

November/December 2016

THE HARDWARE JOURNAL

The Official Magazine of Hardware Association Ireland



Rebuilding Ireland

**FIRST PROGRESS REPORT ON
GOVERNMENT HOUSING PLAN**

ALSO INSIDE:

Rise in planning permission approvals for dwellings
The Hardware Show 2017

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A message from the CEO

As we pull the curtains on 2016, we ask will 2017 be your digital year? Will delivering your brand online be the key objective for your business? My final article from last June's DIY Summit focuses on innovation and inspiration from original disrupters such as Google and eBay, and a few practical tips to setting up shop online, read about it on page 28.

One thing which rarely gets disrupted is the Budget and in advance of its announcement on 11th October, myself and HAI President Hugh O'Donnell met with the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Simon Coveney to discuss some of the aspects of Rebuilding Ireland, launched in July, many of which will have a direct impact on the business of our members. The Government's first update on the plan's progress was recently published. Read the details on page 21.

On Budget Day, we welcomed Minister Noonan's proclamation of the two-year extension to the Home Renovation Incentive scheme that HAI had recommended in its pre-Budget Submission. With a whopping €1.1 billion in value of works put through the scheme three years after its introduction, it has been a valuable boost to the sector, read more about where that money was spent by county and other features of Budget 2017 on page 26.

As we are now on the eve of our premier event, The Hardware Show in March, we look at the softer side of the business by focusing on Home and Garden coverage in this edition. Both have had key roles in expanding the traditional hardware and merchant businesses over the tough years following 2008. In

relation to Homeware, our new contributor Karen Welsh focuses on the gadgets and gizmos under the go-to heading of Home Connectivity. With the gardening market valued at €631 million (Bord Bia, 2015), an increase of 22% since 2011, I look at some of the exhibitors who'll feature garden products at the Show in our Show preview on page 39.

2016 will be remembered as the year that the UK voted to leave the European Union and Donald Trump became President-elect of the United States – both will have medium to long term impacts on our members and we will continue to keep these items high on the agenda in 2017. In the meantime we have a show to put on and as the official magazine of Hardware Association Ireland, *The Hardware Journal* will publish the official supplement to the show in the January/February edition.

An association is only as good as its members. Your dedication and participation are what makes an association strong and vibrant. So, it is always vital to keep your finger on the pulse of your membership. As resources are limited, it can be hard to maintain a personal level of interaction with each member, but I find one of the best ways to keep in tune is through our annual membership satisfaction survey. You'll find this year's results and comments on page 31.

Annemarie Harte
Chief Executive Officer – HAI

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FRONT COVER:

Pictured at their recent meeting to discuss Rebuilding Ireland and HAI's Pre-Budget 2017 submission, are: Hugh O'Donnell, President, HAI; Simon Coveney, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; and Annemarie Harte, CEO, HAI.



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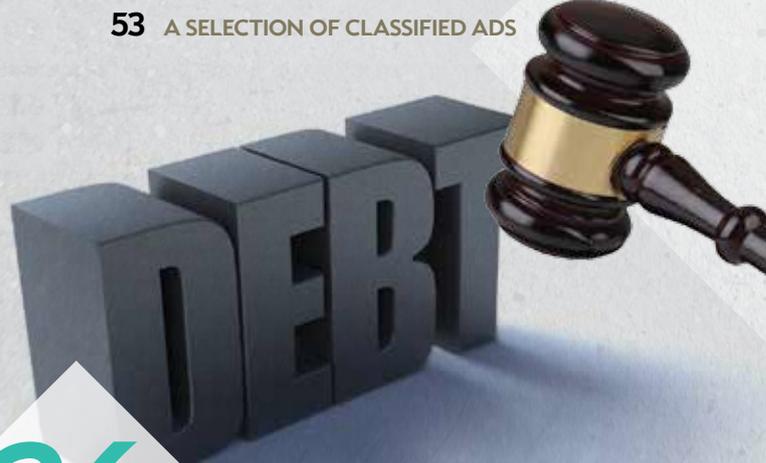
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RESULTS FOR THIRD QUARTER 2016

A total of 154 HAI member branches across the country take part in the monthly business index and since the third quarter (Q3) of 2015 we have been collecting the results quarterly.

Total member revenue for Q3 2016 shows a 5% increase on the same period last year.

The sector rise in Q3 year-on-year is even across urban/rural areas and peaks outside of Dublin. After dipping in July, sector revenue stabilised in August and increased in September.

The monthly moving average is broadly at parity for Q3 and even across the various member groups. 40% of rural members offer agricultural supplies.

How to get involved

All raw data is kept confidential and never revealed to HAI. If you agree to participate in the monthly business index, you will receive an email from Behaviours and Attitudes, our research partner, once a quarter (usually at the start of the second week), asking for several pieces of information that will form the benchmark survey:

- number of employees;
- location of business;
- what type of area your business operates in, i.e. to get an urban/rural split;
- annual sales turnover (less VAT) for your business for 2015 broken down by month; and,
- sales turnover per month for 2016.

Once this benchmark is complete you will only be asked for one piece of information each quarter thereafter, i.e., sales turnover per month for the quarter.

Please contact Jim on 01 298 0968 for more information on how to participate.

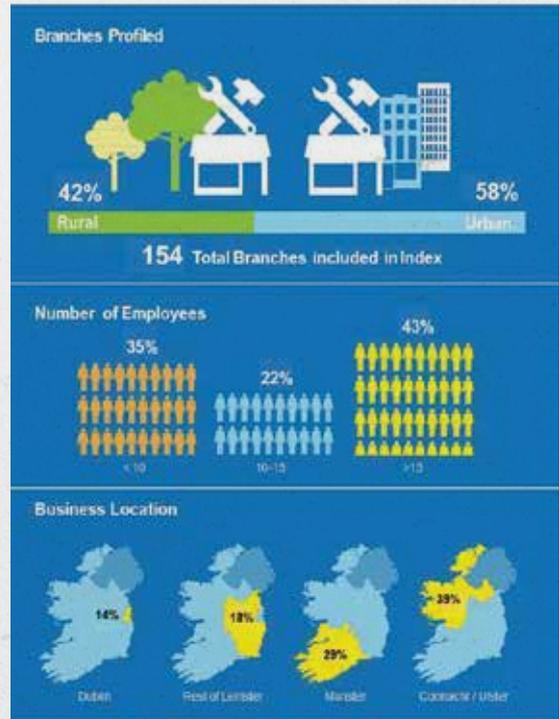
What our members say

Padraic Rogers, Owner, Topline Rogers, Ballymote, Co. Sligo

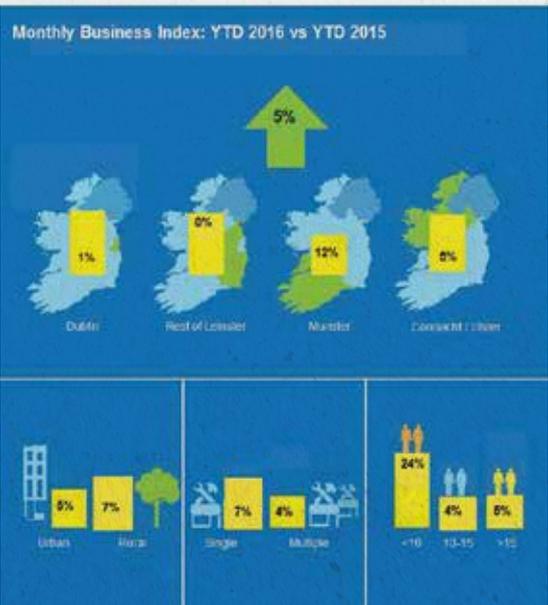
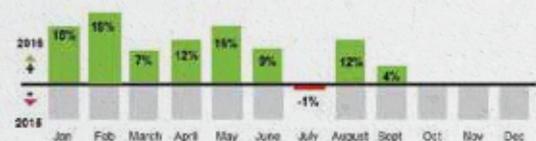
"We at Topline Rogers are finding Hardware Association Ireland's business index a great help to our business. It's great being able to compare our business performance against people in our region with a similar size business. It helps us to plan and to project where our business is going. It's very timely for our industry, pity it didn't happen years ago!"

