wearing, Abingdon Flooring has combined strength and beauty to create a stunning soft-touch carpet. Finesse brings a sense of

soft elegance but is tough enough to cope with the rigours of daily life.

Caress is the big sister to Finesse. With all the stylish attributes of her sibling, Caress adds a touch of luxury through a heavier weight and higher pile height. Caress allows homeowners to easily combine style and luxury with all the features and benefits of a hard-wearing durable carpet.

Both Caress and Finesse enable retailers to give their customers carpets that fit the wear and comfort needs of different rooms, while providing coherence in style and colour. Each collection is supported by Abingdon Flooring's 10-year wear warranty and the famous Stainfree lifetime stain warranty.

ABINGDON
FLOORING

“Abingdon Flooring continues to satisfy consumer demands by introducing thoughtful and industry-leading carpets that not only provide the aesthetics, but deliver on practicality and respond to the dynamics of modern living,” comments Charlotte Coop, head of marketing, Abingdon Flooring.

“The addition of Caress and Finesse to the Stainfree family signifies a considerable investment in introducing carpets that stockists and retailers can confidently offer to an ever-demanding consumer and reaffirms our position as one of the leading UK carpet manufacturers.”

Both Stainfree Caress and Stainfree Finesse were previewed at the recent BGNFS event, where retailers and visitors were able to witness the opportunities that both collections offer for 2022 and beyond.

For further information, call 01274 655 694, sales@abingdonflooring.co.uk www.abingdonflooring.co.uk

ABINGDON FLOORING CONTINUES ITS MISSION AT BGNFS

Returning to Cranmore Park in Solihull for the Buying Groups National Flooring Show (BGNFS), Abingdon Flooring presented new qualities across its collections.

Abingdon Flooring joined with over 60 leading flooring companies for this year's BGNFS, presenting new qualities to keep buying group members in carpets that deliver style, quality and affordability. With a preview of Finesse and Caress from the StainFree family and Charter Berber Deluxe and Charter Loop from the wool Wilton Royal collection, as well as a chance to see the hyped Love Story Velveteer and a sneak peak of Wild Silk, Abingdon Flooring really went to town to showcase the very best of British carpet manufacturing.

Charlotte Coop, head of marketing for the carpet company says;

“BGNFS once again proved its importance as an event for the UK retail flooring sector and even with a really busy couple of years for retailers, it was a fabulous turnout. We used the opportunity to talk visitors through our new collections and show-off our latest creations to keep retailers on the trend curve and which continue our mission to be the UK's most loved flooring manufacturer.”

With a rounded palette of eternally popular grey and beige, as well as some fresh and modern colours, Finesse and Caress share colours and a 1/10th gauge construction, using differing pile weights and depths to balance affordability and luxury throughout the home.

With the bleach cleanable and supersoft StainFree yarn, the new styles excel in family homes needing a carpet that looks great and performs well without breaking the bank.

Abingdon Flooring is also making sure a new generation of homeowners enjoy the natural qualities of wool with the 80/20 wool blend of Charter Berber Deluxe. Bringing affordability and the unmistakable look and feel of wool that has been cleverly enhanced with meltbond for improved appearance retention, this classic Berber style come in 20 elegant colours. And for natural purists, the carpet brand showed Charter Loop, a 100% wool quality in a natural and rustic palette.

As one of Abingdon's most notable launches over the last year, it was no surprise that Velveteer was something of an attention stealer for visitors. A heavyweight velvet carpet made from bleach cleanable polyester yarn, Velveteer holds the largest ever colour range from Abingdon Flooring.

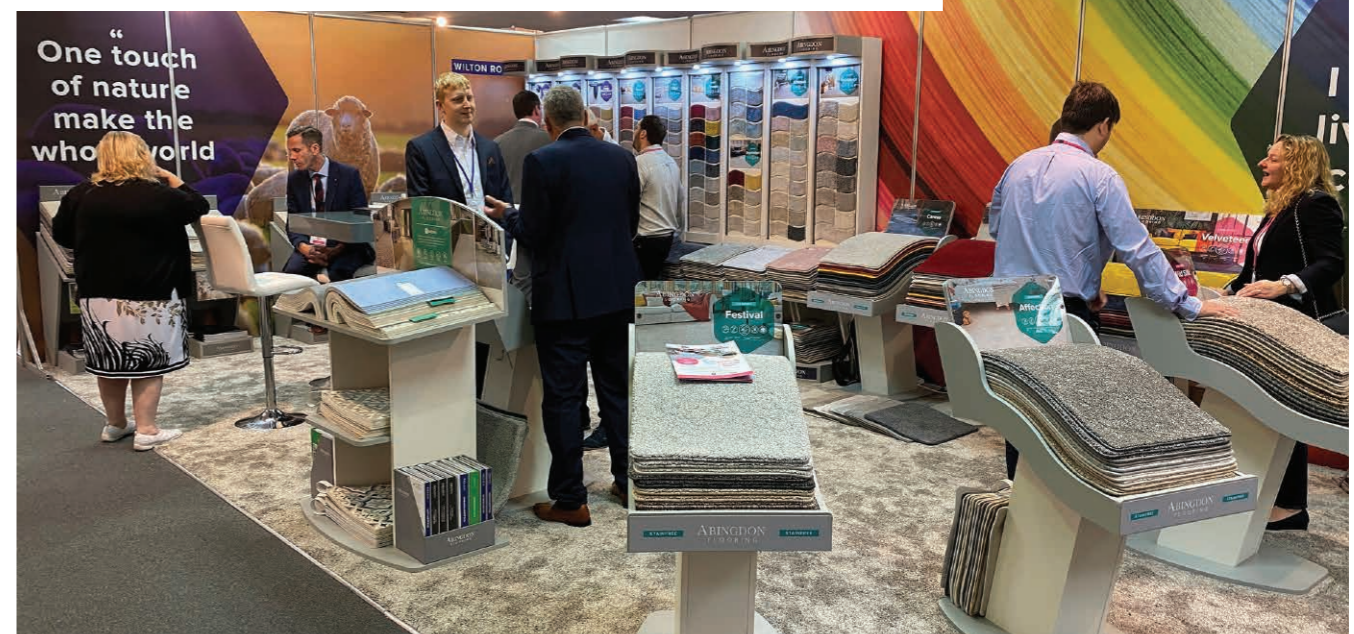
There's a total of 30 inspiring colours for to pick from including bold and luxurious tones such as mustard and midnight in a Love Story carpet that says modern luxury.

Abingdon Flooring also used the BGNFS to tease Wild Silk, another Love Story style that looks ready to cause a stir for all the right reasons. Wild Silk's rustic speckled colour palette is totally unique to the market and aims to bring the practicality and performance of polyester to homes wanting a more natural look in the home.

And as the dust settles on the BGNFS, one of Britain's most loved flooring companies is already busy preparing to wow visitors once again at The National Flooring Show in Harrogate this September.

For further information, call 01274 655 694, sales@abingdonflooring.co.uk, www.abingdonflooring.co.uk

ABINGDON
FLOORING



BUYING GROUPS' NATIONAL FLOORING SHOW 2022

It was three years since the last Buying Groups' Show and we really didn't realise how much we had missed it! A great central venue, easy to get to, all of the top suppliers in one hall, two days blessed with sunshine and a great atmosphere – what more could you want from a show?!

