

selfbuilder + homemaker

NOV/DEC 2018

9

WAYS TO KEEP THE THIEVES AT BAY

As a former police officer, our Expert has the knowledge to give self-builders the right advice on securing their property

Getting the details right

Secrets of Success: Andy and Sarah Ball's 'modern house built with low cost methods' is taking shape

Installing timber shingle roofs

Step-by-step advice

Self-build: a way of life

Mark and Sharon Young make it three self-builds in a row with their new Herefordshire home



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Three in a row

Despite settling down in their previous self-build home in a Herefordshire village, the opportunity to build a new one was too good to resist for Mark and Sharon Young. Roseanne Field reports

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EDITOR'S LETTER



Have you heard about custom build? The Government is very excited about it, having put money into several developments recently. It captures some of the same benefits as self-build, but as custom build has a flexible range of options, schemes tend to be very varied.

Normally however, a developer will provide a 'menu' of options so they can tailor a house to precisely meet their needs. The idea is that you definitely get the layout, services and style you want. If desired you can go the full self-build route, or pay a contractor to build your home.

Community custom build is a further development of the idea, with many schemes popping up across the UK. These are based on a collective approach, where a small group of local people collaborate to fund, design and build their own homes.

In some cases they end up building each others' houses, fostering a really strong sense of community. This is even more the case in co-housing projects – where people will live cooperatively, sharing things like heating, gardening as well as cooking and laundry spaces.

As affordability of self-build looks to become a greater issue for future generations, such models are really interesting ways of enabling people to have a much greater say in the houses they will live in. This may be a long way from the 'home as a castle', but provides appetising food for thought.

JAMES PARKER

DIARY

RIGHT TO BUILD EXPO

29 NOVEMBER, LEEDS
righttobuildtoolkit.org.uk/expos

ASK AN ARCHITECT

1 DECEMBER, SWINDON
www.nsbrc.co.uk/ask-an-architect

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Scottish Government announces new Self Build Loan Fund

The Scottish Government has announced a new Self Build Loan Fund which will allow anyone struggling with finance for a self-build to apply for lending.

The scheme is open to applications from those who have been unable to obtain self-build mortgage finance, but will be eligible for mainstream mortgage finance upon completion of their build. It's set to run for three years and will offer loans of up to £175,000 to help with the construction fees for both rural and urban projects.

The £4m fund has come off the back of the success of the Highland Self Build Loan Fund, which saw people in rural areas provided with funding to build their own home.

The money is delivered by the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust as agent as a form of "bridging finance" for the period of the build. It is secured via a Standard Security over the applicant's future house and released in stages in line with an agreed build programme, accompanied by a Professional Advisor's Certificate.

Those wishing to use the fund to buy a plot of land won't be eligible, as the terms dictate that in order to provide security for the loan the applicant must fully own the land.

Scottish Housing Minister Kevin Stewart commented on the fund: "We know that people are interested in building their own homes and in some cases, it is the best way for families to tailor their homes to their needs. However, we also know it can be tough to secure funding and get the right advice, which is why we set up the self-build loan fund."

To be eligible for the fund applicants must:

- Demonstrate they have been unable to obtain a standard self-build mortgage for a new home
- Intend to occupy the property as their "sole and only residence"
- Own a plot which is 'unburdened' (has no mortgage finance or ranking agreement)
- Have full planning permission and be ready to apply for a building warrant
- Have a defined build cost and programme
- Be able to demonstrate they will be able to obtain a mainstream mortgage upon completion of the build.

SELF-BUILDERS AND RENOVATORS DEFY BREXIT UNCERTAINTY



The expert team from the Homebuilding & Renovating Show

While business leaders across the UK are putting off major decisions, Britain's growing army of self-builders and renovators remain unfazed by Brexit.

According to a recent survey of around 2,400 homeowners, carried out by the Homebuilding & Renovating Show, 86 per cent said they are continuing with their project. 78 per cent said that there would be no change in their level of project spend, and there was also no indication that homeowners had changed their mind on product choice or scale of project.

The survey was conducted at the London Homebuilding & Renovating Show, where respondents said they remained determined to continue with projects including self-build and conversions, as well as single and two storey extensions, remodelling and creating new kitchens.

Jason Orme, property expert for the event said: "Self-builders and home renovators are stoic by their nature, spending tens and even hundreds of thousands of pounds creating their dream homes, often for the first time. We will always need to build and renovate our homes as existing stock deteriorates and our needs change."

TAKE PART IN THE SELFBUILDER + HOMEMAKER ONLINE READER SURVEY

We want to hear about your build!

Selfbuilder + Homemaker wants to find out a bit more information about you. So we hope you won't mind spending a few minutes filling in a short survey. We just need a few details about you and your project, and all responses are anonymous. You'll also have the opportunity to tell us what you do or don't like about the magazine so we can ensure we're providing you with the right content to guide you on your self-build journey.



To complete the survey please visit

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HOUSING MINISTER VISITS GRAVEN HILL

Kit Malthouse MP, the Minister of State for Housing, paid a visit to Graven Hill in Bicester to see first-hand how the largest self-build community in the UK is progressing.

Cherwell District Council hosted the visit, the second by a housing Minister to the district this year, as it provided an opportunity for them to showcase the Garden Town project.

Graven Hill is described as a "pioneering venture in self- and custom-build, enabling individuals to design homes on pre-prepared plots".

Up to 1,900 "unique homes" will be built over 10 years and will be surrounded by open, green spaces including woodland, allotments and a network of cycleways and footpaths. The planning consent also allows for a new primary school, pre-school nursery, community centre, shops, cafes and local pub to be built.

MAYOR BACKS COMMUNITY SELF-BUILD PLANS FOR SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has awarded a south London community group almost £1m to help it deliver social rented and other "genuinely affordable" homes for local residents and workers.

The Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS) – a Lewisham-based Community Land Trust – has received £998,000 from the Mayor's Innovation Fund to build 33 homes on Church Grove in Ladywell. Five of the homes will be allocated by Lewisham Council while RUSS will retain at least 20 per cent equity in the remaining 28 properties, "ensuring they cannot be sold on the open market and will only ever be transferred on to members on the RUSS waiting list".

The homes, ranging from one bedroom flats to four bedroom homes will be partly self-built by residents, RUSS members, apprentices and volunteers from the wider community. This is in order to reduce construction costs, with training in construction skills provided as part of the grant.

The Mayor's statement said that through this approach, residents will be given a say in how their homes are designed, creating a development that reflects the needs and diverse backgrounds of the people who live there. Khan has set a target to "identify a pipeline" of community-led housing schemes by 2021, with capacity to deliver at least 1,000 homes.

Potton submits plans to bring custom-build to Great Gransden

Custom-build and self-build specialist Potton has submitted plans to redevelop the site of its headquarters on Eltisley Road in Great Gransden, Bedfordshire, to create a brand new custom-build development on the edge of the village.

The proposed development, which will provide 38 fully-serviced plots of varying sizes, layout and cost, offers self-builders "an alternative route to aspirational home ownership in the area". With a vision to provide the opportunity of "homes for everyone", the plots – starting from £140,000 – will accommodate a variety of dwelling sizes.

The in-house design team at Potton has produced a selection of house styles suited to the site which will have outline planning permission already in place upon plot reservation. The company has also produced a 'Plot Prospectus' which outlines the proposed house designs along with specific planning requirements. Designs can be tailored to the owners' lifestyle and budget.

Potton is working with Huntingdonshire Planning Authority which holds a public Right to Build Register of people wishing to purchase serviced plots of land to build on, as per the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. Priority plot reservation will be offered to those registered.

In addition to 38 homes, the site includes five plots designated for show homes so those building on the site can "see, feel and experience how a home could look". Potton has plans to work with landowners across the country to develop further opportunities for custom-build. The company is also holding regular "surgeries" at its head office where those interested in the Great Gransden site can find out more about the opportunity, including the proposed site layout and house types.

BOON BROWN TO BEGIN CONTEMPORARY ISLAND HOUSE IN FLOODED COTSWOLD QUARRY



Boon Brown Architects will start work overseeing the construction of the Lake House, a contemporary new build private residence situated on a man-made island in a flooded quarry in the Cotswolds.

The practice has been lead consultant and architect from

design inception through to planning and technical design, and will continue to work with the client to administer the build contract.

A reinforced concrete frame will enable large column-free spans, while maintaining a slim flat-slab floor construction and low storey height. Exposed concrete is largely left fair faced internally. The modular clad ground floor will feature a high percentage of energy performance glazing and black glass spandrel cladding.

The first floor will appear to 'float' and will have views out over the lake, with the master bedroom featuring a 6 m x 3 m frameless floor to ceiling picture window. The cladding will incorporate larch vertical strips, matching surrounding buildings and being sensitive to the property's woodland setting. There will also be some parts finished in a black render.

The house will feature a VRF refrigerant comfort cooling system, which will serve fan coil units unobtrusively built into each room. The building fabric will be highly insulated and a water source heat pump will provide the underfloor heating. The ventilation system will incorporate heat recovery and tempered fresh air supply.

The project is sited at The Lakes by Yoo – a disused quarry site flooded to create sculptured island plots for individual dwellings. The house will be split over three floors and include five bedrooms, living, dining and media rooms, plus a roof-level reading room that connects to a terrace and hydro-pool.

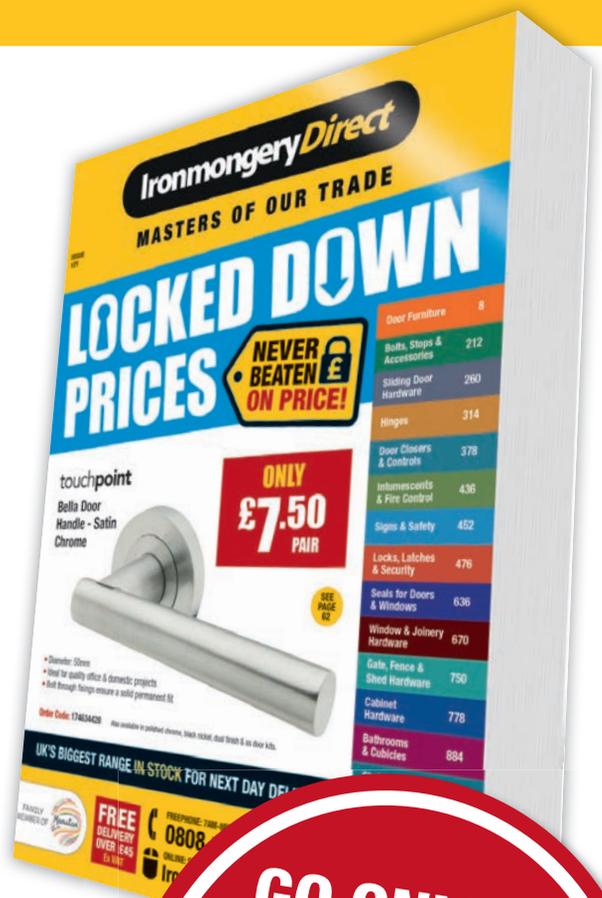
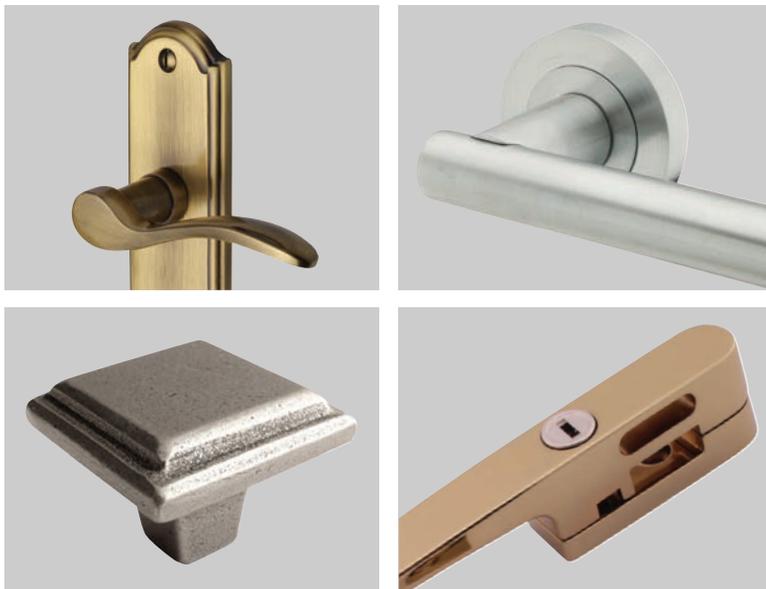
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Safety first