Stephen Blewitt, General Manager Agribusiness, Aurivo

"With 35 retail outlets spread geographically across eight counties and three provinces, we find the breakdown of regions very useful in the report. To be the best you need to compare yourself to the industry and the monthly benchmarks help us decipher the areas where we are over or underperforming versus the industry. The fact that it is completely anonymous gives us the confidence to be totally open with the figures we provide."



Monthly Business Index: % change in revenue from 2015 to 2016



Source: BAA 2016. Data collection from 019-444 000000000000

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The Deanta team.

DEANTA OPENS DOOR TO FURTHER EXPANSION

Deanta, the leading interior door supplier, recently announced the opening of a new distribution centre in Cloverhill Industrial Estate in Clondalkin just off the M50. The 75,000 sq. ft building will stock the largest range of doors, skirting and architrave in Ireland, according to Deanta. Managing Director Neil Fitzgibbon has said the opening of this distribution centre will offer an unrivalled service to its customers and will allow continued expansion to the east coast of Ireland. He commented: "Our current distribution centre in Tralee will continue to serve its customers in the south and the west of Ireland offering daily and weekly delivery services." In conjunction with the opening of our Dublin distribution centre, Deanta UK will break ground on a

new 100,000 sq. ft distribution centre in Cambridge bringing the facility to over 200,000 sq. ft. These expansions will create over 30 new jobs in Tralee and Dublin in marketing, procurement and R&D. Deanta continues to add new design and styles to its ever growing ranges. Neil explained: "One of the key factors in our growth and success has been the opening of our own manufacturing plant in Guangdong China, managed and run by John Fitzgibbon." Deanta also has a new online stock system that allows customers live access to its stocks so they can check stock availability during, and out of, office hours. They can also place orders and check past orders and retrieve invoices and statements.

LAURA ASHLEY CLOSES 22 HOMEBASE CONCESSIONS

Listed homeware and fashion group, Laura Ashley, confirmed recently that it intends to close all of its branded concessions within Homebase by the end of June 2017. This decision follows the £340 million acquisition of Homebase by Wesfarmers in February of this year. The company was sold off by Home Retail Group, which has since been taken over by Sainsbury's. A Laura Ashley spokesperson said it will "cease to trade in its concessions" within Homebase stores and that the closures will take place during the second quarter of 2017.

"The company does not expect there to be a material impact on the group and anticipates that the majority of trade that it receives from these concessions will be redirected to other Laura Ashley stores and the website operated by the group," it said in a London Stock Exchange statement. Laura Ashley is the final concession to be removed from Homebase following the previous removals of Wiggle, Habitat and Argos following the sale of Homebase to Wesfarmers.

(Source: Insight DIY Team)

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TRAVIS PERKINS TO CLOSE 30 BRANCHES

Travis Perkins recently announced plans to shut more than 30 branches, with the loss of 600 jobs. The parent company to Wickes and Toolstation which employs over 28,000 people in the UK, announced the plans as it raised caution over its full-year results, in which it said underlying earnings were "slightly" lower-than-expected amid a period of "uncertain" trading. Branches are expected to close across its brands, including Travis Perkins, Benchmark, its kitchen and joinery business, and plumbing and heating businesses, BSS and PTS, as a result of a "disappointing" performance in the third quarter (Q3). The company also said that 10 of their smaller distribution centres will also shut down and it was reviewing its entire plumbing and heating division. It did say that measures would be taken to relocate some of its affected staff to other Travis locations. A company representative said: "Given that levels of future demand remain difficult to predict, the group has chosen to implement a number of efficiency programmes and branch closures to further optimise the network. This work includes the closure of 10 smaller distribution and fabrication centres, the write-

off of certain IT legacy equipment and over 30 branch closures in our trade businesses."

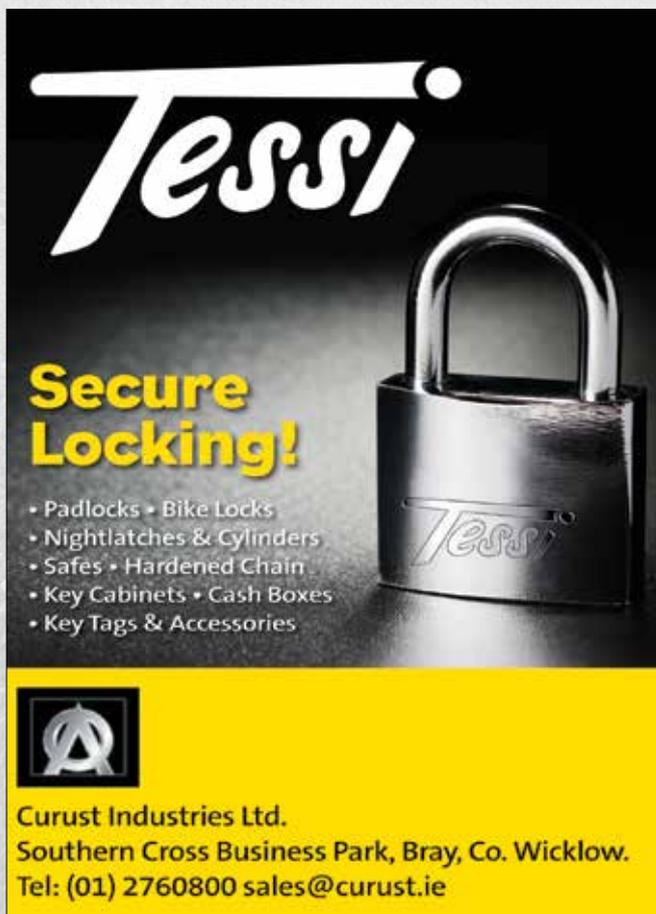
Overall, like-for-like sales grew 2% in the third quarter for the firm.

Travis Perkins Chief Executive John Carter said: "It is still too early to predict customer demand in 2017 with certainty and we will continue to monitor our lead indicators closely,"

The company is mid-way through a five-year overhaul of its businesses, which is seeing it shut unprofitable stores, expand in better performing areas, and refurbish its Wickes estate.