We had a great turnout from SMG Members – thank you so much to all who attended and supported this Show and the Suppliers who put so much effort and time into giving retailers this great opportunity to see them all in one place. There was a brilliant buzz about the Show and the feedback we got was that it was fantastic to be out again.

There were so many new products on show from Suppliers – more colour, more pattern, more texture – such a great opportunity to see an overview of what trends are likely to be popular through summer and autumn this year. While we don't know what the financial implications of the current climate will bring to the trade, we can be sure we have the products people want represented in store.

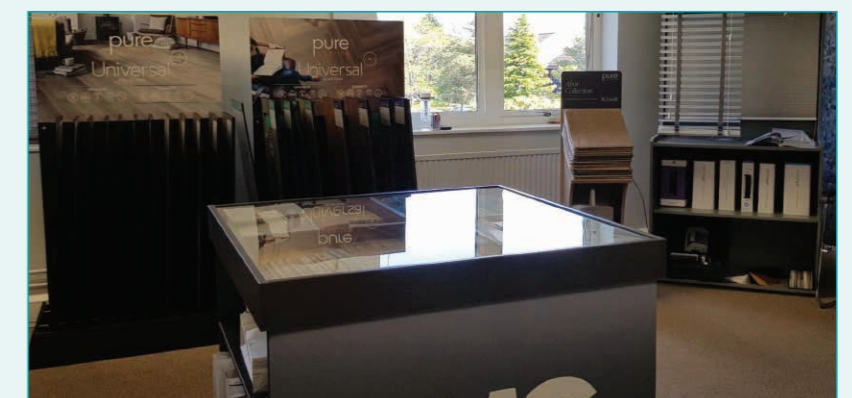
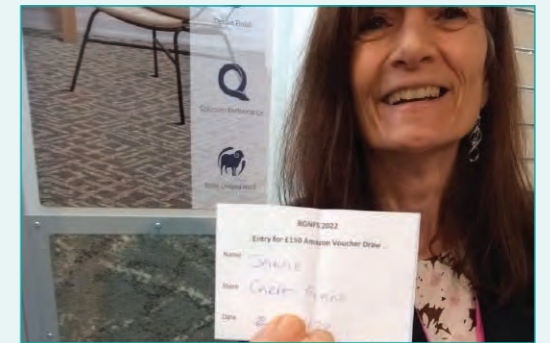
All of the stands were stunning and very well attended and we've got some pictures here which give you a representation of the vibe of the Show.

SMG had our usual room upstairs and it was great to welcome so many Members

who had the opportunity to see all the new offers under the Pure brand, the new blinds supplier Decorquip and the many other special promotions available on the day. We also had a prize draw that everyone who visited SMG was entered into, to win £150 Amazon Voucher.

The draw was made by Andrew Gicquel from Ulster Carpets and the lucky winner was James from Carpet Giant in Yate, Gloucestershire – Congratulations to James.

This show really does have something for every discerning retailer and is a must attend event, alongside the autumn Flooring Show in Harrogate.



BRINTONS BRINGING TEXTURE HOME



The Velvet Collection, Audrey Red



The Velvet Collection, Austin Teal



Country Life Plato Cloud



Country Life Vipera Bamboo



Classic Florals, Toile Empire Noire



Marrakesh Ecru Kadiz

Brintons' latest collaboration with Country Life offers a beautiful collection of textured carpets woven using 100% undyed British Wool offering a more sustainable choice for the home.

Inspired by nature, the designs recreate the shapes found in plants and wildlife in a structural, three-dimensional way using the cut and loop weaving technique. Gentle hues in Bamboo and Cloud have been chosen to highlight the soft lustre of undyed wool.

The Velvet Collection by Brintons offers the ultimate in luxury and sophistication. The new collection has been designed with a new denser

pile that's soft and tactile to the touch whilst being tough and durable. The elegant palette of twenty colours offers all the classic colours that you'd expect from a Velvet including shades of pale creams and beiges through to trend-led gorgeous jewel-like greens and deep blues, alongside versatile greys and silvers.

The timeless toiles and delicate florals of Brintons' Classic Florals collection have been given a contemporary colour treatment - Classic Florals Nouveau features all the popular patterns and introduces brand new colourways. Toile Empire Noire is a high impact colouring of this classic pattern which will add drama and grandeur

to any space. Toile Papillon grey is a beautiful contemporary colouring which adds warmth and depth to this delicate and pretty pattern.

The classic Marrakesh collection has been given a modern update with neutral undyed wool shades. These simple but beautiful Moroccan inspired motifs have been reimagined in our new 100% undyed wools to make them bang on trend.

www.brintons.co.uk



Brintons

BURFORD BRIDGE GETS A NEW LOOK FOR SUMMER.

Telenzo have refreshed their popular Burford Bridge range.

The new colour palette is soft, stylish and sophisticated. Coming in a choice of 10 colours, this carpet is perfect for the modern home, being both durable under heavy use and made from 100% New Zealand wool.

Whether it's the rich beige Chamois or the welcoming cream Ecru, make sure to get your hands on your free samples of Burford Bridge for style and quality assured, naturally.

This quality wool loop is supported by the Wool Owners Warranty where the consumer can be confident that the carpet will be protected against spillages, stains and all of life's little disasters!



The consumer simply registers their details on the WOW website and they can be sure that their purchase will be protected.

www.edeltelenzocarpets.co.uk
www.wowwarranty.com



GASKELL BRINGING TEXTURE HOME

Gaskell Wool Rich add more colour options to their top selling Wembley Range

Gaskell Wool Rich have added five additional colours to their best selling 100% Wool Wembley range with its traditional yet fashionable Arena & Stadium designs.

A beautiful deep collection that complements the existing best sellers and moves the consumer to the next stage of their colour journey.

www.gaskellwoolrich.co.uk



BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED. BEAUTIFULLY STYLED



QUESTION TIME

James Caldwell – Sales Director

In this issue of Question Time, SMG are delighted to feature an interview with James Caldwell, sales director at Victoria Carpets and Design Floors. Since joining Victoria four years ago, the developments in product offer, marketing and direction of the business have been clear and his drive and determination have brought Victoria up to the major market force it is today. James has a wealth of industry knowledge and experience having started in retail before joining Abingdon where he worked for 5 years and then Balta where he developed their cut length offer into the UK for 15 years before joining Victoria.

We asked James our usual questions and here are his answers.....

How would you describe the values that have made Victoria Carpets & Design Floors so successful?

Having been at Victoria Carpets for just over four years the first thing I did was listen. I travelled the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland and listened to our customers first and foremost. We really had to understand what customers expected from Victoria before we could rebuild the product architecture and I would say the one thing that shouted out was quality; our retail partners expect a quality product from Victoria Carpets, something we now deliver with our current order.

What are the biggest challenges you are currently facing?

Raw materials, fuel prices, exchange rates, price increases... let's not upset ourselves too much. It is a difficult trading period, and we are doing everything we can (as a group also) to manage all aspects. Despite an uncertain market, we continue to invest in people, product, IT, service and will support our customers wherever possible.

Independent Retailers are also facing challenges, what advice would you offer them?

With these price increases that are being forced upon us all, they simply have to be passed on and certain price points are no longer achievable for the quality of product. The consumer buys a carpet every five to seven years and it's up to us as an industry not to focus just on a price point.

