

'PERFECT CORNERS' AND SO MUCH MORE AT MASTERFRAME.

Visiting Masterframe at Witham in Essex, Glass News' Editor, Chris Champion, learns about high quality box sashes and about Timberweld® and the opportunities it brings to the market.

"Quality and service outweigh the importance of quantity," says Masterframe's Alan Burgess, "We fabricate around 200 box sashes each week and pride ourselves on the product being, arguably, the best on the market."

The Masterframe box sash has always been recognised as being of a very high quality but since the advent of Timberweld®, it has been taken to a different level. Now the whole look has been seriously enhanced by mimicking the traditional timber frame joint: now the PVC-U box sash has the timber look and makes it an even more serious contender for conservation projects. There is no doubt that a quality box sash is one thing but one crafted with perfect timber like joints is something else again. And that's where Timberweld® turns a high quality box sash into something that appears to have been created by a craftsman. Timberweld® is a patented method of fusion welding two sections together but hiding the welded seam behind a vertical butt joint. The appearance is the same as you'll see on original timber sash windows, vertical joints, just like timber. Masterframe has the exclusive license to manufacture sash windows using this method and all trade ranges now come standard with this technology.

Most butt joints in the market are open ended but the Timberweld® joint is completely sealed from the elements such that there are no open chambers whereby detritus, draughts, rain or bugs can find their way inside. It's clever stuff: both practical and extremely good looking and enhances the look such that it is perfect for conservation areas but also looks more than just good in contemporary developments, too.

It may seem strange that Alan Burgess and his team are content to specialise in sash windows, restricting themselves to a relatively low number of frames per week when they could easily widen the scope to casements windows of every kind.



Masterframe Chairman, Alan Burgess, and Carol Slade, Managing Director



Packed for delivery in Masterframe's own transport



Exclusive locking cam catch

"We have dedicated ourselves to the box sash window over some 30 years," says Alan Burgess. "With this specialism we surpass industry standards and are constantly setting new ones. We pride ourselves on being BBA accredited with all products CE marked and A rated as standard but still competitively priced."

Masterframe's range of windows are split into three distinctive collections. The Authentic Collection comes with authentic features such as original putty line details, traditional patented Timberweld® butt jointed corners, deep bottom rail, run through horns and a white wood foil finish as standard.

It is a competitively priced trade window and, although not as detailed as the Vintage



A Timberweld frame in the welder

Collection, it has a very high specification of standard features and hardware as well as a long list of optional features that can be chosen. The Heritage Collection adds features such as Secured by Design as standard and an exclusive staff bead outerframe design, while the Vintage Collection takes detailing to another level with chamfered sashes and staff bead options for both inside and outside, slim integral mullion, bespoke hardware and a 55mm deep sill as standard.

Although it is said that really can paint a thousand pictures that really is not the case with Masterframe's products. To appreciate the quality it has to be seen and, even better, have the details explained by someone who really knows the product. It's the little details that make the difference. A case in point is Masterframe's London Sash and Frame System. Ray Rabett, Technical & Compliance Director at Masterframe, explains: "We were first approached about this window style when a customer was replacing windows at Guildford High School. The existing sash windows were square internally, but arched externally, and there wasn't a solution on the market for a like-for-like replacement. We worked with them to deliver a solution for the project, but soon realised that this wasn't a one-off. There were plenty of buildings around the London area that had this window style."

Ramon Rabett has recently been refocused on his role as Technical and Compliance Director having temporarily headed up production, with Greg Ponds returning to Masterframe as Head of Production and recently being appointed Production Director. "These moves within the management team are important," said Managing Director Carol Slade. "With sales climbing by 19% in the last quarter of 2018 production, and the maintaining of our extremely high standards, is vital to both our customers and to Masterframe."

Joining Masterframe in 2002 as a Financial Consultant, Carol joined the board in 2008 to take on the responsibility of Operations, Finance and HR and, shortly after that took on the responsibility for Sales, too. With that overall knowledge of the business

and with her drive and energy it is not surprising that Alan Burgess has been happy to let her take the Managing Director role while he steps into the role of Group Chairman. However, Alan is not ready for the pipe and slippers just yet. His own drive and vision is what has taken Masterframe to where it is today and Timberweld® is very much his baby, and one of which he is rightly proud.