The Consumer Division of TP group, consisting of Wickes, Toolstation and Tile Giant, outshone the rest of the business in Q3, delivering an impressive +9.1% increase in sales, +6.3% on a like-for-like basis. Investments in better value, range improvement, the supply chain, the convenience offered by the growing network of stores and the delivery service helped both Wickes and Toolstation to materially outperform the market.

(Source: Insight DIY Team)



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One of the B!Organised shelving solutions available from B&G.

B!ORGANISED WITH B&G

B&G, the leading DIY and homeware distributor, has been appointed the sales and marketing partner for the B!Organised range of shelving and storage solutions. The category of shelving is growing in Ireland and this extensive new range, B&G report, is designed to suit the needs of the Irish consumer.

B!Organised shelving and storage solutions are easy to install and suitable for house and home, offices, utility rooms and garages. The range includes a diverse selection of styles and finishes, to suit all tastes.

HAI GOLF SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S PRIZE

Hardware Association Ireland Golfing Society President Frank McKeon's Prize took place at Forrest Little Golf Club, Cloghran, Co Dublin, on Friday, 26th August, 2016. The event was again kindly sponsored by Tucks O'Brien. The results were:

OVERALL		Pts.	H/Cap
1 st	PJ Gunn	39	17
2 nd	Vincent Hyland	36 BB9	16
3 rd	Michael Kane	36	28

CLASS 1		Pts.	H/Cap
1 st	Tim Lodge	36	12
2 nd	Martin Rowe	36	7

CLASS 2		Pts.	H/Cap
1 st	Eddie Battersby	35	14
2 nd	Brian Wogan	33	20

CLASS 3		Pts.	H/Cap
1 st	Paddy O'Leary	33 BB9	23
2 nd	Paddy Brady	33	24



PJ Gunn receives his first prize from HAIGS President Frank McKeon.

LADIES		Pts.
1 st	Brid Gunn	32 BB9
2 nd	Breda Phelan	32

Front Nine	Pts.	H/Cap
Martin Hennessey	19	19

Back Nine	Pts.	H/Cap
Pat Moore	21	21

Visitors	Pts.	H/Cap
1 st Aidan Burke	32	14

SANBRA FYFFE ANNOUNCES ANOTHER KEY APPOINTMENT TO ITS SALES TEAM

Company Announcement

Sanbra Fyffe Ltd, Ireland's market leading plumbing and heating wholesale distributor, is delighted to announce another key appointment to its sales team.

Ashley Molloy has been appointed as new dedicated Area Sales Representative for Connaught and the north west.

A native of Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, and a well-known face to many in the west of Ireland, Ashley brings with him more than 11 years plumbing and heating experience and a degree in Agricultural Science from UCD.

With an ever expanding product portfolio of more than 4,000 SKU's, this is another significant appointment for Sanbra Fyffe, and highlights its commitment to innovation and to providing excellent sales service to its existing and new customer base.

For many years, Gavin Kelly has skilfully divided his time acting as a Sales Representative for both Sanbra Fyffe and its sister company, RT Large Ltd. To ensure a smooth transition, over the coming months, Ashley will work closely with Gavin covering Sanbra Fyffe's west of Ireland customer base. Gavin will then transfer this area to Ashley allowing both to dedicate 100% of their attention to their respective Sanbra Fyffe and RT Large customers. Commenting on the new appointment, Noel Conroy, Commercial Manager, Sanbra Fyffe Ltd and Mel O'Dowd, General Manager of RT Large said: "We are delighted to welcome Ashley to the group and, in particular, to Sanbra Fyffe. We believe this appointment is essential to allow both Sanbra Fyffe and RT Large to provide for greater sales penetration while also allowing greater focus on our ever-expanding product portfolio. We believe the timing could not be better for such changes to occur, we look forward to working with Ashley and welcome him to our team."



Ashley Molloy (left), 087 161 5587, Ashley.Molloy@sanbra.ie
Sanbra Fyffe Tel: +353 1 842 6255; email sales@sanbra.ie

Gavin Kelly (right), 087 205 5107, Gavin@sanbra.ie
RT Large Tel: +353 1 450 4307; email sales@rtlarge.ie





ATG's MaxiDry Zero gloves

ATG GLOVES ARE ON

The Irish winter offers unique challenges to all personal protective equipment, particularly when it comes to protecting the hands. In addition to a drop in temperature, the hands need to be protected from the 800mm of rain that falls every winter and then deal with the wind chill factor, which is also cold...and wet.

ATG says its new MaxiDry Zero gloves will keep hands well-covered this winter. Certified to work in temperatures as low as -30°C, according to ATG, they are fully coated to prevent water penetration and completely windproof.

The fleece lining wicks perspiration away from the hand and the gloves are still light and flexible enough to complete intricate tasks. As with all ATG gloves, the MaxiDry Zero gloves are dermatologically accredited, making them, ATG state, kind to your hands, but are also tough. The ATG MaxiDry Zero gloves are available from Keypoint.

TOTALLY DIY & TOOLS EXHIBITION

Returning to the Ricoh Arena, Coventry on 14th and 15th February, 2017, the Totally DIY & Tools Exhibition is targeted exclusively to trade buyers and merchants, giving visitors a place to network, do business and see the latest and most innovative products.

According to the organisers, this means exhibitors will have access to buyers who can place stock in branches nationwide, expanding their business and offering them a fast supply route to thousands of potential customers.

Totally DIY & Tools has been an industry staple for 23 years. Exhibitors for 2017 include suppliers and manufacturers such as Draper Tools, Gorilla Glue, Rainy Day Trust and Mewett Polyurethane, Ultratape, Bond-It, and many more.

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The new hardware store will be in Trim Retail Park on the edge of Trim town on the Navan Road.

NEW HARDWARE STORE FOR TRIM

Loman Dempsey property consultants report a new hardware store opportunity in Trim, Co Meath where Homex Ltd has announced it will construct what it claims is the first new hardware store to be built in the area in several years.

The new hardware store will be in Trim Retail Park on the edge of Trim town on the busy Navan Road. According to Loman Dempsey, agents for the property, this is a highly visible and easily accessible location with close to 72,000 vehicles passing weekly and over 10,500 vehicles entering the business park per week.

Trim Retail Park was developed in 2006. Topaz, Supermacs and Londis operate very successfully from the park together with a range of other businesses such as motor factors, car repairs and office equipment sales. Construction is also about to commence there on offices for a large national accountancy firm. The hardware store building and an adjacent retail unit suitable for an electrical appliance shop, furniture store or a hire centre will complete the development.

Planning permission was recently granted for approximately 400 houses in the town and many other developers are gearing up to start building, according to Loman Dempsey

Loman is offering parties the opportunity to purchase the hardware site in advance of construction next year. Alternatively, the completed building is for sale to those that prefer a turn-key solution. Loman is also offering to rent the hardware store to a suitably qualified tenant and, bearing in mind current onerous commercial lending policies of the financial institutions, will work with clients that offer any sensible proposal.

PORTWEST ANNOUNCES 55 JOBS FOR WESTPORT

Mayo-based company Portwest, the leading manufacturer of personal protective clothing and equipment, has announced the creation of 55 new jobs. Over the next four years, staff levels will increase from 75 to 130 at their head office in Westport.