Quality and colour continue to be key factors in the decision process, presentation of the store, knowledge in sales people and service are also key aspects. A well-presented store, with knowledgeable sales staff offering a quality and value product and delivered on time is a winning formula for success (Victoria can help you with the latter three!). I think web presence is also very important and there are more and more sample requests coming from the web with consumers not scared to spend money on-line on big ticket items, certainly after recent events.

If you could ask retailers to change one thing, what would it be?

Invest with key manufacturers! I would like to think our customers / SMG members feel a retailer partner with VICTORIA. There is too much spray and pray sampling in the market. At Victoria we want to present our products on stylish unitary, show off our indulgent colour line, we don't deal with everyone, and I wish more would buy into our loyalty and value the sampling and merchandising.

How would you like to see the industry change in the future?

On-line is certainly more and more important, even if it's just to support the store front. Also, we need to be greener, it comes at a price currently, though the recyclable aspect in flooring will become more and more important in the decision process.

What is your favourite Victoria product? Just one?

I would have to say Royal Velvet, simply because I have just had it fitted in my own lounge and it's stunning, so elegant to look at and soft underfoot. On Victoria Design Floors, I would pick our new Universal 55 Herringbone, an on-trend addition to our Universal 30 and 55 offer.

Aside from Victoria, which other manufacturer do you most admire and why?

Any other Victoria PLC company. My bosses will be reading this! I would also say Adam Carpets, they have always made some stunning wool twists.

What are your career highlights?

I have to say, I had a great 15 years at Balta (who funnily enough are now part of our Group) and took on many challenges during that time. Though my biggest highlight is the changes we have made at Victoria Carpets & Design Floors, we have a fantastic product offer that now makes sense to the retailer and consumer.

Outside of work, what are your passions?

I'm a big music fan and started collecting vinyl again a few years back. Home and family life is very important with travelling as much as I do, a bit of cooking, odd glass of wine, bit of gardening and dog walks on a Sunday. Perfect.

In your whole life, what makes you most proud/What is your proudest achievement?

Personally, my wife and children, I have spent 20 years travelling and have had nothing but 100% support and the four of us are a very close family (that's a wife and two children to avoid any confusion). My dog is pretty fantastic as well, at least he's always pleased to see me.

Professionally, on reflection I would say my career. I didn't set out to have one really, I have (and do) worked for some great people / companies, strong management and sales people who have supported me and my customers throughout all the years. I have certainly made some friends for life.

Do you have any regrets?

No, not really.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

You never lose in life, you win or you learn. That and it's okay if people don't like you, not everybody has good taste!

www.myvictoria.co.uk

VICTORIA™
Carpets & Design Floors



You never lose in life, you win or you learn...."

Royal Velvet, Birchington

STAINFREE

Style

IS HARD TO DEFINE, BUT EASY TO SPOT...



Style

Available in 12 stunning colours and made from a Stainfree yarn which is super soft and bleach cleanable. Its 10th gauge construction and tight twist is perfect for busy areas of your customers homes.



Style in Pale Grey

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www.abingdonflooring.co.uk
01274 655 694



ABINGDON

FLOORING



Martin West (left) and Brian Ahern, BFM vice-chairman at the BGNFS

Here for you

The Furniture Makers' Company is trying to raise awareness among the flooring industry

As the charity for the furnishing industry, The Furniture Makers' Company has been supporting the welfare of people working in the furnishing industry since 1903. However, it has struggled, partially due to its name, to gain awareness with the flooring trade for the welfare support

it can offer to employees past and present in all furnishing industries.

Martin West, former Balta and Kingsmead executive is leading a campaign for the charity, hoping to increase its profile within the flooring industry, with the intention of

increasing awareness among those in need of welfare support and people wishing to support and fund-raise within their own industry.

Every day, people are having to cope with financial hardship due to the impact of bereavement, relationship or family breakdown, illness, reduced work hours, an unexpected loss of income or redundancy. But they don't have to deal with this alone. FMC helps those in the furnishing industry who are dealing with financial hardship by providing grants and useful advice, and has a friendly team on hand to support you.

Last month it exhibited at the Buying Groups' National Flooring Show to raise awareness among retailers and manufacturers.

If you know someone who could benefit from the charity's help, encourage them to get in touch.

Tel: 020 7256 5558

Visit: www.furnituremakers.org.uk/welfare

CHARLOTTE'S STORY

Being made redundant is a frightening and often devastating experience. When Charlotte was made redundant from a manufacturer's retail outlet just after Christmas in 2021, she was facing a rough start to the new year. Fortunately it didn't take her long to find employment, but her new job was not full time and she knew she would have a shortfall in her income. With the same household monthly outgoings, it did not take long before Charlotte was struggling and in financial crisis.

After receiving a recommendation from her former employer, Charlotte got in touch with FMC to see if she'd qualify for assistance. After assessing Charlotte's situation, it was able to provide her with a one-off grant to help cover her bills and outgoings.



The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity



CarMan is industry-specific, multi-award winning, cloud-based business management software by Computers for Flooring, able to manage every aspect of your flooring business. From single to multi-site retailers, wholesalers, CarMan will streamline your current business practice, improving efficiency and increasing profitability.

CarMan will manage the entire sales process from initial customer contact through to order and delivery, with advanced stock management and reporting capabilities. CarMan's central dashboard gives users an overview of customers, suppliers, finance, sales, and staff performance at the touch of a button.

CarMan introduces an intuitive digital process with innovative market-leading features removing the reliance on paper. Computers for Flooring provides multiple solutions to the problems every flooring business faces in one complete network package all under one roof.

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The latest features include the following:

- Full integrated diary
- Sales and performance statistics
- Proof of delivery functions
- Product database
- Device tracking
- Customer database
- Add and adjust stock
- Take a photo or upload a picture from the user's device
- Delivery checklist
- Customise user access
- All these features and much more



DIGITAL DOCUMENT CREATION & SIGNING



We now offer full integration with the market-leading digital document e-sign company, Yoti-Sign.

CarMan users can manage new contracts directly from the system and get a notification when the document has been signed. The signed document is then sent back via email ready to store in the client's file in the CarMan software

- Secure signing with optional identity verification
- Secure signing with full encryption
- Legally binding

The e-signatures are fully admissible in court and compliant with eIDAS, the ESIGN Act and the UETA Act. YOTI-SIGN is recognised in over 64 countries, making it easier to get documents signed around the world. The e-sign platform provides you with a full document audit trail to have full control of the signing process.

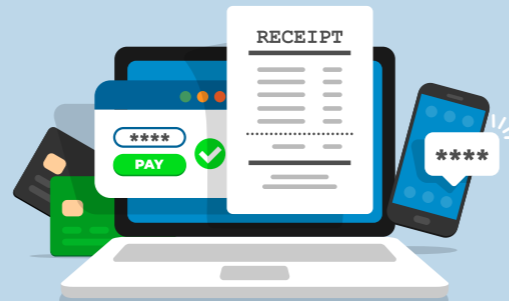


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Home of consumer finance Interest free credit solutions for Flooring retailers

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1 page set up form and live within 5 days | The ability to process customer applications in store, via e-link or online integration | Retailers are paid on delivery

No FCA Authorisation required
Ongoing training and support helpline

Optima in partnership with paymentassist

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CARPET RECYCLING UK REPORTS STRONGER SUPPORT FROM MANUFACTURERS



Carpet Recycling UK (CRUK) returned to the Buying Groups National Flooring Show (BGNFS) in May where the not-for-profit association reported growth in support from the manufacturing sector with a doubling in the number of its core funders over the past three years.

