



The Guild News

DECEMBER 2009

WHAT'S NEW

CATCH UP WITH EVENTS

HAVE YOUR SAY

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A Letter from the Chairman

As you are all aware the Guild is undergoing some pretty big changes of late after the resolutions that were voted on at this years AGM.

This change has been harder to accept for some than others and there has been a certain amount of resistance, some diehards have even been attempting to put a stick in the spokes of change. However, even in the face of this adversity the board has made giant leaps into the future and I for one am extremely proud of our achievements thus far. To demonstrate what we have accomplished and what is ongoing I have drawn up a list so that all the members can see what is happening and how we now stand.

We have:

- All new professional news letter
- New Certificates (See attached files. The Legal disclaimer for the reverse is being finalized)
- New plastic ID cards (ongoing) completion due mid December
- 18 plus new members
- Over £15,000 in the Bank
- New training programs
- A new training centre (Sure fire)
- Revamped and updated website (ongoing)
- An industry first; CRB checking for new members
- We have gained greater industry recognition from HETAS and CORGI this can be demonstrated by the equal status with NACS and the half page advert that HETAS has granted us in their upcoming productions.
- Greater industry respect (members wishing to join from other organizations and positive links being formed and bridges built)
- The ongoing formation of the Limited by Guarantee Company (as promised at the AGM This is being hampered by 2 members however)
- We have managed to secure the Guild as the hosts for the ESCHFOE 2013 (This is a huge achievement and is an honour)
- A massive reduction in Guild fees from £350.00 to £299.00 with no loss of benefits as promised at the AGM. Our policy as a board is to constantly evaluate the fees as membership grows and if things continue as they are then further reductions are likely in the future.
- Greater communication and transparency of the Board
- A new trade treaty between our UK Guild and the German Sweeping Guild which will bring massive discounts on sweeping equipment.

This is some what we have accomplished in just a few months, even with the negative efforts of third parties.

Any other ideas are very welcome and can be forwarded through Lawson Wight PR Trustee.

Yours faithfully

A Proud Chairman

Daniel Hodgson



GMS MEMBER PROFILE No. 6



David Wooffindin

How long have you been sweeping chimneys and how did you get started?

Sweeping Since 1994 needed the cash.

What first attracted you to the business?

The pleasure of working alone and having no hangers on (employees).

Is sweeping your full time business? If not, what else do you do?

Yes it is now, occasionally I fit stoves and liners.

Do you work alone? If not who helps you and how?

Yes except when training new members.

What did you do prior to chimney sweeping?

My wife and I ran a very successful hardware/DIY business until I had enough clients with the sweeping business to be independent. Then We packed in the 7day a week job in retail for 4/5days a week sweeping.

What do you find most frustrating about the industry?

Lack of recognition for chimney sweeps, although things are getting better now. Down right shoddy installations usually fitted by those that fit other types of fuelled appliances thinking that solid fuel is the same.

What do you like most about being a chimney sweep?

Freedom, more freedom.. Take time off when you like. Nice to see how other people have their homes and gardens.

What do you like least?

Stuck in traffic jams, seems to get worse by the week and when gas fitters turn round and say, what do you know, you are only a sweep.

What do you like to do when you are not working?

Relax in the pool, if it ever gets above freezing. Really, I enjoy gardening.

How long have you been involved with the Guild and why did you join?

Have been in the Guild since 1995, Uncle Les Mitchell said that to get anywhere in this profession you needed to belong to a professional body and the Guild had the City and Guilds 7641 then.

What is your most memorable sweeping experience?

I was once asked to sweep a 3 storey dwelling, having checked the stack (3pots) I proceeded to sweep estimating it would take 17 rods at 3ft. I was merrily putting on rod after rod something said stop and look outside, to my amazement the brush was on the pavement still attached to the rods. Scratching my head I thought look from another side of the house so around the back I trundled still scratching my head. Lo and behold, I discovered a pot on the flat roof of a single storey extension 3" away from the gable end that had the 3 pot stack on it. Moral to that one, look twice, all may not be what it seems. I do every time now.

How do you view the future of chimney sweeping and what do you think the role of chimney sweeps should be in the future?

I see the future role of chimney sweeps being very prominent as long as we stick together as one and keep pushing for more recognition in all the fuel industries with the need for sweeping and why. We have a lot of allies out there who can assist the industry

If you have any particular sweeping story or anecdote you'd like to share, then write it here.

I was about 7 when I visited my grandfather, while he was selling fresh vegetables on the market, he said to me, remember lad where there's muck there's money. Little did I know?