The family-run business has been based in Westport for over a century where the now-global company is run by a trio of brothers, Cathal, Owen and Harry Hughes. The Portwest brand is sold in over 100 countries worldwide and turnover is expected to rise from the current level of €125 million to €250 million over the next five years.

An investment of €4 million to double the size of the company's rural west of Ireland base is planned. CEO Harry Hughes confirms that Portwest will expand its manufacturing division from current employment levels of 1,600 staff to 4,500 staff over the next four years. The company's own factory in Bangladesh will double in size to over 3,000 staff and a new factory in Myanmar which has commenced hiring staff.

Cathal, Harry and Owen are third-generation helmsmen of Portwest, which was founded by their grand-uncle Charles Hughes in 1904 and subsequently managed by their father, Pdraig. In 2014, the company welcomed the fourth generation of the Hughes family as Harry's son, Henry, joined the business. This autumn, Cathal's son, Cathal Jnr, began his apprenticeship. Cathal says: "While it's very important that we have family in the business, there is also a senior management team in place that will assist in managing the business into the future." Recent non-family appointments to the company's board include: Ray Carney, Head of Purchasing and Tony Kirby, Head of Finance.

Portwest recently won the Deloitte best managed companies award.



Cathleen and Brendan Rooney of Rooney's Homevalue Agri and Hardware, with Donal Bermingham, United Hardware.

UNITED HARDWARE HOLDS SPRING/ SUMMER 2017 TRADE SHOW

Buying group, United Hardware, recently held its Spring/Summer 2017 Trade Show attracting a strong attendance of Homevalue and Arro merchants from around the country, who had the opportunity to study a line up of exclusive brands in categories that the group's buyers predict will be strong performers over the next 12 months.

Categories that were the focus of a lot of attention on the day included: home furniture; garden furniture, equipment and accessories; power tools; and bathroom fixtures and fittings.

Cathleen and Brendan Rooney of Rooney's Homevalue Agri and Hardware were among those assessing the range of products on show. Having seen some movement in housebuilding in their customer catchment area, the Rooneys are cautiously optimistic about 2017. Brendan confirmed they have expansion



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David Farrell, Chief Operating Officer, United Hardware.

plans for next year: "We are opening a new store in Kells Business Park that will allow us to offer a much expanded range of products."

Cathleen noted: "Visiting a show like this is very helpful in working out our product mix and certainly demonstrates the experience and ability of United's buying team."

The show also presented an excellent networking opportunity with United Hardware senior management all in attendance, including Group Chief Executive Patrick Cassidy; David Farrell, Chief Operating Officer; and John Gillivan, Group Relations Manager.

David Farrell, Chief Operating Officer, United Hardware highlighted several categories that should offer retailers a lot of sales potential in 2017, such as garden furniture and petcare: "Garden furniture is a growing category and the show has a tremendous selection of three-, five- and six-piece furniture sets, loungers, hammocks, chairs and benches on display. Another category that's got strong customer appeal is petfood and petcare accessories. Owners love to pamper their pets and are always interested in new products in this area. We've got a diverse selection of collars, toys and assorted accessories.

John Gillivan, Group Relations Manager, whose main focus is liaising with Homevalue and Arro merchants around the country, was delighted with the response to the event: "Our trade shows always generate a buzz of excitement and the product ranges on display here have the right combination of quality, value and distinctiveness that Homevalue and Arro merchants look for."

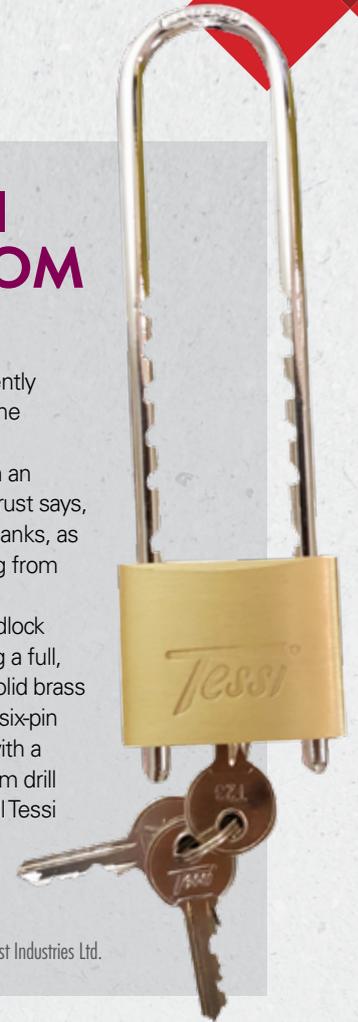
NEW TESSI LOCKS FROM CURUST

Curust Industries Ltd has recently introduced two new locks in the Tessi range.

The 50mm brass padlock with an adjustable shackle is ideal, Curust says, for gates, sheds and even oil tanks, as it gives a clearance of anything from 63mm to 163mm.

The new 90mm armoured padlock is a high-security lock featuring a full, hardened steel cover over a solid brass 90mm lock. The high security six-pin cylinder is further protected with a rotating steel disc for maximum drill and pick resistance. As with all Tessi padlocks, Curust adds, each of the new items comes with a lifetime guarantee.

The Tessi range of locks is distributed by Curust Industries Ltd.



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HOUSING ACTIVITY GROWS BUT FAILS TO MATCH DEMAND

In the region of 11,550 housing units are under construction in Ireland, with another 12,388 having received planning permission in the first nine months of this year, still well below the forecast demand for 25,000 units a year. That's according to data compiled by Construction Information Services (CIS).

According to CIS, which monitors activity in all areas of the construction sector here, some 9,000 houses or apartments went on site in the first nine months of this year as part of multi-unit developments. This represented an increase of 25% on the same period of 2015.

Some 4,716 units went on site in Dublin, with another 1,400 in Munster. In addition, about 2,550 one-off houses have been started since January.

The value of these residential projects rose 34% to €1.3 billion, with more than €800 million worth of development under way in Dublin.

(Source: Irish Times)

For more data on planning permissions, go to page 30.



In the first nine months of this year, 12,388 housing units received planning permission.

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- ✓ Keep up to date with the industry through our website, bi-monthly magazine **The Hardware Journal**, monthly email newsletters, **LinkedIn** page, **Twitter** feed and events.
- ✓ Regular surveys and intelligence about the industry - we are the only providers of hardware specific trends and developments including our monthly business index, wage survey and business confidence monitor.
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Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford
Ph: 053 924 4856
Contact: Walter Crean
Business: Building materials and agri merchant

JH Donnelly Ltd

Unit 4C, Summerhill Enterprise Centre,
Summerhill,
Co. Meath
Ph: 046 955 8890
Contact: Gary Hanan
Business: Plumbing and general hardware distributor

Doras Distributors Ltd

Unit 7, Parkwest Ind. Est.,
Nangor Road,
Dublin 12
Ph: 01 623 5444
Contact: John Clinch
Business: Timber door and mouldings distributor

Kärcher Ltd (Ireland)

Unit 4, E.P. Mooney Business Park,
Walkinstown Avenue,
Dublin 12
Ph: 01 409 7777
Contact: Paul Carroll
Business: Manufacturer of cleaning machines and accessories

James Lynch Ltd

Coachford,
Co. Cork
Ph: 021 733 4127
Contact: George Lynch
Business: Builders merchant and hardware

MRCB Ltd.