Doug Skins, former police officer and now with the national police crime prevention initiative Secured by Design (SBD), answers self-builders' queries on how to make your home more secure



SBD has been a staunch campaigner for improved security in buildings and homes for nearly 30 years. The organisation works closely with UK police forces and a wide range of other organisations, including national and Local Government, the Fire Service, British and European Standards authorities, the construction industry, trade associations and manufacturers to achieve sustainable reductions in crime through design and other approaches to enable people to live in a safer society.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS TO MAKING MY HOME MORE SECURE?

Physical and visible deterrents give a criminal the first indication that the owner of the property has an awareness around security, and as a result the

criminal will often move on elsewhere and look for somewhere easier to break in to.

SO WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OF LOOKING AT MY SECURITY TO SEE IF IT NEEDS IMPROVING?

We recommend looking at your home security through what is called the "onion peeling principle," starting with the boundaries and working inwards towards the centre, considering the security of sheds, outbuildings, garages and the house and its contents.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT PROTECTING THE BOUNDARY OF MY PROPERTY?

Lower fences at the front of a property are better than high fences, as they allow

for 'natural vision' over them while not providing cover for someone hiding. However, at the rear and sides of a property, taller fencing is recommended in order to prevent easy access. Adding light trellises, thorny plants or a suitable anti-climb topping will make it difficult for anyone trying to climb over.

Ensure your boundary fences are in good condition. Planting along boundaries and fence lines acts as a powerful natural barrier to anyone trying to enter. Gravel driveways and paths are ideal at preventing a silent approach, as they will alert you to someone approaching the house.

CCTV can also alert you to someone getting inside your boundary if it is monitored, e.g. by being linked to a smartphone. 'Smart doorbells', such as Ring, alert you to callers to your property. A number of Secured by Design member companies supply the most recent technological innovations in this area.

DO YOU RECOMMEND USING OUTSIDE LIGHTING?

Thieves do not like to be seen, so an outdoor light operated by sensors will make intruders feel vulnerable and observed. Consider dusk to dawn lighting which illuminates areas such as the front, side and rear of your home as an option too.

WHAT SECURITY MEASURES SHOULD I TAKE AROUND OUTBUILDINGS?

People often pay less attention to garages, sheds and other outbuildings where they often store expensive equipment. However, these are vulnerable as they are generally not very secure and also contain tools with which the burglar can use to assist them to gain entry into a home.

You should ensure that all external outbuilding doors are of solid construction with suitable locks or a close shackle padlock and bar fitted. Consider fitting non-returnable screws or coach bolts to the hinges. Locks should be fitted to all windows.

Garage doors can be vulnerable and you can make them more secure by installing additional security, such as padlocks, to provide multiple locking points or using floor-mounted locking T-bars. If you have a door connecting the garage to the house, make sure this has the same level of security as your front door. Fit locks that meet BS 3621 and a

door that meets PAS 24: 2016.

Do not forget that ladders and tools left outside can be used to assist burglars to break into your home. Ensure they are well secured within a garage or shed.

SO HOW ABOUT MY HOUSE, SHOULD I CONSIDER AN ALARM?

Yes, fit a good intruder alarm system installed by a reputable dealer – there is guidance on the NSI and SSIAB accreditation for alarms on the SBD website (www.securedbydesign.com)

WHAT SHOULD I BE CONSIDERING IN TERMS OF DOORS?

When buying a new a door it is better to buy a new ‘door set’ – the complete assembled frame and door, certified to British Standard PAS 24-1 ‘Doors of Enhanced Security’.

If refurbishing a door check that the frame is firmly fixed and sturdy. If it is weak or rotten, replace it. Check that the door hinges are sturdy and secured with strong, long screws. For added security fit hinge bolts or security

hinges. These help to reinforce the hinge side of a door against force and protect the hinge if your door opens outwards.

If fitting locks to a standard wooden door, fit a five-lever mortise lock plus a night latch or rim lock both tested to BS 3621 – these are a minimum insurance requirement. If your door is PVCu or composite then it should be fitted with a multipoint lock meeting BS 3621.

Always fit patio doors that are security accredited to standard PAS24:2016. And most importantly, always remember to use the locks correctly! Double-lock PVC-U and multi-point locking doors – lift the handle and turn and remove the key.

WHAT DO YOU ADVISE WHEN IT COMES TO WINDOWS?

If you are buying new windows or installing windows, always consider a security accredited product made to standard PAS24:2016, as it will be tested to British standards and thus will be insurance approved.



Window locks are essential on ground floors and above flat roofs. They can be retrofitted to many windows.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

The Secured by Design website lists products that have achieved the rigorous Police Preferred Specification standards that are sufficiently robust to resist physical attack by casual and opportunistic burglars. Having robust, accredited products also means they will require less maintenance, repair and replacement.

Doug Skins is development officer at Secured By Design

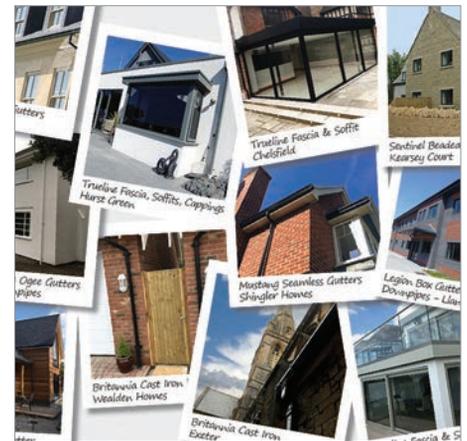
Win One of Five Google Home Devices (worth £129.00)

ARP Ltd has announced the launch of its photo competition. All you need to do is take some quality images of any ARP products which have been fitted and send them into ARP. Products can be gutters, fascias and soffits, copings, other bespoke pressings and downpipes in either aluminium or cast iron.

Winners will be chosen based on the best images and all those who enter will receive a free thermal mug as a thank you (while stocks last). The competition will run until 14th December, with two Google home devices being won in October, two in November and one in December, giving you plenty of time to get your images in. Full terms and conditions and entry details can be found on the ARP website.

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Viessmann awarded Which? Best Buy status

Viessmann has secured a Which? Best Buy status for its six most popular Vitodens gas boilers for the second year in succession. The annual survey by Which? – the UK’s largest consumer organisation – conducts robust research in order to “reveal the boiler brands you can trust.” Viessmann is also one of only two boiler brands to score five stars for reliability, customer satisfaction, and engineers’ recommendations. In the overall brand assessment – based on reliability, customers’ scores, and the expert views of engineers – Viessmann scored second place in the table. Which? reports that the survey again resulted in “a huge difference in overall score between the best boiler brands and the worst.” Which? conducted the survey in May 2018, questioning just fewer than 12,000 boiler owners and 166 heating engineers who are registered Trusted Traders. The report stated that Viessmann’s boilers “have excellent build quality, are easy to repair and even non-incentivised heating engineers would recommend them.”

The six Which? ‘Best Buy’ boilers from Viessmann are: Vitodens 050-W 29 kW; Vitodens 100-W Combi 30 kW; Vitodens 100-W Open vent 26 kW; Vitodens 111-W DHW Storage 35 kW; Vitodens 200-W System 35 kW; Vitodens 200-W System 60 kW.

info-uk@viessmann.com





INTERIOR INSPIRATION: KITCHENS & APPLIANCES

The kitchen is more likely than ever to be the heart of every new self-build home. The fittings and appliances you choose says a lot about how you want this key living space to feel, as well as function.

1. The **Conker** kitchen table from **Loaf** is on trend with its bench-style seating and what appears to be a polished concrete top. This top is actually a tough resin, making it lightweight and easy to clean. The legs are made from sustainably sourced oak. The table is available in three sizes: medium (width 160 cm, £845), large (width 180 cm, £895) and extra large (width 220 cm, £995). www.loaf.com

2. The **Marletti Antracite Gloos** kitchen from **B&Q** comes with integrated handles and is, says category manager Mike Lavers, "perfect for adding a bold style and extremely modern feel to you space." The kitchen also comes in white, giving you flexibility to mix and match the colours for a unique style. A basic eight-unit galley kitchen costs £1,072. www.diy.com

3. The **Moda CD3** bar stool stands at 75 cm high, making it perfect for kitchen breakfast bars and islands. The stool is available in an array of finishes, including three metal finishes and either black or natural Beech wood. The design takes inspiration from contemporary Scandinavian furniture. The stool is available for £99 from **Cult Furniture**. www.cultfurniture.com



4. This **Signature** grey wine rack/glass storage cabinet is manufactured using solid wood. The grey limed top is hand-distressed by skilled craftsmen and is painted using **Wooden Furniture Store's** six stage paint process. The unit also features distressed bronzed hardware which complements the style and gives the cabinet a warm and homely quality. The cabinet is priced at £299. www.wooden-furniture-store.co.uk

5. **ESSE's** new **990 ELX** incorporates a three-zone induction hotplate for instant heat and a large 'plancha'-style steel hotplate. It can be used in any kitchen with a double plug socket and can be positioned almost anywhere, including as a free-standing island unit. The 990 ELX is priced at £7,950 and available in 20 colours including matt finishes. www.esse.com



6. Following the success of the Essence colours bathroom range, **GROHE's** **Essence L-spout** kitchen taps are now available in the same popular 10 colours. The range is offered in two tap designs; a half inch L-spout mixer, and an L-spout pull-out spray model. It's designed to add a touch of luxury aesthetic as well as practicality for cleaning and food preparation. www.grohe.co.uk



Create the Scandinavian style with Keller



Keller Kitchens' latest model, GL5100, embraces the Scandinavian style. The simplicity of the style provides a blank palette for homeowners to add the colour scheme of their choice, whether that's cool pastels or bold hues on the walls or the cabinets. The sleek GL5100 handleless units come in both a silk gloss lacquer and a structured lacquer. Each cabinet is available in muted tones such as Ice, White, Blossom, Magnolia, Loam, Shell, Clay, Mocha and Basalt from the Master Collection; bold colours from the Trend Collection, including Yellow Gold, Powder Pink, Ruby Blush, Botanic Green and Midnight Blue; and 1,950 NCS colours from the Comfort Collection.

www.kellerkitchens.com

London Kitchen Store showcases BLANCO UK



London-based kitchen retailer, London Kitchen Store, first opened its doors in the arches beneath Vauxhall train station in 2000. The innovative group now comprises three impressive showrooms; the newly-refurbished Vauxhall original, Surbiton (in 2004) and Fulham. Many world-leading brands comprise the portfolio; these include Dutch kitchen manufacturer, Keller Kitchens, and market leader in kitchen sinks and taps, **BLANCO UK**. David Haywood, Director of London Kitchen Store commented:

"BLANCO produces a good range of products which are robust and reliable. Following on from this, we committed to the BLANCO lighting range which has been just as successful for us."

www.blanco.co.uk

Unique Calacatta from COMPAC



This innovative worksurface from **COMPAC** makes it possible to decorate homes, apartments, hotels, restaurants, bars and public spaces with elegant overall compositions that transmit serenity and harmony imbued with personality and style. This is how Unique Calacatta transforms empty, silent spaces into unforgettable, living spaces. Architects and designers can specify Unique Calacatta for a wide range of projects with the confidence that every reference for this worksurface will be identical but different. The quality, the finish, the essence... never changes but the design of the veining is always unique. Unique Calacatta is especially appropriate for intensive use areas such as kitchens.

www.uniquecalacatta.com

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We offer mortgages throughout England, Wales and Scotland so get in touch with one of our trained Mortgage Advisors who offer advice free of charge.