Dave lives and works in Barnsley, Yorkshire. One of the longer standing Guild members and he always has time to answer questions.

He puts in many hours a week working for the Guild and is very busy with training and education.

As if that weren't enough, he's also our treasurer.

Thanks Dave.

Ps. See the new courses on offer and the dates on page 5.

Guild Update

I have written this brief article to show all of the membership where the Guild now stands legally and why.

As we all know, it was voted on at this year's AGM that the Guild would have to be a Non profit (LTD by Guarantee Company). The reason for this action was to give each member an equal share of the Guild without personal liability. It is also needed to make the Board democratic and answerable to the members. The board have been working very hard to try to make this happen. Unfortunately Mr Russell has once again gone against the will of the membership and has not done as we all asked. Short of taking legal action it is only Mr Russell who can turn the Guild of Master Sweeps LTD in to a "By Guarantee" company as he is **still** listed as the Managing Director. In November Mr Russell re-listed himself as the Managing Director of the Guild on companies house despite our open and fair discussion and vote at the last AGM. It should be noted that this is the **second** time we have had to vote for this change and yet Mr Russell refuses to accept and acknowledge the will of the majority!

In order to proceed the Board have now opened a LTD by Guarantee company, "The Guild of Master Chimney Sweeps LTD by Guarantee" which we are using for the financial affairs of the Guild. This company already has over £15000 banked. Of course, no single person owns the company. It exists only for the interest of the members. This type of company has Trustees with legal obligations and they can come and go without too much administrative headache.

As a Limited by Guarantee company the individual Guild members will never be responsible for any shortfalls, income tax or debts accrued. Furthermore, it is not legally possible for any trustees to benefit financially from this type of company. This is **not** the case with the old LTD company. We will continue to operate under the name of The Guild of Master Sweeps.

The bank account requires 2 signatories so that no one person may control or have access to the funds. The signatories are Mr Daniel Hodgson, Mr David Woofindin and Mr Sascha Meding

The board is in possession of the majority of share certificates from the old LTD company. This means that irrelevant of Mr Russell listing the Guild logos to his LTD company, we are still within our rights to use them, as physical ownership of products and Logos belong to the share holders. In essence the directors of a company are supposed to run that company for the benefit of the share holders.

I am not sure what is going to happen with Mr Russell and the old Guild in the near future. From what I have been told it is likely that he will be sending you a letter of some type in the hope that you might take him back. That is a matter for the next AGM. I personally have great trust and respect in the membership and will abide by whatever the general consensus is.

Now that we have a legal company, we can set to work on the new rules, rules which are designed to safeguard the membership.

The board has also managed to reduce the fees this year by over £50.00 with a further reduction planned next year with no loss of benefits.

Finally I have personally proposed a rule at a Board of Trustees meeting that "No person may be a chairman of the Guild for more that 4 consecutive years" I believe that this will help the Guild move forward and will help prevent complacency. I will be putting this to the membership for approval.

I hope that this clears a few things up. It is unfortunate that a small handful of the old members have made such a big effort to prevent us from moving forward. Maybe if that energy had been put into something more constructive in the past, things might not have needed to change so drastically.

Yours faithfully

Daniel Hodgson

GMS Chairman





Thanks for the heads up Martin.

If anyone has any other items which may make your fellow sweeps life easier, please let me know. Lawson.

Martin's Warning

I am currently a target of an advertising company who claim to have had instructions from me for an advert.

I don't know for what media as I kept putting the phone down every time they demanded the money.

They had made an ad proof by taking extracts from my website as the proof that I have indeed asked for it.

I do not advertise anywhere other than Yell. com and yellow pages for paid adverts after once being taken in by a company, so I know I have not ordered an advert. However, once you have done an advert in one they all swoop in on you.

I think they rely on peoples forgetfulness or many people in an office to cause confusion to get the money.

The company in question is the forth one of recent claims but is the first one to now issue written demands for the money.

The company is Costello LTD in Manchester. Trading standards claim they are a legitimate company but told me to ask for the tape recording they claim to have of me asking for the advert. Trading standards also said that there are hundreds of companies like this trying to scam people.

Just thought would pass this on is case they are targeting chimney sweeps in general.

I will let you know how I get on.