10-13 Cornmarket,
Dublin 8
Ph: 01 679 8755
Contact: Kevin Coghlan
Business: Specialist paints and wallpaper store

Murray Timber Group

Ballygar,
Co. Galway
Ph: 090 662 4000
Contact: Patrick Murray
Business: Timber saw mills

Nord Roofs Ltd

Unit 88, Baldoyle Ind. Est.,
Grange Way, Baldoyle,
Dublin 13
Ph: 01 484 5199
Contact: Tomas Simonis
Business: Roofing products and building materials supplier

Thomas O'Malley Ltd

Rosmuc,
Co. Galway
Ph: 091 574 101
Contact: Tomás O'Malley
Business: Builders merchant and hardware

SIG Trading (Ireland) Ltd.

SIG House,
Ballymount Retail Centre,
Ballymount Road Lower,
Dublin 24
Ph: 01 623 4541
Contact: Howard Taylor
Business: Specialist construction products supplier

South Coast Sales Ltd

No. 1, Doughcloyne Industrial Estate, Sarsfield Rd,
Wilton,
Co. Cork
Ph: 021 434 6143
Contact: Derry Casey
Business: Plumbing and heating distributor

Spares Direct

Unit 5, Dargan Industrial Park,
62 Dargan Crescent,
Belfast BT3 9JP,
N Ireland
Ph: 028 9543 4399
Contact: Peter Cairns
Business: Supplier of spare parts for boiler manufacturers

SVK Ltd

The Slate Cottage, Nuttstown,
Clonee,
Dublin 15
Ph: 01 801 5690
Contact: Robert Sunderland
Business: Roofing and cladding distributor

Toolstream Ltd

Boundary Way, Lufton Trading Estate, Yeovil,
Somerset,
UK
Ph: 0044 1935 382 222
Contact: Mark Smith
Business: Hand and power tools, fixings and adhesives distributor

Woodford Timber Products

Skellan,
Doogarry,
Co. Cavan
Ph: 049 433 3133
Contact: Mark Richardson
Business: Suppliers of garden fencing, decking, trellises, gates, play equipment, sheds and log cabins



Built to last

Ronayne Hire and Hardware thrives on three decades of experience

Ronayne Hire & Hardware is a familiar landmark on the Dublin road into Thurles where the Ronayne name has been synonymous with hardware since the 1980s. Michael Ronayne talks to **The Hardware Journal** about growing the business, dealing with the downturn and managing the recovery.

When Michael Ronayne left school in the mid-1970s, his father John, a successful building contractor, gave him a start offering him access to some equipment that the building business wasn't using. Based on that initial stock of equipment, which included two air compressors and a builders' dumper, Michael set up a hire business that has since gone from strength to strength and continues to trade successfully to this day.

The success of the hire business encouraged Michael to expand into hardware and in 1986 he opened for business as an Arro branded store which is the retail brand part of the National Hardware Ltd group. Michael has remained a member for the subsequent 30 years through the development of his own business and the evolution of National Hardware Ltd (via a joint

venture with Associated Hardware Ltd) into United Hardware. Today, his store prominently carries the signage of the Arro Group. Michael is currently on the United Hardware board and strongly believes in the advantages of being part of a large group. "I'm a member because I believe it's important for my business, both for the group's buying expertise and the depth of its commitment to helping members make a success of their businesses.

"The group's support for the standalone shop, not just in terms of buying, but in terms of merchandising, marketing and information, is of great benefit, as are the opportunities to go to meetings and talk to like-minded people and exchange views. I'll often find that the problems I'm dealing with are very similar to those confronting merchants in other

parts of the country.”

Ronayne Hire and Hardware is also a member of Euronics, the electronics and home appliances group which it joined in 2008. Michael notes: “The electrical business is very brand-focused and access to the brands, both in white goods and brown goods, is vital to be successful. Euronics helps us not only to get the right brands, but also to get them at the right price.”

Michael brought the strong service ethos he developed in the hire sector into his hardware and builders merchants business. He comments: “The staff here include many individuals who have been with the business for a long time. They have a depth of knowledge and experience that’s hard to beat and we all place a priority on providing the customer with the best possible service.”

Building a hardware business

Ronayne Hire and Hardware has grown through the development of an effective management team and a mix of products and services that responds to the changing needs of his customers and, indeed, the changes in the customer base itself. “As the business grew, I realised the importance of being able to delegate responsibility to a trusted and reliable team. I have a strong management team in place including a sales manager and a hire manager at a strategic level and, in addition to them, in more specific departments, there is a manager for our electrical section, our tool section and our light hardware section. Almost all the responsibility for buying and selling rests with those members of staff.”

Delegation is an essential element in managing a premises of the scale of Ronayne Hire and Hardware. The site occupies an overall area of four acres with the store having an area of 40,000 square feet, an expansion of 25,000 sq. ft on the area of the original premises that opened in 1986.

Heady years and hard lessons

“The bulk of that expansion took place in the heady years from 2000 to 2006. When the downturn hit, and particularly in the years 2010 to 2012, I did a lot of re-learning, primarily about the importance of watching every cost and avoiding any wastage. Coping with the change in the marketplace involved a lot of reorganisation and re-focusing on my own part and on the part of staff as well. It was an extremely difficult time. But everyone on the team bought into what was needed, which was total cost-efficiency and careful management of every aspect of the business.”

The business has recovered strongly in the last few years and now employs 26 people: “I was particularly pleased to be able to re-employ some people I had to let go during the downturn. The store is performing well and, while I don’t believe we’ll ever see the level of business that took place in the early 2000s, there is solid potential for sustainable growth in the industry over the next few years.”

Michael’s optimism is tempered with a degree of caution, however: “The local economy around Thurles is recovering but it is an economy that is essentially agriculture-based and every newspaper I read, every radio or tv programme I listen to or watch, is speculating about Brexit and about what its possible outcomes may be, none of which seems very clear-cut. What is clear is that it’s creating a lot of uncertainty which could have serious implications for my customers and therefore serious implications for our business. So, looking ahead, I would be relatively cautious about the foreseeable future.”



Staff members Tara McGinn, Phyllis Sheridan, Mark Byrne and Paddy Hayden.

The evolving customer

Focusing on the store itself, it has developed over time into two distinct retail spaces. When customers walk in the front door, they immediately find themselves in a welcoming DIY and home improvement section, surrounded by homeware and electrical products. It’s a big space but laid out to showcase a wide range of products from doors and floors to fridges and TVs, as well as paint and household items.

Describing his mix of customers, Michael says there is an approximately 50-50 balance between trade customers and home improvement/DIY/consumer-orientated business.

He explains that 1% of the population of the country lives within 15 miles of Thurles: “That’s the target area for the bulk of my business. We would have customers in localities all around Thurles like Killenaule, Templemore and Borrisoleigh.