Speaking after exhibiting at the event, CRUK Manager Adnan Zeb-Khan commented: "Our presence is helpful at the BGNFS as it helps retailers, contractors and manufacturers to consider the waste that inevitably gets produced and find better and smarter ways of dealing with it.

"Support and collaboration from the manufacturing sector has grown significantly. We are pleased to report that for the return of the live exhibition in 2022, we have 15 core funders; up from seven since the last show in 2019."

CRUK's core funders are Balsan, Betap, Brintons, Condor Group, Cormar, ege Carpets, Furlong Flooring, Gradus, Headlam Group, IVC Commercial, Milliken, Modulyss, Rawson Carpet Solutions, Shaw and Tarkett. The core funders are showing leadership within the sector on developing for the circular economy, helping their customers with sustainable ranges and through CRUK to reduce their waste.



Positive aspects of the show included more discussion on collaboration with existing and potential new members on the way forward through CRUK's circular economy initiatives. "This included a good conversation with British Wool on finding solutions for wool carpets at the end of life and how we need to bring in the wider wool sector to help to identify and develop future treatment solutions," continued Adnan.

CRUK also addressed the 'misconception' from some retailers that by just disposing of textile flooring waste in a skip doesn't necessarily mean it is going to landfill. Adnan emphasised that the need to discuss end destinations of all carpet and textile flooring wastes

"is an important one to have with existing waste management providers."

He added: **"Using the information provided will help the sector to better understand the waste streams being generated and ultimately determine the best sustainable solutions for repurposing textile flooring."**

Latest CRUK figures reveal that the industry is diverting approximately 65% of textile flooring waste from landfill. Landfill diversion figures from the 2020 survey were shared at the annual conference on 29-30 June.

Around 430,000 tonnes of carpet and textile flooring waste arises annually in the UK.

For more information, email: info@carpetrecyclinguk.com or visit www.carpetrecyclinguk.com.



BROCKWAY HERDWICK HERRINGBONE RUNNERS



Brockway have launched a new Herdwick runner range to complement the award-winning Lakeland Herdwick collection.

The sophisticated herringbone design will lend a subtle yet striking design element to your floors. Specially designed for those that want the hardwearing practicality and high performance of pure wool, without compromising on warmth and comfort, the Herdwick Runner is available in six neutral colourways to complement all schemes.

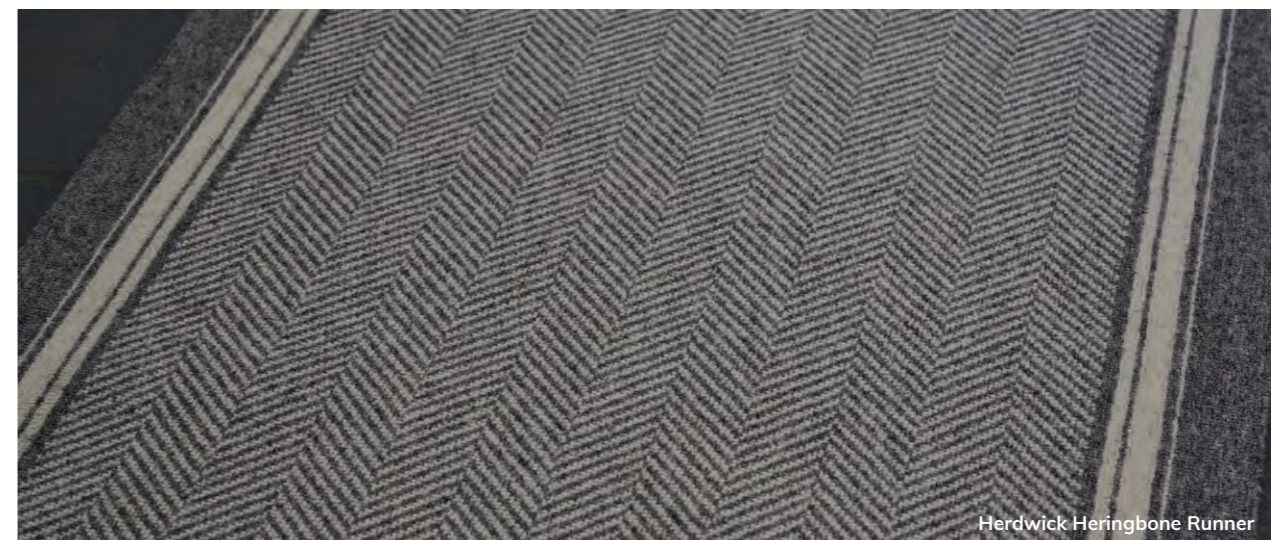
Grown in Cumbria, spun in Yorkshire and woven in Kidderminster, Brockway Herdwick Herringbone runners are authentically British.

The appearance and rugged durability of the carpet results from the natural resilience of one of Britain's best loved and hardiest sheep breeds.

Suitable for hallways, staircases and landings in the home, the Herdwick Herringbone collection is the naturally discerning carpet runner of choice.

For more information visit www.brockway.co.uk

BROCKWAY
THE HOME OF WOOL CARPET



Herdwick Herringbone Runner

lift

by Silentnight

for the 'lift' you need to take on tomorrow

Our **lift** range of mattresses are proven by science to improve the quality of your sleep, so you can rest, recover and get in the zone.



deeper undisturbed sleep

Intense™ sleep surface scientifically proven to help your body relax for quality rest and recovery



luxurious latex comfort

Expect years of cushioning comfort, freedom of movement and pressure relief.



back-saving spinal support

Mirapocket® springs provide unparalleled zoned support for optimal spinal alignment.



the UK's most trusted sleep brand

Discover our **lift** range today



contact us
Stuart.Law@silentnight.co.uk

FORBO LAUNCHES NEW ADHESIVE FREE SAFETY FLOORING

IN RESPONSE TO THE GROWING DEMAND FOR FLOORING SOLUTIONS THAT CAN BE INSTALLED QUICKLY WITH MINIMAL DISRUPTION, FORBO FLOORING SYSTEMS HAS LAUNCHED A BRAND NEW ADHESIVE FREE, HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE (HSE) COMPLIANT SAFETY FLOORING RANGE: SURESTEP FAST FIT.



Joining Forbo's ever expanding Fast Flooring portfolio of adhesive free solutions, Surestep Fast Fit has been designed for demanding commercial environments, where a quick turnaround and minimal disruption is required, but where slip resistance is also a priority. It's perfect for all sectors where safety is important, including healthcare, education, retail, public buildings and offices.

The genuine ≥ 36 PTV safety flooring is installed with no adhesive, which means extensive subfloor surface preparation is minimised or even eliminated, and installation is quick and easy with minimal downtime, meaning installation times can actually be reduced by up to 50%!

Suitable for installation over a variety of existing subfloors, including new concrete substrates of up to 97% RH, Surestep Fast Fit is installed using double sided tape and can be fitted while the building is still in use. Importantly, the floor can be walked on immediately after installation is complete.

What's more, the collection is also free from the usual constraints associated with adhesives such as odours, dust or VOCs – contributing to a better indoor environment.