Timberweld® is an award winning product but is only one part of Masterframe's box sash window. The awards and accreditations speak volumes for the quality and service offered by the company. Twice winners of the Fabricator of the Year and of the NFA awards for Timber Alternative Company Fabricator/ Manufacturer and New Product of the year for Timberweld®. Numerous customer care and Energy Efficiency Awards as well as 25 WER Certificates including the first five ever issued. Masterframe had the first PVC-U sash to gain Secured By Design and have BBA certificates for the whole window... even the plant on Georgian Bars! They have ISO systems and process controls across the business and, not unexpectedly, CE marking for all standard products. However, Masterframe has not restricted Timberweld® to just themselves. They have licenced the use for other fabricators and raised the awareness of the aesthetically pleasing look of the timber like joint and there are now many fabricators that can produce that look for their frames. Alan Burgess is very open about the whole issue of licencing Timberweld® and he commented: "Timberweld® is patented



Straps aid the lifting of heavy box sashes



A London sash



Measure twice and cut once...



Those final finishing touches

"With this specialism we surpass industry standards and are constantly setting new ones. We pride ourselves on being BBA accredited with all products CE marked and A rated as standard but still competitively priced."

so fabricators can hold on until 2025 and then copy what Masterframe have done. However, why would they want to do that and let other fabricators steal a march on them? Although I say it myself, the whole look of Timberweld® is very appealing and to be able to have this authentic look inside and out is not a gimmick but a genuine replication of a timber joint in PVC-U. It is innovation such as this that will keep our industry progressing with better products to offer to homeowners, architects, housebuilders and so on. It makes PVC-U a real alternative to timber or aluminium in conservation projects and widens the scope for sales for installers and fabricators. Having the ability to be ahead of your opposition for the next 6 years until the patent runs out in 2025 has already made sense to a lot of people in the industry and we are happy to keep licencing people to use Timberweld® and gain a competitive advantage."

The watchword for Masterframe is quality and service. This is not unusual and it is one thing to say but, perhaps, harder to always do. Many companies outsource the making of sash windows to specialist companies and, when they do that, they expect the same high standards that they employ themselves. Masterframe is constantly looking at their own performance. Carol Slade comments. "Everyday we look at minor problems or customer feedback to improve our products or eliminate issues.

That's why we invented self-adhesive foam cill pads to prevent any chance of water ingress, foam baffles to reduce air infiltration, balance retaining clips to secure balances for life, two part pivot bars and even strapping for carry handles to make handling on site easier. As the UK's longest established company dedicated to PVC-U sash windows, we'll do what we can to help you win orders. If things don't quite go to plan, we really do help sort it out. We're just a phone call away."

And Alan makes a point: "Trusting any company with your client's order, you need to be certain they will deliver, on time and in full. You should always use

a dedicated sash manufacturer for two important reasons, firstly, if a company makes everything, they don't invest in bespoke solutions to overcome system weaknesses, nor do they offer anything other than standard solutions. Secondly, most casement fabricators actually sub contract their sash windows. You pay an extra margin for someone else to make your windows and that's why you need a manufacturer that will deliver on time and in full."

And where does Masterframe go from here? Carol Slade: "We have a wide network of approved installers for our Bygone Collection who have their own post codes



Greg Ponds shows the Timberweld frame



Programming for Timberweld



Frames awaiting packaging and final QA



Alan Burgess and Ramon Rabett show off the Timberweld



Factory view

and some excellent trade customers. Would we like more? Yes, and we're always ready to talk with companies. Although our sales are constantly increasing- quality and service comes first. Our 'perfect corners' with Timberweld® have opened doors to a number of very prestigious projects and working with specifiers and architects has become an important part of the business. However, we will keep innovating and improving. Within the next 2 years we will see Smart Ready Pro on vertical sliders and innovations such as the vacuum unit glass we showed at FIT with it's 0.2mm void will take us all forward."

There is little doubt that Masterframe's commitment to quality bodes well for their future and that of their customers.

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