“As we gradually emerge from the downturn, it’s noticeable to me that the home improvement/consumer segment is growing at a faster pace than the trade sector. The female customer is driving that growth in categories like electrical, doors and floors and houseware. We invested significantly in the entire electrical and homeware section in 2014 in response to this growing female customer footfall. We realised the importance of presenting products in an appealing and effective way to these



Benny Dudley, Sales Manager; Michael Ronayne, Managing Director; and David Ronayne, Hire Manager.

Store Profile

An interior view.



customers and implemented the redesign in close consultation with Arro and Euronics. That redesign has led to a further improvement in turnover in that part of the store since 2014 and we continue to focus a lot of attention in ensuring that this is an attractive and well-presented area."

Playing to your strengths

Moving through the homeware space brings you to the dedicated trade area of the store where the customer finds a full range of building materials and products, a long-established hire service and a specialist tool department with an extensive range of woodworking machinery and power tools for both the DIY enthusiast and professional markets.

"Our team has a wealth of expertise in carpentry and woodworking and in terms of our business focus, we play to those strengths. Doors, floors and kitchens are areas where the team can offer unrivalled service."

Another major strength of the business is its tool sales business, Michael believes: "We've developed a strong reputation for the quality and range of tools we provide, including power tools, hand tools, engineering tools and all types of woodworking tools and machinery. It's a strong department within our business and we're confident that it is as good as any tool sales business in the country." In addition to its own site, Ronayne Hire and Hardware has developed a website, mytools.ie, that showcases its tool range specifically.

Dramatic change

Looking back over a career that has encompassed five different decades, what does Michael see as the most significant changes he's witnessed? "Without a doubt, the two biggest changes are the development of the internet and the completion of the motorway network. Each represents both an opportunity and a threat. With the internet, anyone can buy anything, anywhere and anytime. That presents us with an opportunity to sell to a wider catchment but it also opens us up to more competition than ever before."

The motorway network provides a similar dual potential: "The motorway means my customers are now only an hour from Limerick, an hour and a half from Liffey Valley or Blanchardstown in Dublin or an hour and fifteen minutes from Mahon Point in Cork. But it also means more customers can travel to me. And it can help create transport efficiencies for the business's own fleet. These two factors, together with Brexit, will probably have the most meaningful influence on the development of the business in the next few years."

Looking to the next 12 months specifically, he concludes by warning that it's vital the Government is given a strong message by the industry and HAI in relation to the prohibitive cost challenges that builders merchants face: "The Government needs to be made aware of the high costs of doing business, whether it is labour costs and associated overheads or the general cost of running a business with rates, taxes and bureaucratic red tape."

As Ronayne Hire and Hardware adapts and changes to meet future challenges, there's also a reassuring continuity at the family business. In the past two years, Michael's son David has taken on the responsibility of managing the plant and tool hire business. Michael admits: "I'm delighted that another generation has entered the business. While there are many challenges to face in the sector, hardware is a great business to be part of."



Rebuilding Ireland

Minister Coveney provides update on progress to date

Rebuilding Ireland, the Government action plan on housing and homelessness was welcomed by Hardware Association Ireland (HAI) when it was launched last July by Simon Coveney, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. Four months on, the Minister has issued the first quarterly report on progress to date.

There are 126 active sites in Dublin (with 10+ units) across the four local authority areas, with an aggregate output of 2,079 houses and 2,746 apartments (an overall average of 38 dwellings per site). Data for the rest of the country is not yet available.

Planning permission for 12,953 new homes was granted in the year up to end June 2016, an increase of 23% year-on-year, of which 7,332 are in the greater Dublin area (GDA) (6,000 in Dublin) and 5,631 in the rest of the country.

- **Completions**

Up to the end of September 2016, 10,507 new homes were completed nationally, an increase of 18% over the same period in 2015, of which 4,410 were in the GDA, up 35% (Dublin, 3,031 – up 47%).

- **Planning Permissions:**

House type breakdown:

- Apartments make up 33% of completions in Dublin, 25% in the GDA and 17% nationally;
- Individual once-off houses made up 41% of all house completions; 59% outside the GDA; and,
- Housing schemes represented 58% of completions in Dublin, 58% in the GDA and 42% nationally.

- **Commencements:**

Up to the end of August 2016, 7,139 new units were commenced nationally, up 34% year-on-year ; 3,599 of which were in the GDA (2,081 in Dublin). In addition, 2,985 of the new units commenced nationally were once-off homes; 42% of the total and an increase from 39% in the same period in 2015.

Some previous impediments to speedy delivery of housing are being attended to according to the progress report. The Government approved the publication of the General Scheme of a Planning and Development (Housing and Residential Tenancies) Bill in September and is now prioritising its drafting and full publication to enable a number of legislative actions and reforms highlighted across the five pillars of the Action Plan to be enacted during the current term. These reforms include provision for:

- facilitating (for a limited time-period) planning applications for large-scale (100 or more units) housing developments and student accommodation developments to be made directly to An Bord Pleanála;
- streamlining of timelines to present and consider local authority own development proposals (including social housing proposals and mixed tenure developments on local authority lands) through the Part 8 process;

RE-BUILDING IRELAND: KEY OBJECTIVES

The plan is intended to provide a multi-stranded, action-oriented approach to achieving many of the Government's key housing objectives, as set down in the Programme for a Partnership Government. These include :

- significantly increasing the supply of social housing;
- doubling the output of overall housing from the current levels to at least 25,000 per annum by 2020;
- servicing all tenure types; and,
- tackling homelessness in a comprehensive manner.

There are five pillars to the plan:

- Address Homelessness
- Accelerate Social Housing
- Build More Homes
- Improve the Rental Sector
- Utilise Existing Housing

The overarching aim of Rebuilding Ireland is to ramp up the supply of housing across all tenures. The target for supply is a minimum of 25,000 new homes per annum, which is a significant challenge, given that output in 2015 was just 12,666 new homes.

However, according to the Dept of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the lack of available and zoned land is apparently not an issue. Based on the recent calculations across all 31 local authority areas, there are 17,434 hectares of land zoned residential nationally (serviced and un-serviced), enough for 414,000 new homes.

In Dublin, there are enough zoned and immediately developable lands to deliver 50,000 new homes with planning permission already in place for 27,000 new homes across the metropolitan area. In total, there are 2,654 hectares of land zoned (both serviced and un-serviced), sufficient to provide for 116,700 homes.

Commenting at the time of the launch, HAI CEO, Annemarie Harte said: "Ambitious and wide-ranging in its scope, the plan appears to have the teeth that Construction 2020, launched over two years ago, did not. Rebuilding Ireland involves relevant stakeholders across a broad spectrum in a fast-track process that will, it is hoped, accomplish what previous plans have not – deliverables within a tight timescale.

"The spirit of the plan is coming from the right place. It's unfortunate it took an emergency situation to pull it all together, but we look forward to a paradigm shift in housing supply over the next number of years."

She added: "It will take high level leadership to realise the plan's objectives and we look forward to frequent reports from Government which will facilitate assessment of the progress being made in achieving deliverables."