Martin Lewis

Contacts



You may find this contact list useful for future reference, or possibly target practice

Daniel Hodgson, Chairman:	chimneysweep@blueyonder.co.uk	01708 860280
Sascha Meding, Vice Chairman:	info@1-2-cmasterchimneysweep.co.uk	0208 770 1630
David Wooffindin, Education & Treasurer	chimneyservices@o2.co.uk	01226 242357
Robert Hudson, Technical	distantlight2002@yahoo.com	01932 570470
Simon Llewellyn, Scottish Regional:	Simon@ablesweep.co.uk	01864 505124
Lawson Wight, Public Relations:	Lawson@camsweep.co.uk	01954 253315

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

SURE FIRE OFFER TRAINING FACILITY

Earlier this month Chairman, Daniel Hodgson along with Sascha Meding, Rob Hudson, Steve Borrowdale and Dave Wooffindin visited the new SURE FIRE training facility in Derbyshire. Owner, Mick Waulmsley is well known to some of the older Guild members and his son Stefan is a

Guild Member. The Guild contingent were very impressed with the facility and have arranged for some of our future training to be held there. Use of this facility will bring many benefits to the Guild as there are a number of different types of installations and chimneys available for practical work. Additionally, the classroom / theory facilities are first class.

The Board are very pleased

with the arrangements and hope this is the start of a mutually beneficial relationship.

Visit the Sure Fire website at: www.surefire.org.uk



TRAINING COURSES

3 NEW COURSES

Following a fair amount of planning and organization the Guild are very pleased to be able to offer the following training courses:

NEW SWEEPS TRAINING

This is the next opportunity for new or existing sweeps to undertake the Guild training course. It is mandatory for all those seeking to join. This excellent 2 day course combines a vast amount of theory with a good dose of practical. Candidates go on enter the Guild mentoring system before completing their assessment.

If you know of anyone who would like to become a chimney sweep or who is already sweeping but not registered with the Guild, this is the one

for them.

The next course is to be held at: **SURE FIRE, Unit E, Fairview Buildings, Heage Rd Industrial Estate, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3GH**

The course is on the **8th and 9th of February 2010.**

Please contact Guild Education Officer, **David Wooffindin** for more details and booking.

WORKING AT HEIGHTS COURSE

A must for anyone working at height and seeking to be safer as well as insurance compliant.

Simple - if you are qualified you get more work at better

rates.

The course is being run by our friends at **ABILITY**. You may remember their access systems from our trade shows.

It will also be held at the **SURE FIRE** facility on the **8th of March 2010.** Again, contact **Dave Wooffindin.**

PRESSURE TESTING and CCTV

Chimney testing will be a profitable growth area for years to come and may compliment your current business very nicely. Learn how to conduct tests correctly, produce proper reports and talk with others about marketing the service. **Book early.**

Held at **SURE FIRE** on **22nd March 2010.** Contact **Dave Wooffindin** to book.

“This is a major step for the Guild. These courses will set you apart from your competitors



Power Sweeping Experiences



Simon Lewellyn using at least 6 items of PPE

Chimney power sweeping I feel, is a wonderful, effective and impressive technique for removing soot, flaky tar and grime from the inside of chimneys. I have experienced the peaks and troughs first hand when the process was introduced. I liked the idea the moment I heard about it and embraced enthusiastically any information I could glean and attempted to put power sweeping into action. Not wishing to dwell too much on my failures, new sweeps might find it amusing, or even alarming, how I would attempt to power sweep in the early days. Firstly, button lock rods were unheard of, so I would use my 4ft, one inch universal joint rods. Secondly, I had never heard of a flail, this meant normal brushes were used! Just to cap it, the motor was a cumbersome mains powered drill. The results in the right sort of chimney were impressive having to learn over

inside the chimney, so power sweeping with button lock rods and a flail was like having to learn all over again. With time and practice I learnt to become sensitive to the tools and the way they respond when sweeping. To begin with I would often use force to negotiate a problem such as an adverse bend or masonry blockage. This was usually a mistake and would result in either weakening of rods or worse, breaking one. Now if I feel a potential problem I gently nudge it and or try rotating in a different direction. I never force the rods.

This system is great for shifting birds' nests. I'm not nearly as worn out at the end of the job and the whole thing is completed more quickly. I have removed nests from chimneys that are nearly 60ft! It can be worth while running a normal brush up afterwards just to feel if any debris remains.



A Selection of Simon's brushes / flails for power sweeping



enough. Unfortunately, I was constantly nursing wrist injuries when the brushes jammed and the drill kept rotating! $\frac{3}{4}$ inch rods would readily shear (this was a real nightmare)! Putting the drill into reverse when removing it from a rod was a constant headache in case the universal joints unwound. Thankfully those days are long gone largely due to the enterprise of Bob Russell and Martin Lewis, who both became my telephone mentors!

I know some sweeps have been trained in power sweeping and can offer probably more advice than me, but the whole thing has been a learning curve and these are really my thoughts and experiences rather than an absolute or correct way to power sweep a chimney.

