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## We're in this together...

**F**ighting talk or just a nice sound bite from a Simply Red track?

Having never been into doing sound bites I'm confident the contents of this newsletter will confirm that at Freefoam we view it as fighting talk not just empty words.

We've always believed that we are in this together with our customers and suppliers; we're all active stakeholders in getting it right.

And in today's tough market place that's the only way for us all to thrive.

Although we are moving into Spring, having had a strong first quarter, thanks in no small part to the kindness of the weather - there are signs of the tougher times ahead as we predicted in our winter issue. Our industry is operating on a background of cut backs, reduced building plans, and restricted maintenance programmes. Day to day, all of us face the impact of the general austerity measures that our Government has introduced. And then we all have to navigate our way through the very real problem of increasing costs on all fronts. Fuel, energy bills, rates, water, labour costs are on the upward trend. We can all see it happening right in front of us on the forecourts and with the readily available comparison sites on the web.

With PVC, it's more difficult as there is little or no visibility on how the cost for PVC is arrived at for the stockists or end users. There is so much scepticism and cynicism surrounding the true need for price increases in our industry it's hard to have a real conversation about it. To a degree that's understandable when you consider the stories of production plants being closed down along with fires & floods creating 'force majeure' situations in the supply chain. Throw in a few stories about the surging demand in China and you'd be forgiven for being a bit sceptical. For the record the graph shows the current trend in PVC costs and the very real challenge we're all facing.

Our commitment is that we'll face all these challenges together to create a win-win outcome whenever possible by only passing on price increases when they are needed based on our aim of maintaining our continuous investment programme. Which to date has enabled our customers to benefit from the development of Industry leading guarantees and innovative new products such as co-extruded gutter systems.

Stability is another theme within this newsletter, and in particular the importance of stable relationships within a business.

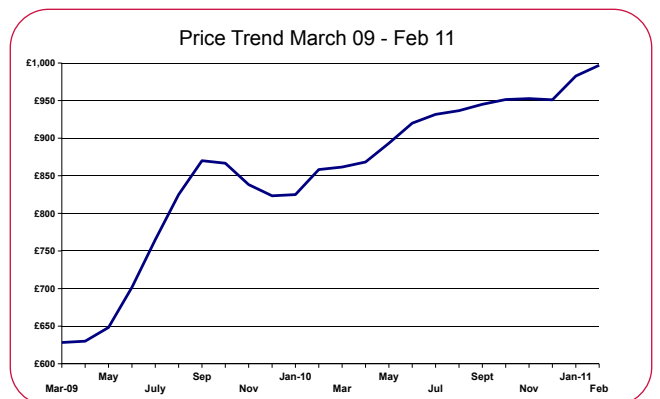
At Freefoam we've been blessed with some excellent suppliers and staff that have been with us for the long haul and it was a pleasure to acknowledge their contribution to our success at a recent get together.

Even more gratifying is to have all that you believe in, working with customers and stable relationships, acknowledged by a customer. Inside, we publish feedback we have received from one of our customers on the Freefoam Difference.

**George Petts, Wilmotts, Reading summed it up "Freefoam think in a different way".**

This feedback is so precious because it's what we're about. We believe there's no point in just providing the same service as everyone else, so we let our customers lead us to where they need us to be.

**We listen to you: that's the Freefoam Difference.**



## A listening Freefoam



Some of you may have noticed a small but significant change in the way our downpipe products are packaged. We have recently added a protective tape to all styles of downpipe in the Freeflow range, in addition to the existing plastic sleeve, which will protect the products all the way from factory to fitting.

The change was prompted by feedback from our customers that sometimes downpipes became scratched during transportation causing expensive wastage and frustration as installers often only discovered the problem during fitting.

Now you can be confident that all Freeflow downpipes will stay in the same perfect condition as they left our factory. Why not generate more sales by promoting this new feature to your customers like Shipley Building Plastics. Darren Clark explained "We are very impressed with the new packaging on pipes, and have had some positive comments from customers. We are now getting customers taking the Freeflow range who weren't previously, all due to the improved packaging - whoever came up with this idea needs a pat on the back!"



**“Whoever came up with this idea needs a pat on the back!” Darren Clark**

## Nu\*stock now taking the Freeflow Rainwater Systems



Established in 2002 Nu\*Stock Ltd is one of the largest independent stockists of maintenance free building products in the UK. Operating from four trade counters and with an active website they service a wide customer base in the north of England and Scotland.

Nu\*Stock wanted to change their rainwater supplier and were particularly looking for a company who could provide a high quality product with consistent distribution to all branches. Ray Stock, Managing Director explained "Basically we wanted to be sure we had stock on time and when we, and our customers, needed it" They were already stocking Freefoam fascia and soffit boards and had been pleased with the consistently high ratings for delivery and customer service.