Donna Hannaway, Head of Marketing UK and Ireland at Forbo Flooring Systems, commented:

"We are continually looking at ways to expand our Fast Flooring portfolio, so we are delighted that we can finally announce the launch of Surestep Fast Fit. Not only does our new range come with all the benefits of an adhesive free solution, but it's also available in a carefully selected palette of 12 on-trend colours and designs including contemporary neutrals, which have a speckled finish, to more modern aesthetics, such as sophisticated concrete and wood designs. The latter of which are completely new to the adhesive free safety flooring market. Several of the colourways within the collection have also been approved by the Dementia Services Design Centre (DSDC) for use within dementia friendly settings too."

Forbo's Surestep Fast Fit collection also features a PUR Pearl finish, which ensures the flooring is both stain and chemical resistant, making it easy to clean and perfect for demanding commercial applications.

There are also environmental benefits to choosing Surestep Fast Fit: Eliminating the use of adhesive means that at the end of its service life, the adhesive free floor covering can be easily removed without damaging the subfloor and is immediately ready for recycling. The ease of removal also allows the flooring to be reused if needed, reducing waste further.

For more information about Forbo's new Surestep visit: www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/surestepfastfit or for more information on Forbo's full Fast flooring portfolio visit: www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/fastflooring



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EUROPE'S LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF CARPET UNDERLAY, INTERFLOOR, HAS REVEALED THEIR LATEST OFFERING TO THE MARKET WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF TREDAIRE PREMIER.

The range sees a number of Interfloor's bestselling PU foam underlays receiving a significant upgrade to provide superior performance.

Made from 100% recycled foam, the new features include a high-specification paper backing, branded in an eye-catching signature style and seven products in the range will feature a scrim layer for improved dimensional stability.

Installers and suppliers familiar with Interfloor products will already recognise the underlays in the Tredaire Premier range.

Softwalk, one of Interfloor's flagship products and part of the collection, has already sold in excess of 1 million rolls alone.

Interfloor will be supporting the release of Tredaire Premier with a selection of in-store POS and sampling.

Stockists will also be featured on Interfloor's interactive online stockist locator.

Interfloor export to over 70 countries globally and manufacture all of their underlay products within the UK.

Benefits:

- The new Tredaire Premier range brings together a collection of luxury PU foam underlays.
- Eco-friendly 100% recycled foam provides a sumptuous and tactile appeal like no other.
- Includes a new high spec paper backing.
- New and improved design.
- Seven products in the range feature a scrim layer for improved dimensional stability.
- Wealth of free POS marketing resources, as well as updated and attractive hanging samples.
- Stockists of Tredaire Premier will be listed on a new and exclusive online stockist locator.

For more information contact Interfloor on 01706 238810 or visit www.interfloor.com



INTRODUCING

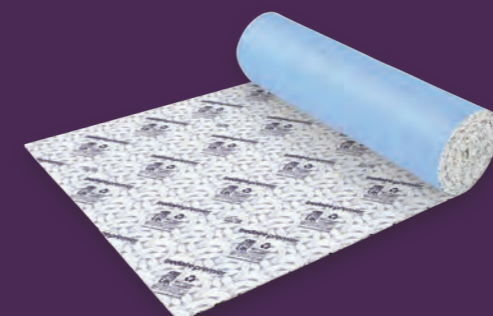
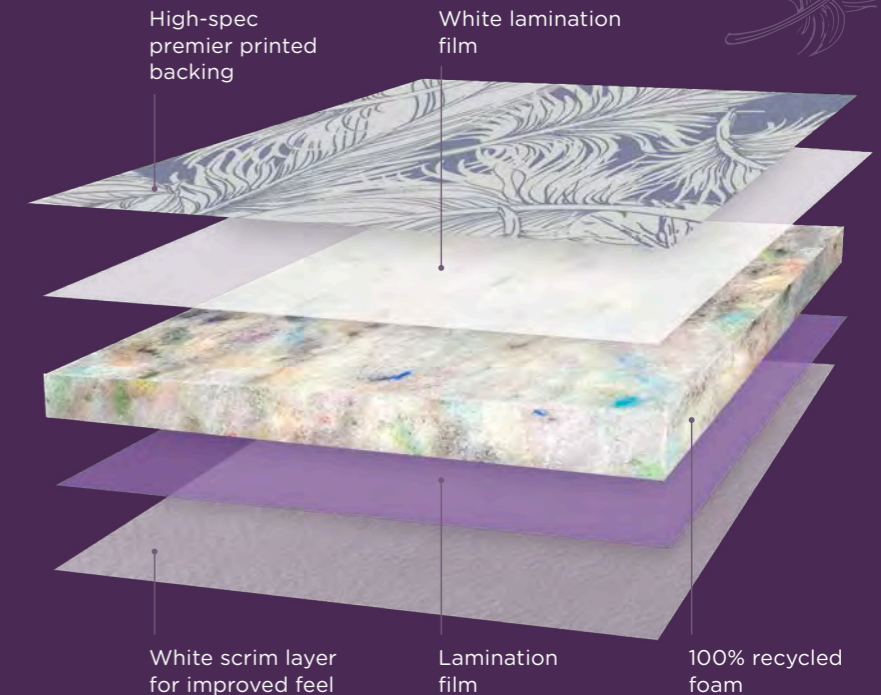
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Find out more at interfloor.com/tredaire-premier

Become a Tredaire Premier Stockist today



Stockists of tredaire | premier will be listed on our online stockist locator.



WHAT BENEFITS CAN SHADING MOTORISATION BRING TO MY CUSTOMERS?

THE MOTORISATION OF INTERIOR WINDOW SHADING IS MORE POPULAR THAN EVER, WITH THE PHENOMENAL UPTAKE OF SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY DRIVING DEMAND EVEN HIGHER. HOWEVER, SOME PEOPLE REMAIN UNSURE ON WHAT MOTORISATION CAN DO FOR THEM.

Saving time and effort

There are hundreds of millions of windows in homes and businesses across the UK. That's a lot of time spent manually operating blinds every day.

With the simplest of handheld remote control options, an open blind is just one button click away but with smart home integration, shading can operate by itself to fit around a user's routine.



Security

Most motorisation options allow for simple timers to be programmed to make a property appear occupied at all times. Again, this can be taken a step further with systems that allow for smart integration – Users can operate their blinds remotely or even set them to react to motion sensors.



Solar protection

With timers or smart scenes and routines, we can protect our valuable possessions from unnecessary sun damage.

Combining motorisation with an appropriate fabric allows users to reduce exposure to strong, direct sunlight that can fade and physically damage furniture, flooring, artwork etc.



Child safety

With no looped chains or cords required for operation, motorised blinds are inherently child-safe.

This in itself is invaluable to users but making safety devices, like the classic p-clip, that are designed to mitigate the risks associated with standard systems, is a benefit welcomed by retailers, fitters and customers alike.



Aesthetics

Everyone has their own style and thankfully every blind type available can be motorised in some way so users can let loose when choosing their shading. The more popular blind types like rollers, Roman or pleated blinds are no strangers to motorisation solutions and can be fitted with discreet motors that are whisper quiet and invisible to the user.

With no operating chains or other external devices required, it's a perfectly clean and seamless setup. Guests can be wowed the first time they watch a previously unseen roller blind emerge from behind a fascia to correct the lighting in a room with no prompt from anyone. Style is effortless as they say.



There are countless benefits to motorisation and which are the most important is almost entirely determined by what will ultimately makes the users' lives just a little easier.