One of my issues to begin with was not being able to 'feel' the chimney. Sweeping manually lets me know pretty much what was going on

I always wear Terry towelling gloves. These initially were a handicap since operating the button locks was very awkward. Again, with practice, it became second nature. The pay back for this perseverance in my view is enormous. I can guide rotating rods with my hand, thus softening the bend at the application end of the job rather than just pushing with the drill (rotating rods weaken on bends). I can nurture $\frac{1}{2}$ nylon rods through a 6 inch right angled bend into an unlined 10 inch plus chimney to a height exceeding 32ft.

A common question I'm asked is 'does power sweeping damage chimneys?' I really don't think so. There is more potential for trauma using normal rods and brushes forcefully in a weakened chimney than a spinning flail with nylon threads brushing the surface. Besides, in my view it does better job! Having said this I would be very guarded with a chimney that had crumbling soft dry lime mix liner, as I would if I were sweeping manually. As a rule I push the rods to the top first and power sweep only on the way down (unless I hit a bend). This saves time taking the drill on and off all the time. Each rod length I will sweep up and down three or four times. Apart from rotating cowls most are clean and the flail does an impressive job. I never use the drill on the high speed function, it's not necessary and the rods are only designed to rotate at 600rpm.

For a typical unlined chimney either through the top spigot of a stove or an open fire my choice flail would be 18 inches on a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

Power Sweeping (cont)

nylon lead rod, followed by a ¾ inch and then successive 7/8 inch rods. I will often reverse the drill when cleaning the gather. If the gather is very big I will at the end remove the ¾ inch rod and replace it with another nylon rod. The above sequence allows the working end to centralise in the chimney rather than being pressed up against one side.

With clay or Isokern type lined chimneys I simply alter the flail to the appropriate size.

When removing nests do away with the nylon rod and use initially a smaller flail and gently 'bump' the underside to dislodge the twigs. Increase the flail size as you progress. Pump mix lined chimneys I'm always cautious, if I am going to power sweep I will use nylon rods and a flail with thin nylon (3mm).

Flexible metal liners tend to clean up really well, even when they are tarry. Again only ever use nylon rods. Often I will use one of the purchased button lock flails, especially if there is a 5 inch nylon lead rod, followed by a ¾ inch and then successive 7/8 inch rods. I will often reverse the drill when cleaning the gather. If the gather is very big I will at the end remove the ¾ inch rod and replace it with another nylon rod. The above sequence allows the working end to centralise in the chimney rather than being pressed up against one side.

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Flexible metal liners tend to clean up really well, even when they are tarry. Again only ever use nylon rods. Often I will use one of the purchased button lock flails, especially if there is a 5 inch tee off a stove. I should point out I have had a bad experience with a rotten liner becoming entangled.

Over all I now power sweep about 70% of my jobs. Every now and then I find it refreshing to sweep manually, and then I really appreciate power sweeping! I am amazed at how much soot I can remove from a chimney power sweeping especially if it is a chimney I've been used to sweeping normally in the past. Customers are certainly impressed! Over all power sweeping is a very useful tool to have in your sweeping arsenal.

Points to ponder.

Always visually check the button when you connect the rods. Don't rely on the 'click', occasionally the button will 'click' without engaging fully. Which is fine going up but the rods may come apart on the way back down. I found out the hard way!

The ¾ inch rods are the most fragile. I have sheared several of them. This sounds quite off putting, but really it's more to do with appreciating what they are capable of. Or rather recognising their limitations. They will fail when forced to bend too much and rotate at the same time. You will notice an 'unnatural' curve, usually close to a joint. Stop using immediately! Any time you see this

take your glove off and feel the rod for warmth. A failing rod becomes hot. Mark it with tape so you don't use it again until it has been repaired.

When repairing ¾ inch rods use the blue Baileys rods.

Their polypropylene is noticeably thicker than the black rods.

Always use a new complete section of rod; I suggest buying a 4 foot rod and cutting it down to 3ft or 1m rather than trying to make a 3ft rod do. I have found once a rod has holes, these are potential weak points, especially when new holes are drilled. They can shear inside the coupling like paper tears along a perforated edge.

I have never had a 7/8 inch rod break, though some of mine are now becoming pretty thin. Only one nylon rod has broken when I tried to force it into a gather and it bent right over. Another became warm, so it is now marked and awaiting repair.

Wakefield Brushes sell 1m lengths of ½ inch nylon for £2.50!