Nu\*Stock, always aware of customers needs, wanted to be sure that any change would not cause problems. They initially put the range on trial in the Barnsley branch to test not just customer satisfaction but the whole Freefoam package from ordering to distribution. Following good feedback from users Nu\*stock felt comfortable rolling out the range to its other three branches.

Nu\*Stock are now holding the full Freefoam range, all colours and styles, including the Deep

range which is proving ideal for the Paisley branch. Ray Stock explained how the process went and what it means for his business "Customers have been delighted with the changes. We had been with our previous supplier for nine years so it was vital that the switch went smoothly. It's been amazing. Customers have actually made a point of contacting us to say how pleased they are with the product. They like the co-extrusion, the appearance, the red seals, which help make fitting easier and they love the taping to the downpipe."

Nu\*Stock's decision to stock the rainwater range also has wider benefits as Ray explained "It means we can now offer our customers the full roofline solution all with a 30 year guarantee. A strong offering making us streets ahead of the competition."

**“Customers have actually made a point of contacting us to say how pleased they are with the product” Ray Stock**

## You should be Clad all over



Following the successful introduction of a wider colour range on the double plank profile we are now extending these options to the weatherboard range too. This means that all profiles are now available in the full colour range including White, Colonial Blue, Argyll, Pale Gold, Pale Blue, Storm Grey and Sand.

To further help stockists and installers promote and sell the range we have also now introduced some new materials. Firstly a free standing display stand featuring the three different profiles in a range of colours and secondly a handy swatch in the double plank profile showing the colour range.

Louise Sanderson, UK Marketing Co-ordinator, comments "Freefoam is committed to supplying the right tools to help our customers sell the full Freefoam product range. With its embossed wood effect and range of subtle colours Fortex is a product that needs to be seen to be appreciated. We have designed the display stand and swatch to showcase the range to its best potential. We're delighted with the popularity of the range to date and confident that these tools will increase awareness and sales of this innovative product"

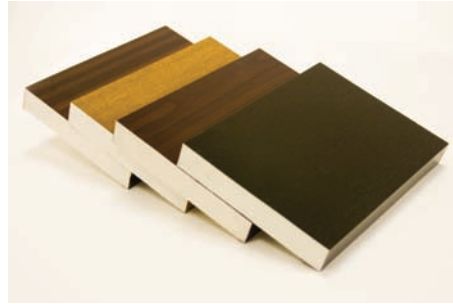
# Tudor Board

Decorative timber features on traditional properties and has more recently been incorporated as a design feature on new build homes adding period charm.

Freefoam now provide a 145mm Tudor Board in a range of four woodgrain colours Mahogany, Oak, Black and Rosewood. Made from lead free PVC-UE the product is covered by a ten year guarantee with built in sun protection provided by market leading Renolit EXOFOL MX foils. This technology reduces heat absorption thus minimising profile temperature and expansion.

- Easy installation
- Low maintenance
- No rotting splitting or warping
- UV Stable
- Environmentally friendly

Ask for samples and literature to start promoting Tudor Board. Contact Louise on 01604 683864.



# Willmotts benefit from the Freefoam Difference



Willmott's, a nationally respected plastic building products stockist based in Reading, benefit from the Freefoam Difference on a daily basis. Here at Freefoam we believe that a fitter, better integrated supply chain will win more business and enable stockist, installer and manufacturer to gain market share and grow.

Willmotts have experienced this strategy at first hand. George Petts, responsible for sales and technical support, explained "Freefoam have a different way of thinking. Not the short term 'what's in it for us' approach, it's more the 'if it can be done we'll do it' attitude. This in turn strengthens our relationships both with our customer and with the end user. In everything Freefoam do, be it product

development, product performance, product guarantee, and customer service, they just want to make it happen and be the best. Becoming a Freefoam stockist is one of the best decisions we made, not only for us, but for our customers. It's a partnership in the real sense of the word!"

Colin St John, our UK General Manager summarised "Willmotts are an excellent working example of the strategy we use to develop our market share. Build strong cooperative relationships with respected stockists by listening to what they and their customers need, then you can deliver the difference they need to be successful in their markets. And their success will be your success - that's the Freefoam Difference.

**“Becoming a Freefoam stockist is one of the best decisions we made”**  
**George Petts**



[www.freefoam.com](http://www.freefoam.com)

# Freefoam congratulate outstanding suppliers

Here at Freefoam we have an excellent relationship with our suppliers, so much so that we recently felt it was time to show our appreciation. Presentations were made to Profoil Ltd, HITEC Ltd and Stan Robinson Transport by Colin St John, UK General Manager, to acknowledge all three companies for their support and the valuable contribution they have made towards Freefoam's success.