01782 255000 www.thehanley.co.uk



BAKEHEART WOOD-FIRED COOKING STOVE

ESSE's new Bakeheart embodies everything we know about warmth and comfort in a compact cooking stove. Hand-built in the UK, the 5kW Bakeheart combines a graduated temperature cast-iron hotplate and 32-litre oven in an elegant upright stove engineered around a large glass-fronted firebox. With efficiency over 82% and an energy rating of A+, this clean-burning stove is approved to burn dry, seasoned wood in smoke control zones.

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Number 41 takes shape

Andy and Sarah Ball have made great strides on their sustainable Derby build since they last reported in *Selfbuilder + Homemaker*. Sarah updates on the recent progress.

When you left Number 41 the last time round, the one tonne steel reinforcement had just been lowered into position to hold up the first floor of the master bedroom at the back of the house and to create the lintel for the oversized glass doors on the ground floor.

Three months later, and Andy and I are pleased to report that the house is almost watertight. The superstructure is complete, the glazing is ordered and due in the next 10 days, the roof is on, and the rendering booked in.

We're continuing with our theme of building an energy efficient home, but using low-cost, traditional construction methods. The walls, now completed, are double skin breeze block with an overall span of 400 mm. Packed with insulation and drylined, they have a U-value 0.12

W/m²K, which is pretty good. Because there's so much glass – to create a light and airy living space – we are going triple glazed. This is designed to keep the temperature as even as possible.

On the south facing side there's a large triple track aluminium sliding door, spanning almost eight metres. Split into three equal sections, this also determines the layout of the open plan room by dividing it into the living, dining and kitchen areas. It's one of the most important decisions we've made, especially as it's on show both inside and out. The criteria for the decision was that it had to be able to divide into three, so we could open two thirds of the door. When shut, we wanted the thinnest frames possible, so the view out isn't obstructed.

We have plumped for AluK's Infinium glazing, manufactured by AluFoldDirect,

with black frames on the inside and out, it will give the illusion that they almost disappear. We're getting all the aluminium windows from them as well. The design at the front includes two very tall, thin windows, we have switched these to a curtain walling system to maintain this striking design feature. What's really impressive is that now the roof is on and ceilings are in place, we can see that even on the north facing side how much natural light will come in through the floor to ceiling glazing.

The weight of the glass is a big concern during the installation. Because it's a very tight site, there's no room for cranes, so most of the glass will have to be lifted by hand. We have been calculating the weights of the triple glazed units and working out how many extra bodies we will need on site when the glass gets delivered! We won't be able to do this with the very largest units, so we are looking at a glass lifting robot for the side glazing and rear doors.

The roof is fitted. It's a flat roof surrounded by a tall parapet, and it's big. The total area is almost 120 m². After much discussion we went for a 'cut to falls' insulation to give us the best combination of insulation and drainage. The insulation fits together like a jigsaw, with all the pieces numbered, creating the perfect run off for rain. The waterproofing layer is PVC single ply and is welded together. The roofing team from Proactive Flat Roofing picked some excellent weather to start the job, but the following day it was howling a gale on the roof as the effects of Storm Callum took hold. As you can imagine, this held them up, but it's all finished now.

It's a very neat way of creating a flat roof and has a 20-year warranty. It was important to us to have a flat roof, as we want to make the most of our solar PV. To start with, we will fit just enough to get the feed in tariff before it ends next March. Then we will wait until after we've moved in and installed battery storage before increasing the number of panels.

The final thing to complete to make the house watertight is the render. We are going for a stark white, in contrast to the black brick detailing, as a design feature. The black bricks look amazing already, and they should look even more striking when the render is complete. This is booked in for the end of November, so we will be watertight well before the winter.

But even without the render, Number 41 looks great. It's a proper house. It has walls, a roof and holes where the



windows will be. You can walk in through the 'front door' and walk into all the rooms. Much of the internal studwork has already been created and it makes it very easy to visualise what it will look like when its finally completed.

We have changed our minds on the layout of the master ensuite bathroom. The original design made it feel very cramped when we saw the layout of the studwork, so we have turned the shower 90 degrees to allow ourselves more floor area. One of the reasons we had to get the studwork up at this point was because the bath needs to be fitted very early on. It's a stone bath and sits directly onto the floor – the waste is fitted underneath. This means to complete the ceiling underneath, the bath needs installing first.

That all sounds pretty straightforward, but then take into consideration that the flooring has to be fitted before that! And under the flooring there's the underfloor heating. So we are now choosing tiles for the bathrooms, and we thought we still had a few months before that decision had to be made.

It's the details that take time. In hindsight, it's worth taking time at the start to walk through the plans and make



Because there's so much glass, we are going triple-glazed

any detailed decisions early on. It would have saved us time and cost of making changes during the build.

The internal doors were one of the decisions that was made very easily. We had seen an ad in this very magazine back in January from JB Kind Doors. I

had looked them up online and been on the website. The choice was vast, but we knew that to choose right we needed to see them for ourselves. The factory is only about 15 miles from our home, so I got in touch with the company, and we were able to see the complete range in the showroom. It took us less than half an hour to choose. Simon, the sales director came to talk to us as he was really interested in our self-build. He was able to give us some great advice. We have gone for something that's a design statement – a laminated dark grey walnut wood effect door the Alabama Cinza. We can't wait to see them fitted.

The knock-on effect of some of the clarifications and changes have put us about six weeks behind. Hopefully we will be able to make up some time now we will be inside. The next steps are the plumbing, electrics and heating. Then it's the flooring, skirtings and internal doors. Hopefully we will stay on track. Certainly, there are lots more decision to be made.

The original date for moving in was end of February. Now we would really love it if we could be in for Easter, so we will have our fingers firmly crossed over Christmas that we can make up some time.

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CASE STUDY

THREE IN A ROW

Despite settling down in their previous self-build home in a Herefordshire village, the opportunity to build a new one next door was too good to resist for Mark and Sharon Young. Roseanne Field reports



All images © Tom Glendinning Photography

The new four-bedroom house sits next door to the owners' previous self-build

OPPOSITE

The design combines a timber frame with modern elements

LOW POINT

"The previous house sale falling through, which brought us to a halt."

A lane in the small Herefordshire village of Preston Wynne, just north east of Hereford, is the location of not one but two homes built by Mark and Sharon Young. And this one makes it three in a row for this self-build-crazy couple.

Their new house sits on a plot adjacent to the last one they built, and is the third 'ideal home' they have built, intending to live in. "It kind of takes the 'once in a lifetime' away from it a bit!" Mark jokes.

Mark attributes his first foray into the world of self-building to his father, who was a builder. "I have always wanted to our own house, because you can build in value for yourself," he explains. "It was just something that I could see the vast benefits of – with a lot of hard work."

Mark bought the plot for his first build in 1998, at the age of 30. With a lot of help from his father, they built a home which Mark and his

family (including 20-year-old Harriet and 18-year-old Henry) lived in for five years, before they built a second house, into which they moved in 2003. "That was a significant project – it was an old cottage," says Mark. In hindsight, he believes working with an empty site is much easier: "You haven't got any clearance costs."

After living in the home for 13 years, Mark and Sharon got the itch to tackle a third build, and the acre and a half paddock next door – which they already owned – seemed the perfect site. He explains: "Large plots like this just don't come up. It was an opportunity too good to miss."

Mark was surprised to find that getting planning permission was an almost completely hassle-free process. "The previous one had horrendous problems, and it was effectively next door. The planners were difficult over everything," he says. Mark credits the lack of



problems this time to the recent changes which have put more pressure on local authorities to pass schemes: "They're now encouraged to allow builds," he says.

The only bump in the road was regarding planners' concerns over the scale and location of a separate office building that Mark wanted to erect on the site – from where he could run his business as an independent financial advisor. He explains: "The negotiation was around whether they would approve a one-and-a-half storey building on a smaller footprint, or a one-storey building with a larger footprint."

In the end, the planners decided to go with an L-shaped one-storey option in order to

have "less visual impact" – which pleased Mark as it was his preferred choice. Despite the slight hold up, Mark says he cannot fault the planners. "They were so helpful," he recalls. Although he credits the relatively stress-free experience to his previous dealings with planners, he is also a firm believer that you have to work with them, rather than fight them. "They've got a job to do and you've got to understand that. You have to try and find a centre ground," he says.

The design for the house was a collaborative process – Mark and Sharon worked closely with an architect he knew. "He did the Building Regulations on the last one," he says. Taylor Lane, who supplied the timber frame,



HIGH POINT

“Once the roof was done and it was all watertight.”

were also key to the design process. “They do all the engineering calculations,” he explains. “They tell you if something’s possible or not, calculate the truss requirements etc.”

THE BUILD BEGINS

The first major job to be tackled on site was the services. The biggest part of this was removing a transformer pole that was on the site. “We had to liaise with Western Power to get that removed and put all the supplies underground,” Mark explains.

Although engaging suppliers to run services to an empty site can often prove to be something of a headache, Mark says in his case, “they were all great.” All the underground work and the installation of a new transformer pole was taken care of. “I can’t speak highly enough of them,” Mark remarks. “Moving a transformer is a significant task.”

Mark and Sharon benefitted from a bit of serendipity, as the existing transformer pole was in need of replacement anyway. Along with their build, two other houses were going up nearby, and the pole wasn’t “up to standard.” It was therefore logical for it to be relocated and replaced at the same time.

Their site was home to some stables which had to be dismantled and reconstructed elsewhere. Groundworks – including the relocation of the pole – started onsite in June

This speed of construction is one of the reasons Mark had a preference for timber frame

2016, and by August they were ready for the construction of the timber frame.

The frame only took two weeks to erect. This speed of construction is one of the reasons they had a preference for timber frame, along with its insulation values. “Within two weeks the roof can be felted and you can start work internally,” he says.