Life becomes easier when repairing a rod if you make sure the button and the lock are in align at either end of the rod. Otherwise you are constantly twisting the rods unnecessarily when fastening them together. I use one drill for everything. A Bosch 24v rechargeable that rotates at 430 rpm and cost about £280. I have no experience of any others.

When it becomes cold again and temperatures drop below freezing I will bring my power sweeping rods indoors at night. I expect the cold will make them brittle and more prone to shearing.

Simon Lewellyn

"I now power sweep about 70% of my jobs"

"Don't rely on the click"



Power sweeping and fly fishing, - some common ground

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

Letters to the Editor

I am disappointed to report that no such letters have been received. Perhaps you have seen or read something in these pages which will prompt a response. I hear many opinions from Guild sweeps but very few of them make their way to my mail /letterbox. It really is the best way to voice your ideas, ask questions and provoke debate.

On a more jolly note I'd like to thank all of the contributors of articles to this edition of **The Guild Times**. I thought Simon Lewellyn's article on power sweeping was excellent. I read with great interest how Simon constructs his lead rod assembly for power sweeping. Some of you may know of my liking for fly fishing. When constructing a line for river fishing we often

build a tapered “leader” using separate lengths of line of gradually increasing breaking strain. Simon has used the same principle to spread the load through his rods whilst power sweeping. I know Simon does fish from time to time but doubt he has ever heard of a tapered leader let alone used one. Perhaps having demonstrated the usefulness, he will try one next time.

More News

GUILD WEBSITE

The Guild website received 4300 hits in October and an average of 3.5 pages were viewed. If you have a website, please try to make a prominent link to the Guild site. It is always the little things done collectively and well which make a difference. The Guild site will be receiving a facelift in the New Year. Any suggestions are most welcome.

MENTORING PROGRAMME

The Board would like to thank the following members for their work in mentoring / training the recent new members. It is not easy work but is usu-

ally rewarding. If you are asked to help the Guild in this way you really should consider it an honour. It is surprising what you can learn by teaching others.

Simon Lewellyn
Barry Chislett-Bruce
Gavin Cater
David Woofindin
Lawson Wight
Sascha Meding
Daniel Hodgson
Ben Hodgson

Please accept my apologies if I have missed you out. Please let me know. Likewise for the new members - next column.

NEW MEMBERS

Below is a list of new members who have recently become full Guild Members. If any of you would like to recount some of your experiences so far, I'd be pleased to hear from you.

Gary Atkins, Nr Ipswich
Mark Fisher, Bournemouth
Dave Cox, Oxford
Andrew Tennant, Helensburgh
Derek Millar, Hamilton
Stephan Bell, Nr Aberdeen
David Barnes, Nr Manchester
Chris Jones

A very warm welcome to you all. Well done for persevering and choosing the Guild.

David Moore on The Guild Training Programme



The Guild of Master Sweeps – 2 – Day Conference/course

Venue:

Thurrock Hotel, Essex

Date:

28th September 2009

My name is David Moore. I used to be a member of the Guild of Master Sweeps but found, after a while, I needed to take a different path.

I am the only independent sweep to have taken and passed the NVQ/ City & Guilds exam in Chimney Engineering. From this I have started doing lectures for several organisations on carbon monoxide awareness and health and safety issues concerning chimney sweeps.

Over the past nine months a lot has been happening in the chimney sweeping industry. Not only within the Guild of Master Sweeps but also NACS who have changed their directors and also my organisation, APICS, have undergone changes too.

All the organisations hopefully now seem to be moving towards a common goal of more openness and tolerance. So, I was very pleased when the Guild accepted my offer to deliver a presentation on PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). I asked for a copy of the course's health and safety policy which was sent to me, and what a surprise, the policy followed my presentation closely, which it should given the information was derived from the same source i.e. the internet.

On the day I wasn't too sure what to expect so I loaded up my van with my PowerPoint projector, my computer and my projection screen. I was pleasantly pleased to see a fully equipped conference room had been set up with a projector and screen in place so all I needed to do was plug in my memory stick containing the presentation. I was scheduled second on the agenda to speak. The presentation lasted an hour and a half and included some basic risk assessments too. The class listened intently and I took a number of questions at the end. I decided to stay for the rest of the day as I was intrigued to know what else the Guild was teaching. Later in the afternoon I was asked to give a short talk on vacuum cleaners as I've helped develop a vacuum cleaner with a company called Sturdy Vac. This company has also developed needlefelt filters for the Camvac similar to Technical Fabric's filters, I also talked about some other vacuums such as the BVC and the Numatic.