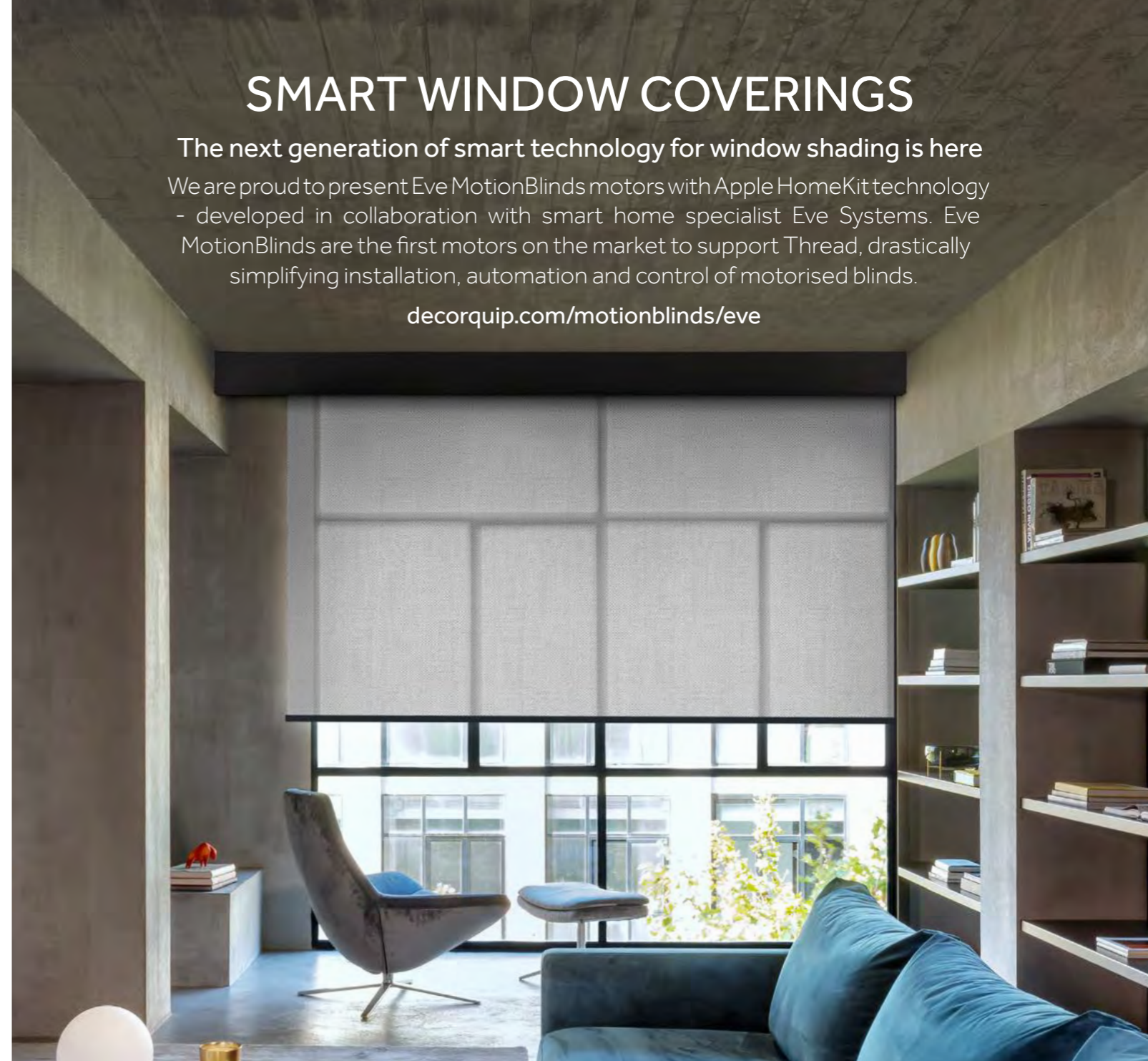
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decorquip.com/motionblinds/eve



Future-Proof Technology

Thanks to support for Thread and Bluetooth, setup is completely intuitive: Just scan the HomeKit setup code with the iPhone. When HomePod mini or the latest Apple TV 4K are present as Thread border routers, window coverings powered by Eve MotionBlinds automatically join their network. And thanks to Thread, Eve MotionBlinds can support the new Matter standard.



Seamless Integration

Putting the blinds on autopilot is effortless, thanks to ondevice, network independent schedules that can be created in the Eve app. And through HomeKit Scenes and Rules, the blinds seamlessly and securely interact with other HomeKit accessories, like light bulbs, thermostats, motion detectors and other sensor-based accessories.



100% Privacy

Just like any Eve accessory, Eve MotionBlinds are designed to safeguard user privacy. Instead of relying on a cloud, like most applications, all data and intelligence are stored locally on the motor.

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FURLONG FLOORING OFFER A FLOORING SOLUTION FOR EVERY ROOM, BUT HOW DO YOU KEEP THAT FLOORING LOOKING GREAT OVER TIME?



FIVE WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR FLOORING

It's the traditional time of year for a spring clean, but of course, it's important to look after flooring all year round. By paying attention to some easy on-going maintenance, you can increase the lifespan of all your flooring – from carpet to vinyl – making the most of your investment and keeping your home looking fantastic all year round. With many years of experience in designing, supplying and maintaining flooring of all types, Furlong Flooring have got five top tips for you to help keep your flooring in tip-top condition.

PROTECT HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS

Although lots of flooring types are ideal for the heaviest traffic areas in the home, such as kitchens, hallways, stairs and landings, it's still worth taking small measures to retain your flooring in its prime condition. For example, putting a rug down in a hallway helps to protect the flooring underneath – from excess dirt if you have carpet, and from scratches and dents if you have hard or laminate flooring. We'd also highly recommend that you use an entrance mat. This can reduce the dirt on your flooring by up to 70%, preventing people from tracking dirt through your home. The usual recommendation for an entrance mat is that it can accommodate two strides – so many of the standard doormats available are not long enough to make much of a difference. Keeping your entrance mat clean will significantly reduce the dirt coming into your home.

KEEP FLOORING CLEAN

This sounds like something you may take for granted, but the more regularly you clean your flooring, the better it will look. Whether you have carpet, vinyl or laminate, frequent cleaning will prevent long term

stains or damage. For example, immediately wiping up water, juice or other liquid spills on hardwood and laminate flooring will maintain the look of the floor. For carpet, vacuuming regularly will prevent dirt from sticking to carpet fibres, which not only keeps the carpet looking fresh but also maintains a healthier home environment.

PROTECT FROM HEAVY FURNITURE

Furniture can cause damage to your flooring, no matter how practical your flooring choice is. Heavy furniture can leave flat patches on your carpet or dents in your vinyl and can scratch both traditional hardwood and modern laminate flooring. You can use specialist furniture pads to prevent some of these problems, and make sure that you lift furniture rather than drag it when you move it around your house.

READ THE CARE INSTRUCTIONS

There's nothing worse than attempting a home remedy for a stain on your carpet and then discovering you've made things worse. Always read the care instructions that come with your flooring and keep them somewhere safe so you can refer to them if you need to. And also, keep the warranty or purchase invoice.

USE THE RIGHT CLEANERS

It might be tempting to use the same cleaning product for the different types of flooring in your home, but it's far better to use the right product. If you have wood and laminate floors, use cleaning products that are developed for wood – other cleaners may be too harsh and damage the colour or pattern of your wood. Similarly, be careful with vinyl – you should always use a non-abrasive cleaner.