Mark project managed the build himself – no mean feat given that he also runs his own business, but admits it is challenging: “It’s hard, because you’re totally reliant on people turning up, but it’s manageable!” He says working from home is a huge advantage however: “I’m onsite virtually the whole time. It makes a huge difference, I’m lucky.” However, should circumstances change, Mark is adamant he would still project manage. “The cost saving is significant,” he says, “but you have to be prepared that the project will probably



It was more cost-effective to have a mix of one bifold door (pictured right) and sliding glass doors elsewhere



take longer.”

The house was more or less ready for the family to move into in September 2017, although it took until July 2018 to be fully finished. Mark admits that ideally they would have left it longer before moving in, but were trying to sell the previous project.

Completing on their former home proved to be difficult. They were relying on the money raised from the sale to finish the current project, and so in April 2017 – once the scaffolding had been taken down from the new house – they put it on the market. It was at this point that they faced a big snag: “It sold within the first week – and then fell through,” Mark explains. “It had a negative effect on the finances.”

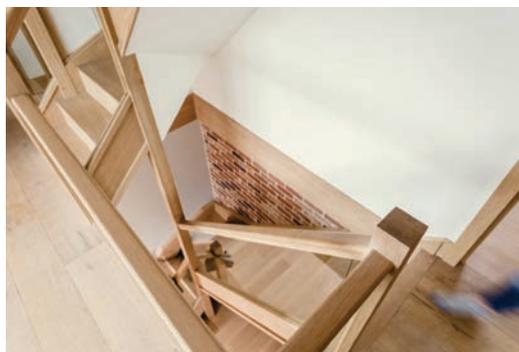
Other than this delay, Mark says there weren’t

any major problems, which he credits to his and Sharon’s previous experience. “I know where things are likely to go wrong,” he says.

A MODERN BLEND

The couple had a fairly clear idea of what they wanted the house to look like, and wanted a contrast with their previous home. “The last one was a traditional oak frame and this time, we wanted a more modern building with a slate roof and aluminium windows,” he explains.

They also wanted to install sustainable features; a 6,500 litre rainwater harvesting tank captures rainwater, which is then used to flush the toilets, as well as feeding the washing machine and an outside tap. Harvesting water is something Mark feels passionately about. “It



MARK'S TOP TIPS

- * Plan the windows, doors, kitchen and bathroom layouts at an early stage
- * Do a budget plan and add 20 per cent on to whatever you come to (or 25 even!)
- * Start making contact with local tradespeople as early as possible
- * Speak to other people who have done it. It makes a big difference if you've got a connection or know someone in the trade

should be mandatory in my opinion," he says. "Rainwater going off roofs into the ground is a total waste."

Solar panels supply their electricity, however heating (underfloor downstairs and in the master bedroom, radiators elsewhere) as well as hot water is provided by an oil boiler. In hindsight, Mark now regrets not installing ground source heating, but was put off at the time by the initial upfront cost.

One of the decisions he struggled most with was choosing the windows. "I spent months and months deliberating," he says. "We just couldn't decide on the style and manufacturer." In the end they decided to go with dark grey painted aluminium externally, and wood internally.

There had to be a change of plan on his original intent to have three bifold doors, due to cost. It was more cost-effective to have a mix of one bifold, to the dining area, and sliding doors elsewhere.

Upon entering the house, guests are immediately greeted by the oak staircase. To the left is the formal sitting room, featuring a wood burning stove, while behind the staircase is a TV room. A downstairs toilet is to the immediate right of the entrance. Next to that a door leads through to the large open plan kitchen/family room area – another of the family's key requirements for the design. Utility and garden rooms sit off the kitchen on the right hand side.

The downstairs features decorative oak beams, supplied by Border Oak, who had to work collaboratively with Taylor Lane on their installation, along with an oak porch and balcony leading off the master bedroom. Also upstairs are another three bedrooms, all of which (including the master) feature an ensuite wetroom. "It adds cost but it's worth it," says Mark. The main bedroom also features a separate dressing area, and the attic has been converted ready to house a fifth bedroom,

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

BATHROOMS / TAPS

Signature Interiors; Lusso Stone; Kudos shower screens

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should future occupants require it.

When it came to styling the interiors, Mark and Sharon wanted to keep things simple and modern. The bathrooms are all white, and the kitchen, featuring handle-less units, is "ultra modern, minimalist and plain," says Mark.

Outside, although there are still some minor jobs to finish, they have laid a patio all around the house, and the front has been planted and gravelled.

Mark admits that despite his experience, he did find himself caught out early on in the build. A downdraft extractor was installed in the kitchen, which was vented underground, and therefore had to be installed much earlier in the process than they were expecting. "You've got to know exactly what you're having in terms of design and location," he says. "You have to know the layout at a very early stage, much earlier than I seem to remember previously!" Other than this, due to considering things early on in the design, no major changes were necessary once the build began.

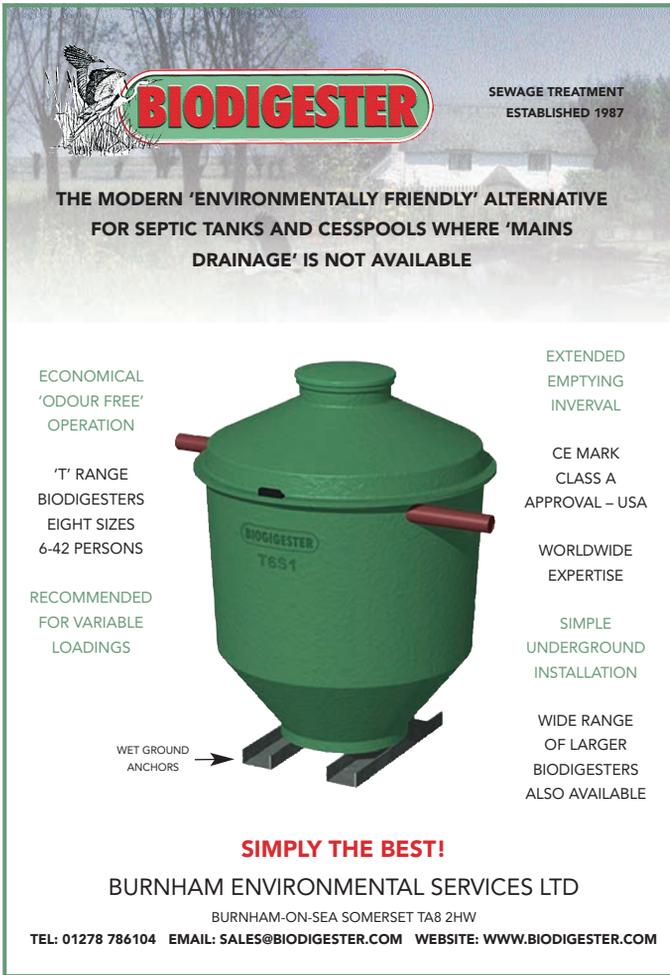
Overall, Mark's extremely happy with the finished product – and in particular, he's pleased how the house blends old and new. "It's a mix of traditional and modern and that has worked

out quite well," he says. His favourite features include the design's combination of rustic-looking brick with the modern grey windows and the oak beams. "A timber frame can be a bit boring and lacking character," he confesses. "The oak beams break up the monotony – it's warm. The mix of using both an oak supplier and timber frame supplier worked well."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

With Mark and Sharon's history as 'serial self-builders,' they're naturally not opposed to the idea of doing another project one day. "It doesn't phase me at all," he says. However, Mark admits there are downsides. He says: "It's hard trying to balance everything", and that it can be frustrating in a variety of ways. "Sometimes it's too much, you come back and people have misinterpreted your instructions, and you have to undo things."

After all the hard work, the plan is to stay where they are for now – as Mark explains, they have everything they need, including the bespoke office block. Plus, he says, "you need at least a year's rest!" Mark concludes: "It just takes over, but it's worth it. The financial gain and the sense of reward is significant." ■



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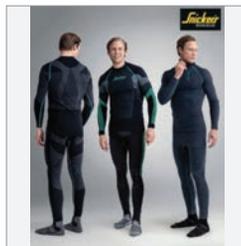
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Shingles made simple

Daniel Redfern of manufacturer Marley Eternit says that installing a timber shingle roof is not as hard as you might think, and offers a step-by-step guide

From summer houses and self-builds, through to holiday homes and heritage projects, the demand for a natural timber aesthetic means there is growing opportunity and demand for builders and roofers who can install shingles.

Although often thought of as a specialist roofing material, with the right tools shingles are actually very easy to fit and can be done by anyone who can fix roof tiles. However, the way that you install shingles and the type of ventilation required will depend on what type of underlay you use – non-breathable (traditional) or breathable (vapour-permeable).

This guide shows how simple it is to install shingles, using the ShingleFix staple system as an example, with two different underlay methods.

STEP 1A: NON-BREATHABLE UNDERLAY WITH 25 MM EAVES VENT SYSTEM

Install a continuous rafter roll, over a fascia ventilator and felt support tray, to direct airflow below the underlay into the roof space. Dress the underlay down to bottom edge of the felt support tray and fix using a self-adhesive tape. Then continue to install the underlay in the normal manner.

STEP 1B: VAPOUR PERMEABLE UNDERLAY WITH 25 MM EAVES VENT SYSTEM (BATTEN SPACE VENT)

This method does not require a continuous rafter roll. Instead install the felt support tray first, and fix the over-fascia ventilator over the top to direct airflow into the batten space, above the underlay and below the slates. Dress the underlay down to the bottom edge of the felt support tray, behind the over-fascia ventilator and fix using self-adhesive tape. Then install the underlay in the normal manner.

STEP 2A: NON-BREATHABLE UNDERLAY - BATTENS

Non-breathable underlay does not need to be counter battened. The position of the first batten should be the batten gauge plus half the thickness of the



batten. The batten gauge thereafter is based on the pitch of the roof.

STEP 2B: VP UNDERLAY WITH COUNTER BATTENS

Vapour permeable underlay needs to be counter battened to allow ventilation of the batten space above the underlay and below the shingles. The position of the first batten should be the batten gauge plus half the thickness of the batten. The batten gauge thereafter is based on the pitch of the roof.

STEP 3: SETTING OUT

When setting out the first course, care should be taken to ensure there is a

With the right tools, shingles are actually very easy to fit

minimum overhang of 38 mm at the verge and either a 38 mm overhang at the eaves, or if a gutter is to be used, at least the centre line of the gutter. A double course is required at the eaves



and a broken bond pattern should be maintained.

STEP 4: FIXING

Shingles should be twice nailed or stapled. You can use a 31 mm x 1.8 mm silicon bronze nail or stainless steel ring

shank nail, but it can be a much quicker method to use a product-specific staple with a Paslode gun. Fixings should be positioned 19 mm in from the edge of the shingle to avoid splitting and 38 mm up from the butt of the course above.

STEP 5: INSTALLATION

As there will be no visible roofing batten during the installation, use a chalk line to highlight the batten position to aid nailing/stapling in the correct position. Ensure the broken bond pattern is maintained throughout the roof and a 5 mm gap is left between each shingle.

STEP 6: RIDGES

When you reach the ridgeline, you will need to cut the shingles to maintain the 125 mm gauge – the shingles can be cut with a handsaw or by using a Stanley blade to score them. A double ridge course is required at the start of both verges and these should be fixed with a 45 mm x 2.65 mm nail, due to the thickness of shingles underneath.

STEP 7: FINISHING TOUCHES

Use the same gauge as the shingles at the ridge to give a more uniform appearance. This means ridges may need to be cut when they meet at the central point. A site formed decorative finishing piece can be installed in the centre of the ridge where the shingles meet.