I must admit I arrived with a hint of trepidation but found a warm and open welcome and the day was very interesting. I would have liked to come back for the second day to see what sweeping techniques and equipment the Guild use, but work didn't permit, because let's be honest, most sweeps enjoy comparing sweeping techniques!

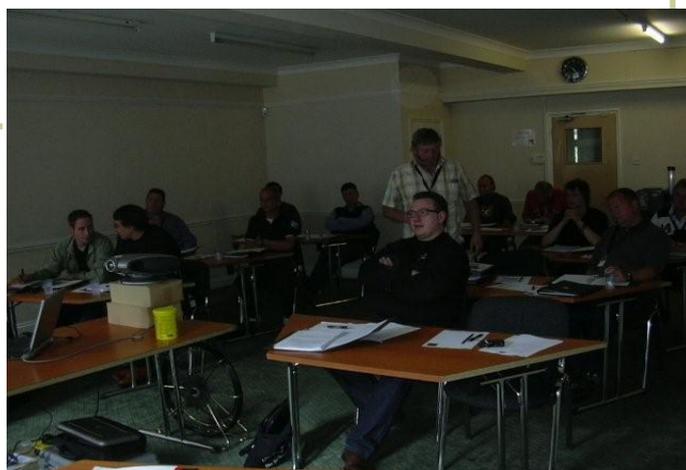
I was given a manual which I found informative and interesting and one of the things I found was the list of basic chimney sweep equipment which follows the same lines as all the other chimney sweep organisations I've had contact with.

All in all, a good day and I hope that more communication between other organisations can only improve the industry for all.

David Moore

Thanks to David for taking the time to tell us about the day. I believe there were eleven trainees on that course. I have mentored a couple of them since and their feedback is very good. David, you were mentioned personally.

Also in attendance were Training Officer Dave Wooffindin, Chairman, Dan Hodgson and Vice Chairman Sascha Meding. We owe them our thanks for their serious time and commitment to The Guild and the industry. Lawson.



C-Cap

C-Caps (UK) Limited

C-Caps (UK) Limited is a small specialist company based in the north east and run by local co-directors Michael Coates and Brian Clubley.

Dedicated entirely to the manufacture and supply of the 'C-Cap', the company takes immense pride in supplying a faultless, top-quality product throughout the UK, coupled with friendly and reliable service to ensure its customers get what they want, when they want it, and always at a highly competitive price.

"We're on duty virtually 24/7", says Michael "and it's surprising how many customers are too. Sometimes orders come in by e-mail well after midnight and early morning, although admittedly I might not pick them up until 8.00am!"

Of unique and innovative design, the C-Cap was launched exactly 10 years ago and immediately received a magnificent response from chimney sweeps, roofing contractors and others who brave the heights to maintain people's chimneys.



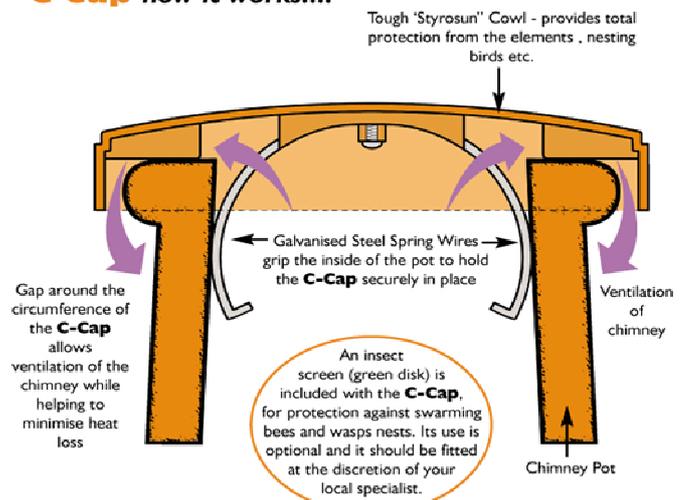
Made from a special plastic chosen for its immense toughness and UV resistance, the C-Cap is quick and easy to fit and is simple and light enough to allow several at a time to be carried up to the stack by ladder.

It guarantees 100% protection from everything Mother Nature can throw at it and tens of thousands are now fitted to grateful chimneys from Cornwall to Kent in the south and as far north as The Orkneys.

Fitted over the pot and retained securely by strong spring wires, the C-Cap prevents ingress of rain, hail and snow in all weather conditions, keeping the chimney dry, yet still allowing it to breathe.

There is even an insect screen supplied with each cap, which many customers with bee swarming problems wished they had known about before the chimney was invaded.

C-Cap how it works....