BUDGET 2017 FIRST-TIME BUYERS SCHEME

IN 2015

- 24% of house purchases were by first-time buyers; only 2% of these were new homes
- Movers' and investors' transactions have grown by 285% and 344% respectively since 2010 while first-time buyers' transactions grew by only 15%
- For every 11 existing properties bought by first-time buyers, 1 new property was bought by the same demographic



IN DUBLIN

- First-time buyers paid roughly x3 more for new properties than in Border-Midland-West Region, and about x2 as much as those in the South Region in 2015
- Certain areas are beyond almost all first-time buyers' budgets



FIRST-TIME BUYERS SCHEME

- Income tax rebate of 5% of maximum purchase price of €400k, up to a max of €20k
- Once-off up-front rebate (prior to purchase) of income tax paid
- Applies to new homes only including self-builds
- Properties up to €600k can qualify but max grant is still €20k
- Tax rebate based on previous 4 years' tax return
- Builders of new homes must be registered to qualify



HOW IT WORKS

HOUSE PRICE	Minimum income (for LTP*)	Savings needed pre rebate	Rebate amount at 5%	Savings needed post rebate
€150,000	€38,571	€15,000	€7,500	€7,500
€250,000	€86,286	€48,000	€17,500	€30,500
€500,000	€120,571	€78,000	€20,000	€58,000

*Loan to Income Ratio

Reference: CSO Residential Property Price Index databases

The scheme is intended to provide a dual benefit of helping first-time buyers to buy their first home, while also encouraging extra supply of new homes by increasing 'realisable demand'.

- further limited extensions of planning permissions for specified larger housing proposals, where permissions which have yet to be built out are nearing their expiry date;
- enhancing certain aspects of the functioning of the residential rental sector, including tenant rights protection issues (e.g. enabling tenants to remain in their homes when multi-unit developments are sold), while also strengthening the enforcement and dispute resolution powers and functions of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) in respect of both landlord and tenant matters; and
- facilitating Higher Education Institutes to borrow monies from the Housing Finance Agency for the purposes of financing student accommodation provision.

The General Scheme of the Bill was approved by Government on 27th September, 2016 and the drafting of the Bill is at an advanced stage. The aim is to publish the Bill shortly, with a view to it being enacted by the end of 2016.

Accelerating social housing delivery

The Government says its commitment to accelerating and expanding social housing delivery can be seen in the budget of €5.35 billion which has been provided for the delivery of 47,000 social housing units over the lifetime of Rebuilding Ireland out to 2021. These homes will be delivered by local authorities and AHBs through a number of different mechanisms: construction, repair and renewal of existing housing (both public and private);

regeneration of certain areas; acquisitions; and various leasing arrangements. Taking account of the commitments in the Action Plan and accelerating the delivery targets set down in the Social Housing Strategy (November 2014), there is already significant construction of social housing underway this year, with the expectation that 1,500 new homes will be either completed or under construction by the end of this year, a substantial increase on output activity in 2015, when only 74 homes were built. In order to underpin an early acceleration

in activity, Budget 2017 has provided for a very significant increase in housing funding. The overall funding for housing in 2017 will be €1.3 billion, a 39% increase on the €933m provided for this year. The report said that delivering high quality homes in sustainable communities, in a value-for-money manner, will be paramount in ensuring that full and optimal use is made of the available funding.

For more information on Rebuilding Ireland visit rebuildingireland.ie

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Rawlplug's focus fixed on quality and service



HAI CEO Annemarie Harte visited Rawlplug's large warehouse on the outskirts of Drogheda during the week sterling plummeted to 91p against the euro. That plunge in value made Commercial Director Paul McCormack's planning significantly harder as budget season began. However, as Annemarie learned, Rawlplug, a manufacturing specialist in anchoring and fixing systems, is ready to face the challenges ahead with determination and confidence based on a heritage of almost 100 years of innovation, reliability and safety.

In 1919, the Rawlplug Company Ltd was born after John J. Rawlings' development of the first-ever specialist wall fixing product. His revolutionary Fibre Plug was the product from which the modern range of Rawlplug fixings was developed.

The company expanded dramatically and today it is one of the world's leading fixing manufacturers distributing its products on every continent. Innovation remains at the heart of its success, including significant developments of torque-controlled anchors and chemical systems for safety-critical applications. Paul anticipates significant growth in 2017 based on the launch of additional upgraded and brand new technically approved products, as well as the reliability and expertise of Rawlplug's new Technical Service. In fact, Paul is using the company's stand at the upcoming Hardware Show to display only new products as he believes visitors to the show are primarily there to find something new and innovative. Rawlplug is proud that it is the first manufacturer to have European Technically Approved (ETA) certification on its Rawlbolt, a shield anchor that expands in the wall. Paul believes that verified quality standards are vital as there are some products on the market that are not fit for use. Rawlplug places a strong emphasis on the wide range of ETA products that it offers.

New Rawlplug trade range

The new Rawlplug Prepack Fixings Range comes pre-packed with QR codes to help with installation and is colour-coded for easy identification depending on the nature of the job. I noted that this is useful for the DIY enthusiast as well as the tradesman and no sooner did I mention "hanging curtain

poles in plasterboard that crumbles like sand" than Paul shows me a sample of the array of pre-packs available. They're called Project Solution Kits and I'm very impressed by how far this particular area of the industry has come when I see individual flat screen TV kits, shelving kits and outside light kits.

Substrates

Rawlplug manufactures and supplies various types of fixings and fasteners intended for use in different substrates. Numerous surveys show that consumers hesitate over which product is best and are keen to seek expert and knowledgeable advice. In order to meet these expectations, Rawlplug is introducing a colour-coded system on its new trade range to categorise products for use in various substrates and applications (See Table 1). All the information, such as installation instructions, drill size and barcode, is presented clearly on the back of the packaging.

Rawlplug has become increasingly aware that merchants and hardware retailers are finding it more difficult to control stocks of loose products in their stores. Problems that arise in-store include theft and wrong product selection at the cash desk. In turn, stocktaking can be a major problem if incorrect products have been booked out over the previous 12 months. The new Rawlplug trade range offers a solution to this problem with fixings in small quantities and in barcoded bags. With the company supplying the complete range of fixings and fasteners in competitively priced and well-designed bags, retailers' staff will no longer have to guess the type and size of a fixing, Rawlplug says.



Rawlplug is one of the world's leading fixing manufacturers distributing its products on every continent.

A Rawlplug display.

Investing in Innovation

On the question of competition, Paul says that it's important to be informed about the marketplace but he believes the business is not primarily about analysing your competitors; it's about looking at your own business and your standards. "It's so important to have excellent service, including next day delivery," he says, highlighting Rawlplug's commitment to innovation and to being category 'captain' in its sector. "Research and development is imperative. R&D ensures new, innovative products, new packaging and new, improved marketing."

Launch of Rawlplug Technical Service

Rawlplug says it is the first fixings distributor in Ireland servicing merchant and DIY stores to offer a technical advisory service. Paul notes: "Our trained engineer will provide a complete package of technical support, from the design stage of a project to its completion." Rawlplug's service includes the recommendation of an appropriate product, taking into account structure, life expectancy, location, load applied, and all other relevant factors. Rawlplug is pleased to check the design and specification of any product from lightweight fixings to heavily-loaded, safety-critical anchors. "This ensures that there is correct specification of fixings to meet required safety loads and that the fixing works satisfactorily throughout its product life."