Daniel Redfern is marketing campaign manager – residential roofing at Marley Eternit



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One of the world's largest construction manufacturers: **Simpson Strong-Tie**, has released a new catalogue of structural connectors, beads and meshes aimed squarely at the repair maintenance and improvement sector.

The 2018 'Builder and Plasterers Essentials' brochure includes all of the core products that the professional builder or plasterer reaches for when renovating or extending homes.

Simpsons' Sarah Greenway explains: "We wanted to provide something more accessible to the builders merchant. We spoke to our customers and they told us what they really like to see in the catalogue (and what they don't particularly need) and this is the result – a brochure focussed entirely on the things that matter to the RMI sector."

The lighter and easier to navigate brochure is available online from the Simpson Strong-Tie website, hard copies are available on request.

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The open and shut case for bi-folds

Homeowners are increasingly looking for glazed extensions, light-filled rooms and the additional space needed for versatile living. Steve Bromberg of Express Bi-folding Doors discusses why aluminium glazing products are the answer for opening up conservatory build plans

Providing that it's in keeping with the style of the build, installing a conservatory or orangery can dramatically improve the layout of a home – and add value. Conservatories can incorporate a choice of glazing fixtures, including roof lanterns, a fully glazed roof, and be framed with either bi-folding or sliding doors.

From a dining room to a sun room, the possibilities are endless. Adding another room in the form of a conservatory or orangery can add up to 10 per cent onto the value of a property, as well as creating a versatile living space.

Aluminium bi-folding doors are a strong choice to incorporate as part of a conservatory or orangery. They're renowned for their durability and functionality and even small or simple conservatories can benefit from bi-folding doors, completely transforming their appeal and increasing light and perceived space.

WHY ALUMINIUM?

Aluminium is one of the most durable options for conservatory glazing. It's worth checking the products you choose have Secured By Design accreditation, which means they have been rigorously tested to comply with police standards against break-ins.

One of the most eco-friendly metals, thermally broken aluminium is also incredibly durable, lightweight and versatile. Aluminium can also be powder coated in a choice of over 200 RAL colours to achieve the effect of timber or other materials, meaning you gain the benefits of a resilient, eco-friendly material but without the maintenance problems of natural materials like wood.

WHY CHOOSE BI-FOLDING OR SLIDING DOORS?

There are many benefits to using bi-



folding or sliding doors on a conservatory, as opposed to more traditional choices like French doors. For starters, bi-folding doors open up to 90 per cent of the aperture they're in, completely transforming how a conservatory is used during the warmer months. Recent advances in door design have also led to some options having frame sightlines of less than 40 mm, creating near-panoramic views between the indoors and out.

In terms of sliding options, lift and slide mechanisms are heavy-duty yet effortless to operate, as the door glides on lifted ball bearings. Some designs can also drop down into the track, so it locks in any open position – ideal for family gatherings.

CHOOSING BETWEEN BI-FOLDING AND SLIDING DOOR OPTIONS

First consider the amount of space you have to work with. If the space you have

Aluminium bi-folding doors are renowned for their durability as well as functionality

is less than four metres wide, then bi-folds might be the best option. With spaces of this size, bi-folds look much more impressive than sliding doors when open, creating a real wow-factor and transforming the space



completely. This helps open up the indoors to the garden or outdoor space, bridging the gap between the two.

However, it's important to remember that with bi-folding doors comes additional framework which may detract from a seamless view.

Sliding doors often look better when they're closed, because the large panels and minimal framework facilitate virtually uninterrupted views and a flood of light to enter the room. If the aperture that you have to work with is over four metres wide, sliding doors

may be the smarter option, although both do work well.

GLAZING DESIGNED WITH A PURPOSE

Installing an aluminium conservatory means you will not only enjoy the outdoors a little longer in the winter, but also throughout the summer, with specialist thermal glazing technology in the form of solar glass. The heat is kept inside the conservatory in the winter, and reflected away in the summer.

Self-cleaning glass is also a great option as it's virtually maintenance free. The

permanent self-cleaning coating uses UV light and rain to actively break down dirt that builds up on the surface of the glass, keeping the panels cleaner for longer.

With the wealth of options available, it's easy to create a solution that suits your build. The beauty of aluminium is not only its eco-friendly qualities, but also that you can fully customise the colour to suit the design requirements with over 200 RAL colours available.

Steve Bromberg is managing director of Express Bi-folding Doors



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Schueco's window viewed as 'go-to' solution



Originally launched in 2014, the AWS 70 SC outward-opening aluminium window from **Schueco UK** delivers Schueco's renowned 'build quality' at an economical price, a formula that has led to it being widely specified for domestic projects right across the country. Its versatility and excellent performance in use means that many specifiers now view the Schueco AWS 70 SC window as the 'go-to' solution for projects where high quality is paramount but budgets are tight. With a depth of 70 mm, slim sightlines from 63.5 mm (outer frame/vent) and a choice of five vent profiles offering optimum cost/size/weight options, Schueco AWS 70 SC is ideal for punched openings, ribbon windows and curtain walling.

mkinfobox@schueco.com www.schueco.co.uk

Wide-span Patio Doors



Patiomaster by **Framexpress** is one of the best PVCu, inline, sliding patio door systems on the market, with a full range of design options to suit all kinds of self-build and renovation projects. Configurations are available with up to four panes, making the doors great for wide-openings. There is a wide range of colours to choose from as well as a selection of hardware.

Security is superb too. The doors are manufactured with a 3-star cylinder lock, multipoint locking system, a patented interlock shootbolt system, a deadbolt and a dual-purpose anti-lift/sash stabilising trim. For further information, please visit the Framexpress website.

01952 581100 www.framexpress.co.uk



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Design flexibility & performance from Scotframe

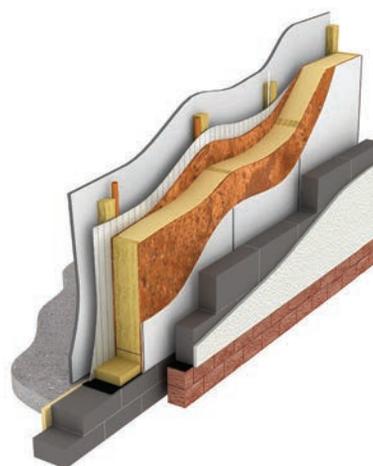
Val-U-Therm PLUS® wall panels achieve 0.08 W/m²K - probably the best U-value wall in the world. Couple this with Scotframe's expertise & track record and the sky really is the limit when it comes to design of buildings that tick all the boxes on your clients' wish lists.

Key to achieving this extraordinary performance is that the insulation is injected in off-site, quality-controlled factory conditions. The foam expands into every nook and cranny, providing a best-in-class BR443 U-value correction factor of zero. As well as excellent thermal insulation performance, details are available to minimise thermal bridging and give excellent airtight fabric levels.

The Scotframe Val-U-Therm® building system was originally launched in 2011 and has been used in over 8,500 homes with an excellent track record. A UK market leader in full timber frame packages for new housing and commercial projects, Scotframe exclusively offers the Val-U-Therm PLUS® closed panel building system. This is accepted by financial institutions, NHBC, Premier Guarantee and Checkmate - the panels have a 60-year minimum service life.

Because it's a hybrid of the best aspects of SIPS and timber frame technology, coupled with the latest advances in material science, it offers much flexibility and innovation in the design and build process. The unique combination of design opportunities includes:

- Can be used for walls, roofs and floors
- All types of design and architecture, even curved walls and roofs
- Can be thermally engineered to perform as an optimum combination
- Unrestricted elevational treatments – brick, stone, render, cladding, tile, timber, etc.
- All interior finishes and treatments
- Large-span roofs with vaulted ceilings, if required
- Dramatic open-plan layouts offering lifestyle flexibility
- Extensive glazed features and uninterrupted roof-space living areas
- BBA accredited building system,



including in-fill panels in other building systems

Couple this with its exceptional thermal performance and sustainability, Val-U-Therm PLUS® provides a straightforward and cost-effective way for architects to hit energy efficiency, air permeability and other environmental targets. It offers a fit-and-forget, future-proof solution, whatever level of environmental specifications are required – for example, 'A' rated Energy Performance Certificates, PassivHaus or the highest levels of energy saving and carbon neutrality.

The patented Val-U-Therm PLUS® is also inherently sustainable due to careful sourcing of raw materials with a minimal environmental impact. Scotframe's timber is sourced from FSC and PEFC sustainably managed forests and the insulation in Val-U-Therm PLUS® panels is based on renewable vegetable oil, has zero ozone depletion potential and is CFC, HFC and HCFC-free with a Global Warming Potential of less than 5. This means it has a BRE Green Guide A/A+ Rating – the same as straw bales or sheep wool yet is hydrophobic offering flood mitigation.

From the UK's first PassivHaus for rent (which won a Green Apple Award) to examples that significantly exceed the PassivHaus standard, Scotframe has been leading the way using Val-U-Therm® technology in energy efficient building for many years.

The Maryville PassivHaus delivered a total primary energy demand of 69 kWh/m²a (exceeding the PassivHaus

requirement of 120 kWh/m²a). This 'Fabric First' approach is also suitable for commercial buildings - the Rocking Horse Nursery at the University of Aberdeen, which caters for 78 pre-school children, achieved an air tightness of 0.475 ACH.

Hence Scotframe homes and buildings are warm and draught-proof in winter, cool and well ventilated in summer, healthy for all the family and enjoy remarkably low energy bills. Scotframe Val-U-Therm PLUS® allows the construction of typical family homes that can cost less than £95 a year to heat.

The great news is that building to these high standards is not necessarily more expensive or time consuming using Scotframe Val-U-Therm PLUS®. Edinburgh Napier University compared the cost per square metre of superstructure using 10 different building systems.

Scotframe Val-U-Therm® cost £1092 when built to PassivHaus standards, whilst the other nine systems ranged from £711 to £1138 when built only to existing Building Regulations. It took 65 days to build a Scotframe home to PassivHaus standards; the other 26 homes ranged from 49 to 126 days to build, again only to Building Regulations.

So, if you are looking to design a dream home or superlative building – think Scotframe Val-U-Therm PLUS®.

01467 624 440
www.scotframe.co.uk

A triple treat from VEKA Group

Industry-leading systems supplier VEKA Group has added three more strings to its bow, for the benefit of self-builders and homemakers. The Burnley-based PVC-U giant now offers perfectly colour-matched laminated mouldings, clip-on cills and a new, Halo large outerframe option via its network of customers.

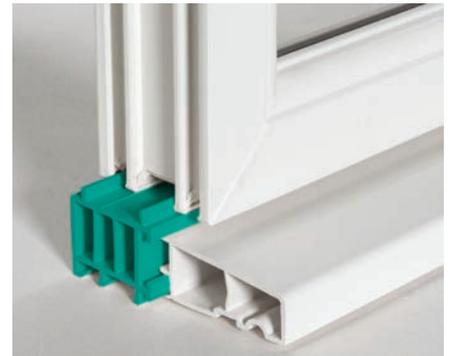
Marketing Director Dawn Stockell explains: "Earlier this year, we partnered with Allied Profiles to create a comprehensive laminated moulding offering that perfectly complements all the colours in our Variations range. Customers can order online for direct deliveries, so there's no need to visit a trade counter and, obviously, no longer any need to spray mouldings during fabrication.