Furlong deliberately design and source their flooring to make life easier for homeowners. Their industry-leading carefree fibres are stain resistant and easy to maintain, our vinyl ranges are easy to fit and easy to maintain, and both hard wood flooring and laminate flooring ranges are designed to keep homes looking great for longer.

To find out more about Furlong's range of flooring for every room of the home, contact your sales rep today, or call your nearest distribution centre:

Furlong Dartford: 01322 628707
Furlong Gloucester: 0845 520 0800
Furlong Preston: 01772 696787

FURLONG FLOORING'S VINYL COLLECTION: AFFORDABLE, BEAUTIFUL FLOORING FOR EVERYONE



Augusta

Duke

AS PEOPLE LOOK FOR AFFORDABLE WAYS TO FLOOR THEIR HOMES WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON COMFORT OR STYLE, WE SAY: WHY NOT TAKE A LOOK AT VINYL?

Furlong vinyl flooring collection is incredibly well engineered, with a range of designer styles providing comfort, insulation, and easy fitting whilst being cost-effective. It can be used practically anywhere in your home – from traditional vinyl areas like kitchens and bathrooms to open-plan living spaces and high-traffic hallways. As the rising cost of living continues to raise concerns for those looking to upgrade from old or damaged flooring, here are our top reasons for considering vinyl flooring solutions:

AFFORDABLE

This is a huge benefit. Vinyl is more affordable than some other traditional types of flooring, meaning you can give your room an instant uplift without breaking the bank. It often takes less time to install, and can be laid on a wide variety of surfaces, including existing floorboards and over underfloor heating systems.

DURABLE

Importantly, vinyl will last for many years, giving you fantastic value for money. It can withstand pretty much anything making it perfect for busy family homes. And, with the increase in the number of people working from home, durable flooring that doesn't wear out easily is essential. Specialist coatings mean that vinyl is also resistant to most stains and spillage, retaining your flooring in its prime condition for as long as possible.

EASY MAINTENANCE

If you follow some simple steps, it's quick and easy to look after your vinyl flooring. Putting protective coasters under heavy furniture and cleaning up spills quickly will help, but in general, all you need to do to keep your vinyl looking fabulous is to give it a quick once over with a mop or a vacuum cleaner.

GREAT DESIGNS

Vinyl patterns now give you a huge range of choice. From wood-style plank and herringbone designs to Victorian-patterned tiles, modern designs and classic plain tiles, there's something for every home, whether contemporary or traditional.

COMFORT AND INSULATION

Modern vinyl uses good quality cushion or felt backing. This makes the flooring extremely comfortable to walk on and helps with both heat and sound insulation. Choosing vinyl keeps your home warm, safe and comfortable all year round.

Furlong Flooring have an extensive range of vinyl flooring, including their Charisma II contemporary tile ranges, and Artisan II on-trend plank and herringbone decors. Alongside the wider vinyl range, these collections offer contemporary wood-effect, tiled, and contemporary patterns in a range of stylish colours, giving customers an incredible choice of high quality, affordable vinyl flooring for their home.

For more information, visit www.furlongflooring.com

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MUSEUM OF CARPET KIDDERMINSTER MARKS 10TH BIRTHDAY WITH AN EXHIBITION ON HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CARPETS

BIRTHDAYS ARE A TIME TO LOOK BACK AND WONDER AT THE PAST, CELEBRATE THE PRESENT AND LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE POSSIBILITIES.



The Museum of Carpet's 2022 summer exhibition 'Magnificent Design' will feature historic carpets from the Museum collection, pieces by contemporary carpet designers and textile work from emerging talented textile graduates from Birmingham City University.

Commemorating the Museum of Carpet's 10th birthday, the exhibition will celebrate the foresight and achievements of those who were instrumental in its creation.

Sue Hetherington, Museum Manager said, We are very proud of our collection of magnificent carpets from the past and excited to work with our partners in today's carpet industry to show off what can be achieved today. By connecting with recent textile design graduates we are inspired to embrace new ideas. This exhibition will be a celebration of the past and an expression of our hopes for the future.

Alongside the exhibition, the Museum of Carpet is running a program of events across the summer to encourage visitors of all ages to engage with local history, art, industry and textiles. Events include adult spinning lessons and children's

weaving workshops, as well as talks on the Museum carpet archives and on the local history of Kidderminster. The highlight of the Museum events programme is an illustrated talk with celebrated textile designer Margo Selby, exploring the relationship between man and machine, and hand and industry.

Further Information

The exhibition Magnificent Design runs from 2nd July to 3rd September, and is included in a standard museum entry ticket.

With the museum itself located in a Grade 2 listed building, the Museum of Carpet can give a unique experience to anyone visiting the museum and its new exhibition. Group bookings are available now (bookings@museumofcarpet.org.uk) and visitor tickets can be booked via the website.

With thanks to our exhibition funders: Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, Kidderminster Town Council, The Elmley Foundation and William A Cadbury Charitable Trust.

The Museum of Carpet is an independent charity and relies on funding from visitors, donations and external funding (we are not government funded).

www.museumofcarpet.org.uk





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Colour shown: Dune

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HOW TO APPROACH A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION WITH YOUR EMPLOYEE

Part of being an employer is having difficult conversations with your staff. It's never easy whether you're making them redundant, conducting a disciplinary, or managing mental health issues. However, it is crucial that these conversations happen, and that they are handled right. Research conducted last year found that workplace conflict costs employers £30bn a year. But where do you start?



How to prepare for difficult conversations at work

The first rule: don't dive headfirst into a difficult conversation with an employee. Take time to prepare. Schedule a meeting and give yourself time to get ready. How do you get ready for a challenging conversation? There are a few steps you can take. One, consider the desired solution. If the employee has an issue with their line manager, for example, ask yourself the question:

"What will get them back on the same page?"

Come up with at least one solution, if not more, and note them down. The eventual solution may not look like what you've noted down, but at least you can begin with a reference point. Do not force a resolution on the individual, as this will lead to resentment and further confrontation.

Next, note down any discussion points. Again, this isn't so you can force an opinion

on the employee, but so you can open a dialogue about the main issues.

Once you have your desired outcome(s) and talking points, you can do a run-through of the conversation. What could their objections be? What are some concessions you could make?

When you are happy, schedule a meeting with the individual and send them a breakdown of the talking points. Try to keep the email neutral and clear. You should avoid soundly overly emotional as this will set a bad precedent for the rest of the meeting.

How to have difficult conversations at work

So you've set a meeting, and you've thoroughly prepared for it. Now what?

Start by outlining the purpose of the meeting. Highlight the pre-planned talking points and go through them one by one. Remember, this should be a discussion, not

a lecture. If you're doing all of the talking, take a step back and allow them to speak. The same applies if they're talking at you without a chance for you to respond.

You should finalise the meeting with some clear actions. Don't leave the meeting without at least one thing you can both go away and work on. If not, you haven't found a resolution, you have just let the employee vent their thoughts and feelings.

The employee should help build the action plan moving forward. Avoid assigning blame or proving a point. Go away with a solution, or steps you can take to improve things.

Finally, make sure you follow up on the meeting. New problems can arise, and people can fall back into old patterns. Checking in will help you keep track of how things are progressing.

