

Producer members

Producers offer mainland UK coverage unless otherwise stated

C&G Concrete Ltd 01780 482000

www.candgconcrete.co.uk (East Midlands)

CEMEX UK Materials Ltd 01932 568833

www.cemex.co.uk

CPI Mortars Ltd 0845 850 9090

www.euromix.com

Hanson Premix 0845 845 6699

www.hanson.biz

John Carr (Liverpool) Ltd 0151 2070067

(Liverpool)

Premier Mortars 0845 603 3406

www.marshalls.co.uk/premiermortars

RTU 02890 851441

www.rtu.co.uk (Belfast)

Remix Dry Mortar Ltd 01329 231200

www.remixdrymortar.co.uk

Roadstone Dublin Ltd 00 35 31 4041200

www.roadstone.ie (Dublin)

Smiths Concrete Ltd 01295 278177

www.smithsconcrete.co.uk (Oxfordshire)

Tarmac Limited 08701 116116

www.tarmac.co.uk

Dave Gordon

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Dave Gordon, 48, director of CEMEX UK mortars and screed business and a member of the MIA executive committee.

Described as a natural leader, a great team builder and business entrepreneur, Dave's likeable personality and great sense of humour cut across all boundaries.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife and young son.

Can we see the light at the end of the tunnel?



Number of new start builds is improving

While few in the mortar supply industry claim to have seen 'green shoots' when asked about the economy, there does seem to be a feeling that the fall in demand has at least bottomed out.

But is that the view elsewhere?

Director of economics and public affairs at the Mineral Products Association, Jerry McLaughlin, can see some light at the end of the tunnel:

'The prospects for mortar are one of the few positive trends in the sector. From a very low point, the housing market and housing starts are now improving, there is an increasing focus on building houses rather than flats, and government is actively supporting the sector. In the longer term the market will be underpinned by demand arising from rising population and household levels. Although economic and financial sector constraints suggest no prospects of a boom in housing activity, the trends are in the right direction.'

Editor of Housebuilder, Ben Roskrow, also felt we are coming out of recession: 'But as to whether this means better times ahead in the short term for business is a more complex question' he said. 'In my sector of interest, house building, there are clear signs of

recovery with visitor numbers up, reservations up, cancellations down and new sites opening. However this recovery is uncertain and fragile and cannot be relied on as a clear indicator of better times ahead. Rising unemployment, a difficult mortgage market, the artificial impact on the market of HomeBuy Direct and Kickstart and a looming election, all suggest the road ahead will be bumpy. But hey, at least we are not still in the nightmare of 12 months ago! And in the long run, we desperately need housing – so hang on tight.'

Even if prospects for business ahead look a little brighter, MIA members have already begun to voice their fears about industry job losses. One reports that a bricklaying contractor in the Midlands is 65 per cent down on the number of bricklayers employed compared to a year ago. This can only be damaging to any recovery because many of those former brickies may well have found other jobs, again leaving the construction and building industries short of trained craftsmen.

'Even in these tough economic times,' says MIA marketing panel chairman, Dave Stewart, 'we must try and protect industry skills otherwise recovery will be even more difficult to achieve.'

CEMEX had special mortars in store for Asda at Rugby



The dry mortar silos on site at Rugby

Over 600 tonnes of dry silo mortar was supplied by CEMEX to contractors, Online Brickwork, to build an Asda supermarket in the town centre of Rugby, Warwickshire.

The store is the first major supermarket in the town centre. Additionally, the retail complex houses 16 further retail outlets, 440 car parking spaces and provides an estimated 600 jobs for the local community.

CEMEX provided three different coloured mortars: natural and two shades exclusive to the contract. For the main building work, the appropriately named Asda Golden Brown

mortar has been matched, at the request of the architects, to the bricks. The second exclusive shade, Tudor Brown mortar, involved delivery of a small quantity in bags for brickwork close to an existing building.

Factory produced dry silo mortar has many advantages over mortar mixed on site. Main ones are the exact colour matching as in this contract, consistent quality of product and less wastage than with traditional mortar.

CEMEX UK commissioned a new mortar factory in Braintree in Essex in 2008 that represented a £6 million investment.

Brick has top environmental rating

Forget 'brick is beautiful'. Ignore its popularity with house buyers, designers and planners. Brick as a modern building material now stands firmly on its environmental credentials alone. In the BRE *Green guide to specification* the material has been given the highest possible accreditation – A+ – for every external wall rated containing brickwork.



Brick – excellent environmental credentials

And, says the Brick Development Association, a square metre of brickwork produces 28 kg of carbon dioxide by the time it is delivered to site – or just 0.0001867 tonnes per square metre a year, on an 150 year service life, although the lifespan of brick extends well beyond that.

For more information on the guide, go to www.thegreenguide.org.uk.

British expert advises on Belgrade Embassy refurbishment

MIA associate member, consulting engineers Neil Beningfield and Associates, has been advising on the refurbishment of the British Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia.

Dr Beningfield, was asked two years ago to diagnose the reasons for the poor appearance, cracking and loosening of the building's render, in the first instance using only a file of photographs. Following an initial diagnosis he was asked to visit the building and has subsequently made several visits to the embassy – built in the 1920s in the style of British architect Edwin Lutyens – and advised

on the removal of some 800 m² of render, replacing it with a three-coat render system based on special binders.

Refurbishment was supervised by multidisciplinary practice, Ridge Associates while the main contractor was Orostream International.

Dr Beningfield is chairman of British Standard committee B/519/2, mortar and principal UK expert to European Technical Committee CEN TC/125/WG2.



**mortar
industry
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MIA is part of the Mineral Products Association, the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, lime, mortar and silica sand industries