"Secondly; knowing that construction sites can be hectic environments, with different tradespeople all trying to get their own part of the job completed, our new, two-part cill allows the 'nose' to be added at the end of the

installation, when the likelihood of it being damaged (and then re-ordered) is drastically reduced. It works with VEKA and Halo's chamfered and sculptured systems, plus is available in all 29 colours of the Variations collection to guarantee a flawless finish.

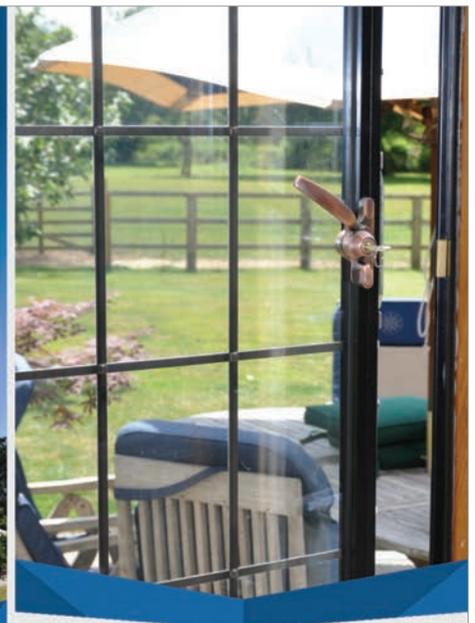
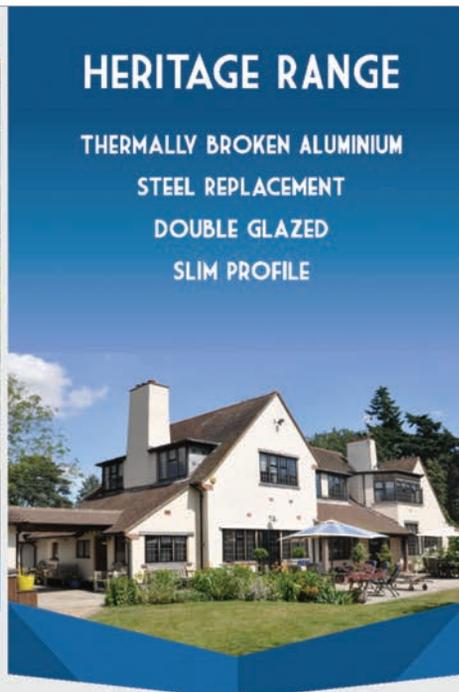
"Last, but not least, VEKA Group has also developed a large outerframe in order to help Halo customers achieve a perfectly professional finish on every project. The large outerframe allows more hinge-side plasterline clearance on residential doors without the addition of a 15mm frame extension and means there is no unsightly join line. It also means there are no additional stock items required as it uses the same reinforcing as in the 72mm outer. The minimum order quantity is just one pack, and all hardware used on the 72mm outerframe can also be used on the new 84mm outerframe.

As a large, and long-established company, VEKA is proud to be light



footed and adaptable to changing market trends. As such, as the last few years has seen demand grow drastically in specific areas, VEKA has, in turn, stepped up to the plate by adding Anthracite Grey Smooth to its ex-stock list this summer, as well as Cream to the Vertical Slider in both VEKA and Halo systems. All of these offer a perfect palette of options, whatever the project requires.

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Steel for Kitchen Kudos

'Metallics' will be everywhere, say interior trend experts. So, if you're revamping your kitchen, for glamour and elegance, you can't go wrong with 'on-trend' steel partitioning screens and windows. Rather than putting in a dividing wall, blocking-out light, a great alternative is installing an interior steel screen, which lets light flood-in. **Crittall** brings a further dimension to a kitchen through its minimalist style windows and its InnerVision glazed steel partitioning screens. Designed for modern living, they provide a sense of space and light with clean lines, subtle detailing, excellent technical properties. Elegantly slender, the slim steel framing, with single or double opening doors, is unobtrusive. The distinguished-looking installation makes a wonderful talking point. Natural illumination inside is maximised, while enhanced acoustic properties ensure privacy and reduced noise levels, without compromising on security. Chilly draughts are prevented, warmth kept-in for year-round comfort. InnerVision steel frames can be powder-coated to your choice of RAL or BS colours. Each screen is bespoke to your application - panel shape and size, single or double glazing, decorative or obscure glass. Natalie Benes, associate architect at Stiff+Trevillion comments: "Crittall windows are a great on-trend option if you want a light and airy feel with an industrial aesthetic. Their slender minimalist frames allow as much light as possible into a space."

01376 530800 www.crittall-windows.co.uk



New windows for period country home

Felley House is a period country home set in two acres of private land. Complete with an indoor pool room, five bedrooms and many additional reception rooms the property is more than striking – and boasts over 100 windows. So when replacement windows were required for the home it was no minor job. It was Paradise Windows in Nottingham that undertook the installation, electing to replace with PVCu **REHAU** TOTAL70 chamfered profiles in white. Z-section profiles were used in the manufacturing to facilitate fitting around the stone mullions present in certain windows at the home. Mark Millward, Managing Director at Paradise Windows, explained: "We installed a few windows using the TOTAL70 profile to ensure the style suited the property. When the owner saw the profiles installed he was very happy, and we continued with the project over a number of weekends to fit in with wider refurbishment work taking place on site at the same time. "Overall the project was very straight forward, and the windows were easy to install. I'd only ever recommend REHAU for a project like this due to the quality and ease to work with. I have been installing REHAU profiles for 25 years and I trust the product to meet all the required standards and provide the correct solution to the specification." Paradise Windows have since been commissioned to work on further projects for the customer, demonstrating the establishment of a successful relationship.

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Tackling timber humidity risk

Niall Crosson of Ecological Building Systems and Michael Foerster of pro clima discuss the need to ensure that unforeseen moisture trapped during timber builds can be released, avoiding damage over time

Timber construction is undergoing something of a renaissance in the UK, and it's easy to see why. Not only does timber provide design flexibility, it can also help to fast track your self-build project. And of course, it also offers a sustainable approach to creating new homes, utilising a renewable material that boasts both low embodied carbon, even post processing, and carbon lock-up through replanting.

However, timber construction is not without its challenges. In the wet UK climate, keeping structural timbers dry during the build phase of any project is virtually impossible. Rain, atmospheric moisture and high humidity are inevitable onsite, even during the summer months. As the project team races to get the building watertight, this moisture can become trapped, causing issues with damp and mould. The dark, dank conditions of damp timbers enclosed within a building's structure also create an ideal breeding ground for spores, which can form over time, potentially leading to rot over the course of the building's service life.

Climate is not the only culprit. Moisture from the drying of plaster and screeds can also lead to high humidity during construction, contributing to moisture-related damage to structural timbers and potentially reducing the service life of the property.

The good news is that these risks can be avoided with effective site management, and if appropriate materials are used within the building fabric during construction to enable gradual release of moisture to the outside. Indeed, specification of advanced construction materials and a best practice approach to quality control can ensure your new timber home is thermally efficient, moisture free and more comfortable thanks to improved air quality.

Snug Within was designed and built to Passivhaus standards
© Graham Drummond



TRAPPED MOISTURE ISSUES

While the vapour trapped may only represent relatively small amounts of moisture, its impact can be significant over a longer period of time. For example, trapped moisture can lead to issues with damp insulation, affecting the building's energy efficiency because the insulation does not perform to its designed capability. Around 90 per cent of all building failures are due to issues caused by moisture in some form, some of which may have penetrated the structural timbers before the building became watertight.

Often a vapour control layer (VCL) is seen as the catch-all remedy for managing moisture issues within a property but, if moisture has penetrated the structure during the construction phase, this can actually trap the moisture within the wall or roof build up.

This is because all 'vapour check'

While the vapour trapped may only represent small amounts of moisture, its impact can be significant

membranes may allow some moisture into the structure due to air leakage during construction, with the



combination of high humidity, drying screeds and plasters and cold temperatures creating moist conditions on site, especially if some or all of the build phase takes place over the winter months.

If the construction has limited drying potential to the outside, and the vapour control membrane does not then allow the moisture to 'back dry' to the interior when conditions allow during the warmer summer months, the moisture within the structure can become permanently trapped in the building envelope.

MEMBRANE SOLUTIONS

To address these issues, the most effective specification methodology is to select a membrane that hinders the transfer of moisture into the building fabric during periods of high relative humidity, thereby limiting the root cause.

It's also essential that the chosen membrane enables back diffusion of any moisture that does enter the structure, enabling it to escape to the inside of the building before it can cause structural damage. This is especially critical in scenarios where the exterior of the construction has limited drying capacity, such as where impervious layers like OSB or plywood are used on the outside.

At pro clima, we have created a term for this technology – 'hydrosafe' – and used this as a key element of the development of our airtightness membranes. One of these has recently achieved the Passivhaus Institute's highest ever rating for airtightness during tests for Passivhaus approval.

Hydrosafe technology ensures that the building envelope is much more forgiving because it provides humidity-variable moisture protection, particularly during the build phase when humidity levels are at their highest due to poured screeds and plastering. During periods of high relative humidity in the winter, when it is wet and cold outside and warmer and drier inside, the hydrosafe vapour check also provides excellent protection against condensation. Then, during the warmer summer months, when the relative humidity is lower,

hydrosafe technology provides enhanced back diffusion capacity, enabling any moisture in the structure to dry out to the interior rather than remaining trapped.

The technology is based on building physics data, which has been used to measure 'hydrosafe values'; a calculation to assess the vapour resistance of a humidity-variable vapour check at an average humidity of 70 per cent. For example, an average humidity of 70 per cent will be present if there is a humidity of 90 per cent inside the building and 50 per cent humidity on the opposite side of the vapour check, adjacent to the insulation between the rafters.

BEST PRACTICE

As timber-framed buildings continue to increase in popularity in the UK, self-builders are faced with the challenge of achieving a building envelope that delivers the benefits of airtightness without the risks of trapped moisture. There are a host of CPD seminars to support architects and construction professionals in squaring that circle.

Niall Crosson is group technical manager at Ecological Building Systems, and Michael Foerster is engineer head of applications technology at pro clima

Cembrit Plank brings life to bungalow



Water leaks are a distant memory for the owners of a bungalow in the Isle of Wight after **Cembrit Plank** was installed on the property to provide a new watertight cladding system. L J Teal Roofing Service was approached by the homeowners who were looking for a solution to fix a water ingress issue. Having heard about the recently launched Cembrit Plank, the contractor was confident that this weatherboard could provide a good cladding solution for the customer. Fibre

cement Cembrit Plank is low in maintenance, rot, rust, warp, crack, sun, heat, rain resistant, is non-combustible, providing a superior alternative to timber and plastic based alternatives.

sales@cembrit.co.uk

StrongFix - improved support from Norbord



SterlingOSB Zero StrongFix, from **Norbord**, is a precision engineered oriented strand board (OSB) with a special groove machined into the edge for metal C-studs at 600mm centres. SterlingOSB Zero is made from several layers of softwood strands, carefully layered and bonded under heat and pressure with a strong zero-formaldehyde resin to create a strong board. Superior to plywood, which contains knots, splits and cracks, OSB has a consistent density meaning you can attach fixings, hang

pictures or fit items of furniture securely anywhere on the panel. SterlingOSB Zero StrongFix is supplied in 18mm-thick, 2,400mm x 597mm panels with 50 sheets per pack.

www.norbord.co.uk

Simply stunning!