As Michael points out: "Across the UK there are millions of disused chimneys that ought to be capped off and GMS members have a huge opportunity to deal with these in the course of serving their present and future customers. It is a privilege to be associated with the Guild of Master Sweeps, and satisfying to contribute a product that helps members provide the highest standards of professional care in their work."

C-Caps are available from C-Caps (UK) Limited direct to members in boxes of 10, 20 and 30, in either terracotta or buff colour (or mixed boxes), However, members can buy in any quantity they want via various online suppliers listed on the company's website, www.chimneycap.co.uk

C-Caps (UK) Limited

Company Registration No. 3670859

Telephone: 01661 833233 Fax: 01661 834312 e-mail: info@chimneycap.co.uk

Hello from Kim Chimney



Powering Sweeping into the 21st Century with a sprinkling of Old-Fashioned Values makes our business Magical! Ramblings from the Heart of a chimney sweep's wife...

"Ooh, I LOVE your answering machine message, it's all twingly and magical and I had to call back just to hear it again", said a customer of ours recently. She then went on to recommend our service to all her friends and family and so business is beginning to flower and blossom from the seed of an innovative thought set by Kim about 18 months ago. Comments like this are commonplace to us now, and we are proud that we bring a little smile to the faces of those who contact us for our services.

When Kim decided to become a chimney sweep, it was from the perspective of having been a slave to office systems for over 20 years. At some stage, in between jobs, he had been a coalman, and loved it, but it was hard work. It seemed fitting that his thoughts would turn once

again to the comforting world of soot, coal and flame. He did extensive and investigative research into the best way forward and found the esteemed Guild of Master Sweeps and then it was 'all systems go!'

Kim and I work as a team, not just as husband and wife, but as business partners, too. With over 30 years experience in the Executive PA arena, I naturally fell into the role of Office Manager and Receptionist. However, I am also a writer and a natural 'medium' which means I can speak to and see things that are 'not there' (but that's another story). I've had this gift since I was 2 years old, by the way. This gift comes in very handy when dealing with all manner of situations, as I can naturally discern the 'good eggs' from the 'bad eggs' and steer us around the rocks in times of stormy seas!

Kim and I decided at the outset that we wanted our business to be people-oriented and we both hold dear to us the old-fashioned values, encompassing courtesy, respect and good manners. Both of us had been raised with influential grandmothers who imprinted upon us these fundamental teachings. In this day and age where it seems Customer Service is about anything BUT the customer, we were determined that our business would engender these values and bring something of the good old days to walk hand in hand with the technology of the modern world. You can have them working in unison, and it isn't necessary to forfeit one for the other!

Looking around at many businesses today, we notice a distinct and profound lack of the personal touch. A service that makes you feel as if you are a person and not just another addition to the Post-It Note Pile is about as rare as hen's teeth, as they say. Kim and I have experienced this lack of caring and unwillingness to take any personal responsibility so many times over the years and so have many of our friends. We have become so unimportant, in the corporate world, as feeling human beings, that we are greeted by any number of robotic labyrinths of telephone answering services, only then to be passed to some cocky 19 year old, fresh out of college, who only cares about commission and who is hell bent on 'following the script' and with no authority or personal autonomy whatever.

So, Mr Atkinson and I had a good heart to heart about how we wanted our business to grow, and decided that the only way forward for us was to combine Head with Heart. In other words, practical and down-to-earth Kim being the 'head' and I being the 'heart'. Well, it's a woman's prerogative, isn't it? He brings to the table his knowledge, excellent Guild training and modern technology and I bring vision, expansive interaction and fun ideas. And so it goes that every Kite that flies has to have a string and someone to hold onto it... so it doesn't fly so far as to disappear completely!

Businesses that have been founded on very patriarchal terms have become inflexible and rigid. Something vital has been lost along the way to fame and fortune and Kim and I both believe that what is missing is Heart and a little bit of the magical and fun side of life.

When either of us answers the telephone, it is with old-fashioned courtesy. Our customers are our lifeline, and as such deserve to be treated with respect and manners. Always, they are addressed as Mr or Mrs – never by their first names. Always, they are responded to immediately and if we are not home to answer the call, our promise is that we will get back to them within the hour. And as we have a pager service in action, we always do. I am proud of Kim in that he 'does what it says on the tin', and feedback from our clients is always positive and wonderful. They do say the best form of advertising is Word of Mouth, and so far, this is proving to be the case for us. Old ladies especially love my husband, for he



**“Kim and Jay,
combining
head with
heart**

Kim Chimney (cont)

is charming, polite and respectful.