Profoil Ltd provide woodgrain foiling for Freefoam PVC-U boards in a range of four finishes, HITEC supply forklift trucks to our warehouse operation and many of you will be very familiar with Stan Robinson Haulage who provide the transport and logistics to get our products out to you throughout the UK. Colin Deans, Managing Director Profoil Ltd commented "We are honoured to receive this award. We have worked with Freefoam for 12 years and seen the company grow and develop. It's been a pleasure to be a part of that growth and we look forward to working with Freefoam for many years to come"

Colin St John, UK General Manager summarised "Suppliers are a key part of our business - we see them as our partners and value the role they play in both our day to day operations and long terms plans. We work together to ensure we have in place an infrastructure that consistently helps us deliver our promises to customers. These relationships have developed over time and we wanted to thank them for the contribution that they have made to our success in the UK."

**“Suppliers are a key part of our business - we see them as our partners”**  
**Colin St John**



(left to right) Colin Deans, Profoil;  
Prospero Giradi, Hitec;  
Colin St John, UK Manager;  
Andrew Selbie, Hitec;  
Steve Cope, Stan Robinson Transport

## What makes a top installer?

The Freefoam Registered installer scheme has been running since 2002 and is still going strong. Many of our installers use the scheme to help differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace. We caught up with Nigel Francis, Managing Director of County Cladding, who are one of our top installers to find out how things were going and what's the secret to their success.

### Tell us a bit about County Cladding

We specialise in fitting roofline products and have been operating for nearly 12 years from our base in Evesham, Worcestershire. We have amassed a large customer base throughout the Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and South Birmingham region.

### So how was 2010 for you?

It was actually an extremely busy year for us although the extreme economic conditions meant we had to work even harder to maintain our market share with competition still fierce on price and service.

### Tell us about some of the developments that have led to such a successful year.

Early in 2010 we implemented several key initiatives including a new server that allows us to maintain our high levels of customer service, a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

to help us manage our growing customer base and we are currently working towards achieving British Standard Accreditation ISO9001

### But presumably it's not all about technology - what about the people?

Absolutely, we really value our staff and see their success as part of our success. Super Sales Person John Taylor, affectionately known as 'Spud', has worked with us for 9 years and has now become a Director. We are also proud that the majority of fitting teams have been with us for in excess of 8 years. We encourage progression by having a senior experienced fitter train his junior fitters mate for a 3 year period. After this time the junior fitter is allocated his own team.

### So what about 2011?

A new website has just been launched featuring some great images that we worked on with Freefoam which should make us even more accessible to potential customers. We have just added two new fitting teams along with a new Window & Conservatory fitting team so our head count is growing.

We are looking forward to 2011. We will be building on the success of 2010 and with our reputation for quality work and the modern tools in place to manage the business efficiently we are set for another good year.

“We really value our staff and see their success as part of our success” Nigel Francis



## 10 years of loyal service

Congratulations were the order of the day when we presented long service awards to three members of the UK team. Ken Rhodes, Kevin Archer and Grant Robinson have all worked at Freefoam for 10 years with this outstanding achievement being marked at a recent ceremony.

Many of you will know Ken and Kevin who are both Area Sales Managers and have helped us develop long standing relationships with customers in their respective areas in the North East and Midlands. Grant has worked in a variety of roles during his time with the company, most recently in the Customer Service department, always giving a valuable and high quality service to customers whilst ensuring that the order and delivery process runs smoothly.

Colin St John commented "It's becoming increasingly rare in today's dynamic workplace for individuals to serve 10 years at the same company. Congratulations and thanks must go to Ken, Kevin and Grant who have all played an extremely important part over the years in making Freefoam the success it is today. Freefoam prides itself on supporting and developing staff to encourage a stable and consistent workforce and these awards are a strong endorsement of the commitment we make to our staff."



(left to right)  
Grant Robinson, Ken Rhodes,  
Kevin Archer

## Let's see the wood for the trees

It's a common misconception that wood is better than PVC-U for the environment, and you've probably noticed the drum banging going on by the Wood for Good campaigners. As experts in the PVC-U industry we wanted to put the record straight. Here's our response to some of the misleading statements that you might come across.

### PVC is made from unsustainable resources

**FALSE:** PVC is made from 57% chlorine and 43% ethylene. Chlorine is produced from ordinary salt and, although ethylene can be produced by refining oil, like petrol, it can also be manufactured from renewable vegetable oil crops. Neither is therefore totally dependent on unsustainable resources.

### Using wood building materials is a more sustainable option.

**FALSE:** The problem with wood is its need for ongoing maintenance. PVC is exceptionally durable and products made from PVC have a typical life expectancy of more than 35 years. Because it lasts longer, and requires less maintenance, PVC actually helps to conserve raw materials and reduces the ongoing environmental damage caused by chemicals, solvents and paints required to protect wood.