James Latham recently supplied 5m³ of super prime grade Walnut to one of its customers who have used it to create some spectacular doors as well as privacy screening for an outstanding, high-specification residential property in Lancashire.

The project has seen twenty-three 2.7m high doors manufactured and installed by specialist bespoke handcrafted joinery company, Woodside Designs of Blackpool.

Eleven of the doors are handle-less, incorporating grooves for handles, plus there are also 3D-hinges, and drop-down seals as well as top-end Swiss and German ironmongery throughout. In addition, a breath-taking, 'living' privacy screen has been created and framed in super prime Walnut which features lush foliage and dense greenery.

Carl Hulme, Timber Sales Representative for James Latham Leeds, who supplied the timber commented: "The colour of super prime solid Walnut boasts a unique earthy brown hue which varies between cinnamon and chocolate and it also finishes beautifully, giving an excellent decorative appearance due to its outstanding grain, colour and pattern. This coupled with the bespoke workmanship on both the doors and screens have produced an outstanding interior space." For more information, please visit the James Latham website.

www.lathamtimber.co.uk



NOV/DEC 2018

HEATING & RENEWABLE ENERGY SUPPLEMENT





Design is the cornerstone of the development process at **Dunsley**. Design alone is not enough to give you confidence to buy. You need the knowledge that the product has quality to match it; which is why each stove leaving Dunsley's factory is quality checked at each stage of production, ensuring that the product you purchase is a total delight for you.

The Highlander has been developed using the best burning technology to give you a stove with cleaner burn and high efficiencies of up to 84 per cent. The Air Wash System has been designed to keep the glass clean to give a full view of the superb flame pattern.

For further information, you can visit the Dunsley website or give the company a call.



By 2022, all newly designed wood burning stove appliances that are verified by HETAS must meet the new requirements to be cleaner and more efficient to help improve our environment through producing lower carbon emissions under the Stove Industry Alliance Eco Design Regulations.

Capital Fireplaces have recently introduced its new Barrington Eco Stove, one of the cleanest burning stoves on the market, Eco Ready and DEFRA approved for burning wood in smoke controlled areas. The Barrington Eco is available in Black and Warm White Enamel.

To view Capital Fireplaces full Eco range and locate a Showroom, visit the company's website.



Want to avoid ugly-looking radiators in your low energy home?

Why not use your MVHR ducting to supply warm air throughout the property, coupled with towel radiators in the wet rooms?

Solarcrest now offers new inline duct heaters that deliver warm air from a boiler – or cooled air too if connected to a heat pump!

To combine heating and cooling with fresh air ventilation, please give Solarcrest a call for more details.

Alternatively, you can visit the Solarcrest website to look at the company's whole range of products, as well as reviews and case studies.



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When specifying heating in domestic properties, underfloor heating (UFH) is increasingly seen as the system that offers the levels of energy efficiency and comfort required.

In design terms, UFH provides the added benefit that, unlike radiators, it does not have an impact on interior aesthetics and layouts.

This leaves just one perplexing issue; whether to opt for a wet (hydronic) system or an electric system. Both offer advantages and disadvantages. Whether wet or electric, UFH systems offer extraordinary levels of comfort to users and perform equally well.

For further information on **Gaia Climate Solutions**, please call or visit their website.



Clearview Stoves, a leading manufacturer of clean burning wood stoves, has been designing and manufacturing exceptional wood burning stoves since 1987.

The stoves are a joy to use with excellent controllability and a wonderful view of the flames behind large crystal clear glass.

They produce five times more heat from the same fuel as an open fire and burn so efficiently for long periods unattended there is no need for frequent cleaning.

For inspiration and to view the range in person, please visit one of Clearview Stoves' beautiful showrooms or one of its many stockists throughout the UK.



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Contact **Total Home** for a room-by-room heat loss calculation to see if this system is suitable for your home.



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The Dartmoor gas stove from **Yeoman Stoves** provides comfort and heat at the touch of a button, bringing instant luxury to any room.

This stove is available in both conventional and balanced flue versions, and features a wide range of styling options, including the choice of single or double doors and the option to remove the Tudor Rose door crosses if desired.

This impressive stove also comes as an electric model, which features the same cast iron door and heavy gauge steel body as the gas version, and can be operated via remote control.

Find your local retailer by visiting the Yeoman Stoves website.



Selfbuilders are always looking for the most energy efficient equipment to incorporate in their projects.

The **Wilo** family of small circulating pumps are as energy efficient as they come, saving up to 90 per cent of the energy used by some older and less advanced pumps. Take a close look at the Wilo Yonos-PICO – trusted by the heating and air conditioning trade.

More Wilo pumps are incorporated in combi and system boilers across Europe than any other brand of pump so take advantage of what boiler manufacturers already know.

Take a closer look at all they have to offer by visiting the Wilo website.



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Floor Heating Systems products are sold throughout the world under the company's brand name Varme.

The Varme brand covers our comprehensive range of underfloor heating and associated products, from the traditional electric cable and mat kits, to our wide range of water based systems including the new state of the art low profile water based Aqualay system.

All of the company's products are manufactured to the highest quality and its customer service is second to none. Why not give them a call and put them to the test.

For further information on Floor Heating Systems and Varme please visit their website.



When considering renovation or new build, then Isokern's Pumice Double Module system is highly recommended. The easy, put-together blocks provide a zero distance to combustibles due to their volcanic insulation and different range of diameters suitable for any project. The features include: Zero distance to combustibles on straight rendered chimneys; Quick and easy to assemble; Lightweight materials, easy to handle; Highly insulating pumice for better draw and minimum heat loss; Staggered joints for maximum safety and stability; Air gaps between outer casing and flue prevents surface staining; Good resistance to temperature variations and CE Certified to EN1858 with the designation T450, NI, D, 3, G (00). Visit **Schiedel's** website for more information.

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A natural insulator | Easy to install

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What's more, as a natural insulator, pumice is highly effective at keeping flue gases warm, while not transmitting heat to the outside.

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* According to Customer Satisfaction Survey 2017, carried out by GIM Ltd on Wilo customer data – 87.7% of Residential Installers & 83.6% of Commercial Installers stated that they would recommend Wilo to their colleagues.





Viessmann introduces new heat pumps

Viessmann has introduced two new air source heat pumps, the Vitocal 200-A and Vitocal 222-A, with innovative noise-reduction technology. Both operate so quietly that they are suitable for densely built-up areas such as terraced housing estates, and both have high energy efficiency with low operating costs. The Vitocal 200-A and 222-A are identical except that the 222-A has an integrated 220-litre domestic hot water cylinder. Both heat pumps feature Viessmann's new Advanced Acoustic Design. This combines a sound-optimised fan designed to harmonise the acoustic frequency range with intelligent speed control to reduce airborne noise at full- and partial-load operation. This effectively stifles the lower frequency sound of conventional heat pumps which can be perceived as disturbing. The result is that the pumps are barely audible: noise pressure in night mode at a distance of three is a mere 35 dB(A). Installation of the Vitocal 200-A and 222-A is easy. No minimum distance is required between the indoor and outdoor units, no refrigeration leak test is required because the cooling circuit is hermetically sealed, and no F-gas certificate is needed because the connecting pipes to the outdoor unit are filled with water.

info-uk@viessmann.com

Coloured rads – new options!



Radiator manufacturer **Stelrad** is leading the trend for coloured radiators here in the UK and Ireland.

For decades you could have radiators in 'any colour so long as they were white!'

Now Stelrad has a number of radiators available in colours from stock but also most of its radiators are available in up to 36 different colours with a reasonable order timeframe. Ideal for selfbuilders

looking for radiators that match or contrast with other décor in the home – take a closer look at all of the Stelrad products by visiting their website.

0844 543 6200 www.stelrad.com

Calor creates renewable energy ad campaign



Calor gas has launched an exciting new national advertising campaign that promotes its new BioLPG renewable gas, a fuel ideally suited to the rural self builder. The 'Karma' campaign features a print ad shot within the stunning vistas of Snowdonia, and also a ten-second video advert filmed at Black Lake. The BioLPG ads are part of a wider campaign, 'More than just Gas', which celebrates the joy of everyday life and the wide range of uses for Calor gas in the home. BioLPG, available

exclusively from Calor, is created from a mix of renewable and sustainably sourced raw materials. To view the video, go to Calor's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=48uE7o1UQnw

www.calor.co.uk



Far from being merely a source of heat, the Lotus range of woodburning stoves and fireplace inserts offer a stylish mode of expression in an exquisite and luxurious design! For more information visit www.lotusfires.com

Clean paint solutions from Crown Trade



As well as providing colour, paint should also provide protection which is why paint brand **Crown Trade** has extended its Clean Extreme range to offer specifiers a trio of high performance products to help combat the common problems of dirt, mould and bacteria. The water-based range offers three quick drying and low odour solutions to creating clean and hygienic surfaces and features Clean Extreme Anti-Bacterial Scrubbable Matt, Clean Extreme Stain Resistant Scrubbable

Matt and Clean Extreme Mould Inhibiting Scrubbable Matt. The full Clean Extreme range is also available in a high performance, stain-resistant, durable and washable Acrylic Eggshell mid sheen finish.

www.crownpaintspec.co.uk

Design service makes ventilation a breeze



National Ventilation has designed and supplied a whole house ventilation system to a two-storey home being built in Taunton, Somerset. National Ventilation worked with the owner and designer to create a system that would provide the correct levels of ventilation and physically work within the existing structure. National Ventilation's free design service includes unit calculations, a full kit list as well as recommended duct routes. Using project drawings, National Ventilation uses its specialist ventilation

equipment knowledge coupled with software programmes to specify the correctly sized ventilation units and the correct type and lengths of ducting – whilst ensuring a ventilation system meets Building Regulations.

01823 690 290 www.nationalventilation.co.uk

National Ventilation's IntelliSystem MVHR



National Ventilation has launched the Monsoon Energysaver™ IntelliSystem Heat Recovery Unit. Offering a smarter way to whole house ventilation, the IntelliSystem is a Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) unit that is near silent, has market-leading efficiency and offers easy control via its touch screen or wifi linked App. Designed to offer the ultimate MVHR solution in one unit, the IntelliSystem is ideal for self-builders and small developers.

Offering state-of-the-art controls the

IntelliSystem boasts both an easy-to-use App or touch screen controls. Households can simply download the IntelliSystem's free App onto their smartphones which enables simple control over their indoor air quality.