There has been a quantum leap from the old ways of doing business to the new ways. Some would say it's all New Age nonsense, this touchy-feely stuff. But it works! We are proving it to be so. At an event Kim and I recently organised together with some dear friends, we held a Free Hugs Campaign (you can see this on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbMxDiK_4WA)). The energy of goodwill as the Milk of Human Kindness flowed was breathtakingly tangible. People want to be cared about, that much is evident. There is no earthly reason why this should not be incorporated into the business world, too.

Of course, I cannot write this piece without some mention of my childhood idol, Mary Poppins, who is a magical, mystical, no-nonsense caretaker of children in need. Mary's gift is that she sees beyond the norm in the world of Victorian rigidity and goes beyond what is deemed socially acceptable. She sees into the hearts of all, but not many people would see this as the film did not portray the full picture, evident in the actual books. I urge you to read one and see what I mean. I actually do have a parrot headed umbrella, which I take with me to businesses that are interested in using our services. Recently, we won the hearts, and the business of a major heating and wood-burning stove installer in our area, with Kim's practical demonstration and my engaging conversation (!) followed by at our departure, a little shake of the umbrella from out of which fell a few little golden stars. They were transfixed and later, the secretary called me to ask if I could do her one of my readings! Kim is now their 'preferred sweep' and we get most of their business prior to installations!

There are many ways to run a business and we would say that all of them are right for whomever is running them. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as the old saying goes, and this is true of business also. The success of your business is not measured by how many calls you have done in a week, but of how many hearts you have touched along the way, also. For these are the customers who will return to you time and again, just for the way you made them feel... and they will also remember that you did a damn good job of their chimney, too!

And so it would seem that the journey from coalman to sweep and all points in between has been one of lighting the fires in the hearts of all and warming the soul of human beings once more...

Now, where's that husband of mine? Spit-spot onto the next job Mr Atkinson!

With love and from the heart of our lovely business

Kim and Jay Atkinson
Trading as "Kim Chimney"

Thanks Jay. Jay is now acting as proof reader for Guild publications so thanks again.

Chimney sweeps are usually very independent and some are fairly eccentric. I would say this is partly due to the variety in their previous working lives. Many of us have been and done lots of different things before becoming chimney sweeps. This equips us with many useful skills for running our businesses. Hopefully, through the pages of this newsletter, you can begin see that if you are wanting in any area, there will certainly be another Guild member with answers for you. Just ask. If that doesn't work, ask someone else.

Board Meeting Report

Continuing the theme of open communication within the Guild here is the latest Board meeting report.

A Board meeting was held on 19th October . Daniel Hodgson kindly provided the facilities this time. Apologies for absence were received from Secretary, Frank Diment.

A barrister is reviewing our Rules of Membership. Further progress is not possible until the new Guild legal company is formed. Daniel has been advised that the best legal entity for the Guild is "Ltd by Guarantee" as this is the safest for the Guild's future. Jan Willoughby of Kim Chimney has kindly agreed to proof read Guild documents prior to publication. The disclaimer for the new certificates will be checked by a lawyer. Dave Woofindin has organized use of Sure Fire training facility with Mick Waulmsley. A proposal to put Sure Fire on to the Commercial partners section of the Guild website, as a thank you, was agreed. Working at heights and pressure testing courses are in the pipeline and being progressed by Dave Woofindin. A risk assessment will be made available (probably via website) to all members. The training manual is to be expanded. Reduction in annual subscriptions from £350 to £299 agreed. A discussion on new company formation followed. One of the old shareholders of the Guild has not returned his share. New rules - Members to go through a consultation period once the new rules are finalized. Daniel Hodgson proposed a rule that no individual can be chairman for more than a four year period. It was agreed to include this in the new rules. Board members are to submit any rules they feel are useful or required. Sascha Meding will organize the new ID cards with professional printers. We have been contacted by Innung Oberpfalz of Germany re. Training / education swaps.

Complaints were discussed. Lawson Wight suggested experienced members should be approached re. new sweep training.

Guild environmental policy was discussed. More eco information on website, use of FSC paper etc. Criminal Record Bureau checks to be made for all new applicants. A new non-discrimination policy will be drafted.

The next Board meeting will be on 11th Jan 2010. Please forward any agenda items you wish to be included.

Lawson

Old Stock Sale

We still have a number of 1/2 inch nylon button lock rods. It has been decided to reduce the price of these to £25 each in line with other retailers. Contact Dave Woofindin for further details.



Welcome Back Florian

Florian Pelz, pictured left, has returned to work in London after completing his national service in Germany.

He is one of a growing number of employee sweeps within the Guild.