### You can't recycle PVC

**FALSE:** There are two types of PVC recycling: Manufacturing waste is the material which is wasted during the production process, either off cuts or sub standard products. Virtually all of this is

recycled, in fact Freefoam recycle 85% of their waste and are currently engaged in projects to increase this to 98%.

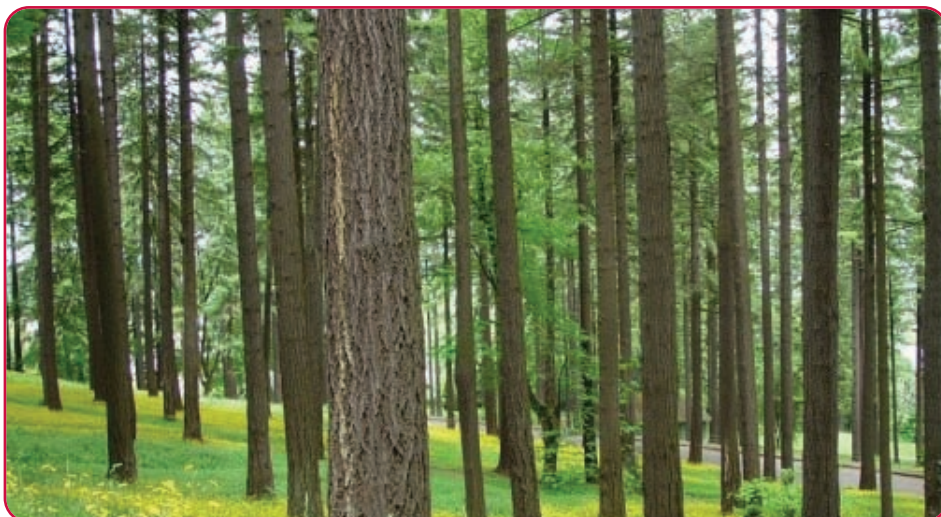
Post consumer waste is PVC product that has reached the end of its natural life. The amount of post consumer waste that is recycled is low, but there's a good reason for this, most of it is still being used! It doesn't need replacing so it doesn't need recycling.

### The manufacturing of PVC is adding to our carbon footprint

**FALSE:** Some environmental groups have expressed concern over the amount of dioxins that are released into the atmosphere during PVC production but in reality PVC manufacturing produces very small quantities of dioxins. According to the World Health Organisation the biggest producer of dioxins are solid waste incinerators.

So there you have it. When a specifier, builder or indeed homeowner mentions to you one of these statements you've now got the true facts at your fingertips and will be able to give them the full picture.

“Freefoam recycle 85% of their waste and are currently engage in projects to increase this to 98%”



## NEW homeowner brochure

We are pleased to announce the availability of our new homeowner brochure. For some time installers have been asking us for literature to help them explain what roofline is and why Freefoam is the best choice. Well here it is! We have worked with installers to design this brochure specifically for that use. It tells the story of roofline, why it's important for it to be maintained, the range of options available including colour and rainwater systems and most importantly the benefits of using a Freefoam registered installer.

All installers and customers have received a copy and we have already had some great feedback.

Why not have some printed with your own contact details to make a really professional looking sales pitch when talking to prospective customers. To find out more or to order more copies contact 01604 683864 or email [installers@freefoam.com](mailto:installers@freefoam.com)



# Spot The Difference

Your chance to win  
£50 of Shopping  
Vouchers

There are 6 differences between  
the photos opposite.

## How to enter

Simple list the differences and  
send us your answers to

Freefoam Building Products  
77 - 83 St James Mill Road  
Northampton  
NN5 5JP

or email us at  
marketing@freefoam.com

Closing date for entries  
30th June 2011



## We are here to help

### Stockists

We have an experienced customer service team to help with any enquiries. Please contact us Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm

Jay Hunter <i>Team Leader</i>	01604 683870	jay.hunter@freefoam.com	Simon Panting <i>New Build Co-ordinator</i>	01604 683862	simon.panting@freefoam.com
Sammi Read	01604 683877	sammi.read@freefoam.com	Patrick Redmond <i>Credit Control</i>	01604 683873	patrick.redmond@freefoam.com
Grant Robinson	01604 683876	grant.robinson@freefoam.com	Louise Sanderson <i>Marketing Co-ordinator</i>	01604 683864	louise.sanderson@freefoam.com
Paul Clark	01604 683874	paul.clark@freefoam.com			
Tish Redmond	01604 683875	tish.redmond@freefoam.com			

### Installers

If you would like information about our products please contact your local stockist or Freefoam on 01604 591110

[www.freefoam.com](http://www.freefoam.com)

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