Tips on managing difficult conversations

We've discussed the structure of the meeting, but not how you should manage it. Emotion is probably the biggest issue in a difficult conversation. If you express too much emotion you risk escalating the issue. If you express too little emotion, you could come across as if you don't care. The key is to stay calm and acknowledge how the employee is feeling.

This doesn't necessarily mean you should accept or agree with what they are saying. You should always acknowledge the employee's point of view, as this will make them feel heard.

But, if they're saying something that isn't accurate or viable, you should express that. Remember, it's not your place to get overly emotional. Stick with facts and figures. It can be good to allow the individual to vent during difficult conversations at work. They may have been carrying a lot of emotions and this is their chance to let them out. However, you shouldn't allow this to derail the meeting. Allow them to speak and then calmly reorient the conversation. Only

provide information where absolutely necessary, as a lengthy policy explanation at this stage is unlikely to have a positive effect.

It's also a good idea to be accompanied to the meeting. This will give you a sounding board. If the employee is accompanied, they also have another person to run thoughts and ideas by.

If the individual has mental health issues you are aware of, you should be accompanied by a mental health professional or first aider.

Following up on difficult conversations and crucial conversations

Follow up is crucial to the success of your meetings. It is key when considering how to handle challenging conversations, and to track the progress of the issue. In fact, it's a good rule to follow in all of your meetings, not just the difficult ones.

To follow up, schedule a meeting a week or two in advance. Take the time in between to reflect on the discussion. If you feel the conversation has had an emotional impact

on you personally, prioritise your mental health. Take a walk. Speak to someone about the experience. Practice breathing exercises. Utilise an EAP, or seek out a mental health professional to talk to.

In the follow-up meeting, review the action points you came up with in the last meeting. Evaluate their success and see how the employee feels now. If there are any lasting concerns, brainstorm new solutions.

Don't handle challenging conversations alone

Every employer needs to have difficult conversations. This is something you will need to learn how to manage. Luckily, it's not something you'll have to manage on your own.

Croner's consultants provide expert advice on all HR matters, 24/7, 365 days a year. Not only that, they can accompany you to meetings, or even conduct them for you.

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SMG MEMBERS FOCUS

EACH ISSUE SMG PUTS A MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND THEIR VIEWS ON THE INDUSTRY.

MEMBER: BUCKFAST CARPETS & INTERIORS LIMITED
JOINED SMG: JUNE 2019
LOCATION: BUCKFAST, NEWTON ABBOT & OTTERY ST MARY, DEVON

SMG are delighted to feature this fantastic retailer from Devon in this summer issue of SMG News. Steve Upperton and his wife Joanna opened their first retail store in Buckfast, Devon back in 2018. Since then, the business has gone from strength to strength and they now have three stunning retail stores in that most beautiful part of the world. We asked Steve to tell our readers a little bit about his background and his own road to success before we put our usual questions to him and here is what he said:



Steve Upperton

“Until we purchased Buckfast Carpets my background had always been on the manufacturing and supplier side of the business and I held senior positions with some of the country’s most recognisable brands including Pretty Polly (Lingerie) and Royal Doulton (China-ware) before joining Axminster Carpets. In 2013 my wife and I set up a business supplying Sheepskin rugs and in 2018 we bought our first retail shop Buckfast Carpets and I found I loved it! Since then we have grown the business and now have 3 branches”

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE INDEPENDENT RETAILER’S STRENGTH?

Service and flexibility. Every independent is individual and will have their own strengths however, one thing we all share is the ability to look after our customers at every stage of the journey. Buying flooring can be an intrusive and confusing process for a consumer; the independent retailer can help the customer at every step of the way.

WHAT IS THE KEY MARKET CHALLENGE TODAY?

I think the market has changed incredibly quickly. The pandemic was without doubt a boon to our industry but this has changed. With the cost-of-living crisis being on every website, TV and radio show we are talking ourselves into a recession. We are also seeing almost weekly price increases pushing product inflation up and see increased costs at every level. The key challenge in my mind for independent retailers during this period is to focus on margin, yes, we need to secure sales, but it needs to be at a healthy margin.

BRITISH MANUFACTURERS, IS THIS SOMETHING YOU SUPPORT?

Absolutely 100%. If the last 3 years have taught us anything it is the benefit of UK manufacturing. The pandemic has exposed the fragility of long supply chains and the UK carpet manufacturers performed much better than many other industries.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS YOU HAVE FROM CUSTOMERS?

It’s so varied on any given day! Many customers come in with no idea as to what they want and our job is to ask the right questions to find them the right flooring. We are being asked about environmental concerns more often but in our shops the conversations are, more often than not, about design, colour and suitability.

IF YOU COULD ASK SUPPLIERS TO CHANGE ONE THING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Embrace technology. Some do it quite well, but some are well behind the curve. Make yourselves as easy to deal with as possible using portals, online payments and order tracking. As retailers we need to be as efficient as possible.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP SELLING PRODUCT AT THE MOMENT?

Our single best selling product is Cormar’s Natural Berber Twist. We are unusual as we sell a lot of wool products, it is probably due to my background but I am a firm supporter of wool as a carpet fibre.



As retailers we need to be as efficient as possible...”



Buckfast Carpets

WHAT WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR JOINING SMG?

As a supplier at Axminster I was lucky enough to have a view of all the buying groups so had an understanding of their relative strengths. I believe SMG has the best fit for us in terms of culture, allowing us to be independent whilst supporting us and the industry. As a group we also have very competitive pricing and rebates with the added benefit of Orderlink that we have used.

WHAT WOULD YOUR ADVICE BE TO NON-ALIGNED RETAILERS?

Business is simple, and now more than ever you need to be sure you are buying at the best prices. I really believe that the vast majority of retailers will get better terms overall through a buying group. Talk to a couple of the buying groups and do a cost benefit analysis and see if it is for you.

WHAT HAS CHANGED MOST DURING YOUR TIME IN THE INDUSTRY?

The industry is always evolving. In terms of the carpet market, I have seen the rise of the ubiquitous grey poly-prop although I think that tide is slowly turning, and we are seeing customers more interested in colour and natural products. Also, the long-term trend of the increasing use of hard flooring and specifically LVT which I think will continue. I think the most surprising thing is what hasn’t changed! We still have a thriving independent retail sector unlike many other industries, whilst the internet has made an impact it doesn’t dominate the sector unlike many other industries. We still have a healthy UK manufacturing base with some brilliant businesses still making great carpet in the UK. Finally, I believe this is still very much a people business throughout the whole supply chain. Our retail customers trust and buy from us and we trust those suppliers who have a good relationship with us.

Before I sign off can I just add a plug for the Carpet Foundation! There are many reasons to join, but as a retailer in these uncertain times, having the code of practice and deposit protection scheme is a great tool. More generally we should all support this fantastic industry that we are a part of.



Ottery St Mary store



Newton Abbot Store

CELEBRATING

50 YEARS

Lovingly crafted

since 1972

Penthouse have been **lovingly crafting carpets** with the finest raw materials to create products of **exceptional quality** since 1972. We source premium yarns, natural jute backing and take care throughout our manufacturing process to consistently deliver the trademark Penthouse quality for **50 years**. Combining modern manufacturing techniques with our traditional values forms the foundation for us to continue to deliver the very best for many years to come. **Penthouse quality – naturally.**



For samples and further information please call **01706 639 866** or visit **penthousecarpets.co.uk**



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