01823 690 290 www.nationalventilation.co.uk

Osmo UK expands range of wood adhesives



Osmo UK, an eco-friendly wood and finishes specialist, has expanded its range of wood adhesives with a new durable product developed for use in the home. Introducing the D3 Express Wood Adhesive, a ready to use water resistant adhesive that is specially formulated for use on interior and exterior wooden furniture and joinery. The hard-wearing formula of the D3 Express Wood Adhesive is suitable for gluing all types of wood. Developed not only to secure wood to wood, the versatile adhesive can fix

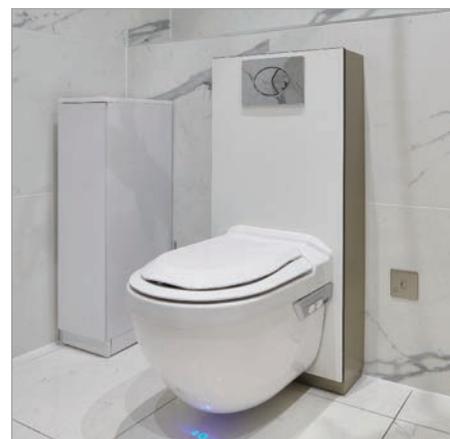
paper, cardboard, and textile-backed PVC to wood and board. For stockist details and more information on Osmo and its range of products and specialist finishes, you can visit their website.

www.osmouk.com

How a WC is helping one man get his privacy back

When electrician Kyle McAdam Whyte arranged to go out with friends four years ago, he little realised the consequences: it would involve him losing even his ability to go to the loo without help. The car in which he was passenger was involved in an accident, which left Kyle unconscious and with life-changing injuries. High level spinal damage has left him unable to do most things for himself – even daily activities such as going to the toilet. So, he has used some of his compensation to adapt his family home, and install the latest in smart toilet technology – a **Closomat Asana**. The contemporary, sleek wall-hung WC delivers what is claimed to be the ultimate in intimate care, by push button or remote control. Integrated douching and drying deliver hygienic and thorough cleaning. The user is left feeling fresh and dry without any need to wipe – or be wiped. Asana also offers unrivalled personalisation: the concealed cistern can be built into the wall, or hidden behind a choice of sleek back panels in a choice of finishes; operation can be via the integrated push buttons on the edge of the pan, remote control, or, if being used as a conventional WC, via a choice of smart flush devices. Asana is the latest evolution of smart toilets from one of the UK's brand leaders, Closomat. Kyle commented: "It looks much better than anything else like it on the market. Also, in my opinion, it washes and dries more effectively too. I feel much cleaner."

www.clos-o-mat.com 0161 969 1199



Helping self builders' sustainable spec

Many self-builders set out to build as sustainably as possible. When it comes to paint, one company specialises in sustainable specification but goes beyond that to deliver excellent performance and aesthetics. **Earthborn** uses carefully selected ingredients and technologically advanced manufacturing processes. No oils or acrylics means high breathability and no toxic emissions. Its range includes interior and exterior paints as well as specialist finishes for interior wood and furniture, wallpaper paste and primers.

Its flagship product is Claypaint, an exciting alternative to emulsion, which provides a distinctive, ultra matt finish with great covering power and performance. Containing no oils or acrylics, Claypaint is virtually VOC free and does not give off any toxic emissions. That means it is safer for the health of building occupants as well as the environment. It is Ecolabel approved.

Other Earthborn products include Ecopro Emulsions and Eggshell – high performance, low odour alternatives to conventional products and Ecopro silicate masonry system – a hardwearing, weatherproof, breathable alternative to modern masonry paints and traditional limewash.

Earthborn has an outstanding colour palette. Bespoke shades can be developed through its nationwide network of stockists.

01928 734 171 www.earthbornpaints.co.uk





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Perfect porcelain

The Stone & Ceramic Warehouse's Chris Grainger discusses the compelling benefits of porcelain floor tiles, from efficiency, cost and maintenance, to the ability to create a precise visual result

Choosing flooring for your new home is a big decision. While many love the look of natural stone flooring, it can be a big investment, from both a time and financial perspective. Modern advances in technology mean porcelain flooring can now offer all the aesthetic advantages of natural stone without the added headache.

MAINTENANCE & COST

Compared to natural stone floor tiles, porcelain has the advantage of being very easy to maintain, making it a great choice for domestic use. It's lightweight and doesn't stain, and prices tend to be lower than the equivalent stone. While ultimately it comes down to personal taste, porcelain can offer all the benefits of stone but without any of the maintenance.

Porcelain tiles are both virtually indestructible and stainproof, as well as being impervious to water, making them an ideal solution for kitchens and bathrooms. They also won't be damaged by detergents or any of the other chemicals we frequently expose our surfaces to.

AESTHETIC APPEAL

Another huge benefit of porcelain tiles is that they can now be manufactured in a wide range of realistic finishes, including marble, natural limestone, concrete and metallics. This makes it possible to achieve the look you want without the challenges and maintenance issues the real materials can bring.

For smaller, darker rooms, choosing light-coloured porcelain will help to enhance the light in a space, and using a large format tile will create the illusion of space. Recent technological advances have meant porcelain tiles are now available up to a massive 320 cm x 160 cm x 3-6 mm thick, which gives a

Porcelain tiles can be manufactured in a wide range of realistic finishes, such as marble

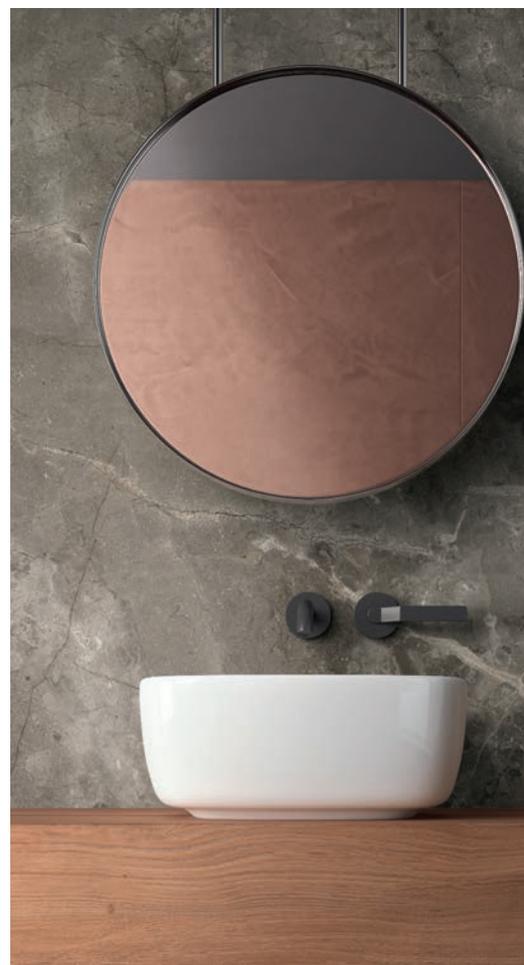
very impressive finish.

A particularly popular trend at the moment is marble-effect tiles, and using porcelain is a great way to bring this look into your home. Until recently, having a marble bathroom was a pipe dream for the average homeowner. It was a material only to be found in the world's finest hotels and luxury residences. Now, today's modern porcelain lookalike tiles are available at around a fifth of the price of natural marble – but how good are they really?

The appearance is perhaps the most important aspect in achieving the marble look, slabs of real marble are digitally scanned. Mineral impurities and unsightly blemishes (which occur in marble) are Photoshopped out and so with the help of modern technology you are left with an almost flawless, 'natural' marble pattern – the perfect 'Statuario Venato' that clients perceive and desire. As well as creating an exceptional look, this also allows for book-matching and it can be fixed so that the veins appear to run from tile to tile.

MANUFACTURING & INSTALLATION PROCESS

Another benefit of using porcelain is the process. Installing real marble slabs can





Porcelain tiles are both virtually indestructible and stainproof, as well as being impervious to water

be a long and costly process. Initially, the client would take a visit to a marble yard (either in the UK or abroad) to select the exact slabs of marble they desire. The stone mason would then visit the site to take a template of the areas of the bathroom where the marble is to be fixed.

They then return to the factory to cut, polish and trim the marble to match the

template using specialist machinery. Finally, a few weeks later a capable team would arrive to deliver the cut marble and fix it into place.

Looking at the modern porcelain option, as we know, digital technology means there is no fear of picking the 'wrong' piece, which makes the initial selection process a lot more straightforward. The porcelain tiles

weigh a lot less (around a quarter of the weight of natural marble) and at around 3-5 mm thick, they are much easier to handle. This means the actual slabs chosen are delivered direct to site, where the fitter cuts, polishes, trims and installs them. The whole process is lot more efficient, quicker and therefore also cheaper. Many manufacturers also keep their most popular porcelain tiles in stock, so they are available for immediate delivery.

Chris Grainger is managing director at The Stone & Ceramic Warehouse

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Relaunch of Tile Backer Board



Abacus Elements is well known as the go-to brand for waterproofing and wetroom solutions in the bathroom, creating innovative and flexible designs coupled with ultimate build quality. What sets the new Elements Backer Boards apart from the competition is the engineered quality; for "behind the tiles" security, there is simply nothing like it on the market. The key features of the board include insulating properties, exceptionally high compressive strength, and impressive environmental

credentials. The cost-effective Backer Board system is lightweight, easy to handle and cut, and ideal for application with electric underfloor heating.

sales@abacus-bathrooms.co.uk

Polyflor launches new Colonia Collection



Polyflor is delighted to reveal an exciting new Colonia range. The updated Colonia Collection features all 18 original shades with the introduction of eight brand new on trend designs. Following extensive design, trend and performance research each shade is carefully developed to complement a variety of residential interiors and reflect the current interior design trends, identified by the company's in-house design teams. With a 2.0mm gauge and a 0.2mm wear layer, Colonia has been constructed to withstand

the demands of busy lifestyles and engineered specifically for the residential sector including private housing, social housing, housebuilders and housing association.

0161 767 1111 www.polyflor.com

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The WF is available as a straight flight, quarter, and half turn and is made in solid hardwood.

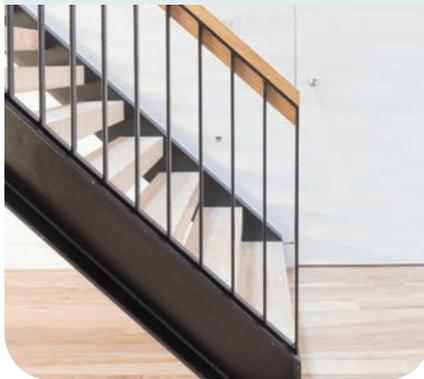
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www.fivestars.ltd.uk



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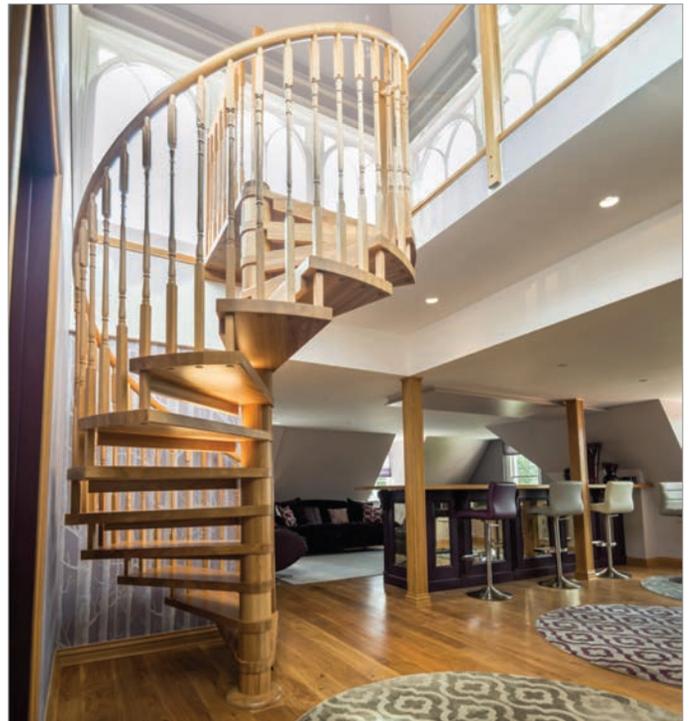


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