Rawlplug and the environment

Rawlplug is committed to making the company environmentally sustainable: "Minimising our environmental impact is certainly a priority. An example of the company's dedication to this principle is the development of new eco-

Table 1. Rawlplug's colour-coded system to categorise products for use in various substrates & applications.

Blue	Multi-purpose suitable for use in a variety of substrates, regardless of their structure
Yellow	Plasterboard
Orange	Solid material (such as concrete or stone)
Brown	Timber, plywood and chipboards
Grey	Steel sheets and profiles
Green	Solution kits

friendly product packaging, which contains special fibres, conforming to a sustainable brand image while not sacrificing quality or appearance."

We finish our discussion by looking towards the New Year. The Hardware Show will be the main platform for Rawlplug in 2017, so a visit to their stand is a must. Paul concludes by promising that customers and potential customers can look forward to new high quality products and innovative marketing ideas from Rawlplug over the next 12 months.

If you have a story to tell as a supplier or manufacturer in the Irish market, please contact Annemarie on 01 298 0969 or annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie for more information.



HAI welcomes HRI extension in Budget 2017

– research shows its value but also indicates lack of public awareness

Behaviours & Attitudes conducted research among homeowners in August this year on behalf of HAI to support its pre-Budget submission and in particular, the recommendation to Government to extend the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) scheme for two years beyond its planned end date of 31st December, 2016. So it was welcome news on the afternoon of 11th October when Minister Noonan confirmed the extension was going ahead. Here, we highlight some of the most interesting findings in the research.

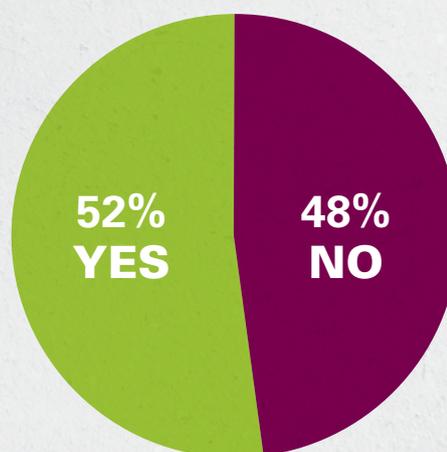
Key issues put to homeowners as part of the research in August included:

- the likelihood of their carrying out renovations in the next 12 months;
- their estimated spend on renovation;
- reasons for not conducting renovations; and,
- awareness of the HRI scheme.

The results were used to gain media exposure and to reinforce the need for the extension of the scheme. In summary, the findings were as follows:

- One in five householders are looking to carry out some home renovations in 2017, with one in ten very likely to do so. Those aged 35-49 and the middle classes are the most likely to undertake some form of home renovations next year. Looking specifically at the regions, Leinster (excluding Dublin) shows a high likelihood of conducting renovations.
- Those aware of the HRI scheme are twice as likely to be carrying out renovations as those unaware of it.
- Focusing on those saying they are likely to do some renovation work, close to half aim to spend €5,000 or less on their renovations. A high proportion of homeowners are unsure just how much they will be spending in this area.
- Among those who said they were unlikely to carry out renovations in the next year, the majority said they did not have the need to do so. Cost is less of an issue; only one in ten mentioned it, with a similar proportion saying they just don't have the money for it right now.
- Just half of home owners have heard of the HRI scheme. Awareness levels vary considerably among the main demographics with awareness highest among those aged 50-64, the middle class and those living in Dublin. Just three in five of those likely to do renovation work in the next year are aware of it.

Just half of householders have heard of the HRI scheme. Awareness levels vary considerably amongst the main demographics with awareness highest amongst those aged 50-64, the middle class and those living in Dublin.



General HRI statistics.

Number of Works	71,644
Number of Properties	49,047
Total Estimated Value of Works	€1,138,438,251
Average Value of Works	€15,890
Total Number of Contractors	8,787

Breakdown of the number of properties registered, works carried out and their estimated values by county.

County	Number of Properties	Number of Works	Value of Works €m
Carlow	361	533	5.77
Cavan	339	443	5.08
Clare	848	1,193	17.22
Cork	5,692	8,554	122.72
Donegal	371	507	9.77
Dublin	22,412	33,139	615.29
Galway	2,000	3,007	43.83
Kerry	983	1,377	18.63
Kildare	2,771	4,003	49.98
Kilkenny	722	974	13.35
Laois	330	473	5.31
Leitrim	170	215	2.87
Limerick	1,597	2,312	29.35
Longford	184	279	3.02
Louth	799	1,082	13.17
Mayo	635	905	11.65
Meath	1,714	2,518	31.55
Monaghan	196	259	3.33
Offaly	371	501	5.96
Roscommon	436	642	6.62
Sligo	514	770	12.33
Tipperary	1,145	1,551	22.69
Waterford	938	1,312	17.43
Westmeath	668	970	11.92
Wexford	940	1,326	15.76
Wicklow	1,911	2,799	43.85
TOTAL	49,047	71,644	1,138.44*

* Figure may be affected by rounding. Data correct as of 1st November, 2016.

OTHER BUDGET INITIATIVES WELCOMED BY HAI

In addition to the HRI extension, HAI also welcomed a number of other initiatives announced in Budget 2017 including:

- The Help to Buy scheme which will provide a rebate of income tax paid over the previous four tax years up to a maximum of 5% of the purchase price of a new home up to a value of €400,000 to first-time buyers of new houses up to a maximum state payment of €20,000. Pro-rata rates will apply to lower priced houses and a full rebate calculated on €400,000 will also apply to houses in excess of €400,000 and up to €600,000. No rebate will be paid on house purchases in excess of €600,000. First-time buyers must stay five years to get the full tax rebate. Second-hand properties are not included in the Help-to-Buy measure.
- Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, announced €1.2 billion for 47,000 new social homes by 2020 as part of Minister of Housing, Planning and Local Government Simon Coveney's Rebuilding Ireland plan and €50 million additional funding to the Local Infrastructure Activity Fund. This ambitious plan will require sustained funding to deliver the required number of housing units identified.
- The Earned Income Tax Credit for the self-employed increased by €400, bringing it to €950.
- An additional €5 million allotted to the Revenue Commissioners for the recruitment of 50 additional staff and additional investment in systems and equipment. HAI hopes this will serve to constrain activity in the shadow economy and particularly to clamp down on the illicit solid fuel trade.
- €107 million in increased funding to the Rural Development Programme and the announcement of €15 million funding allocated to progress the procurement phase of the National Broadband Plan.

Top five categories of work by reference to the number of works completed.

Top Five Works by Number	% of Total Works by Number
Window Replacment	23.40
Kitchen Renovations	18.06
General Repairs & Renovations	13.32
Home Extension	9.10
'Other' Works (unspecified)	6.79

Top five categories of work by reference to the value of work completed.

Top Five Works by Value	% of Total Works by Value
Home Extension	34.89
General Repairs & Renovations	24.75
Window Replacment	11.07
Kitchen Renovations	9.94
Bathroom/Shower/En Suite Improvements	3.23

New dimensions in DIY

In the final part of her series of reports from the 4th Global DIY Summit, HAI CEO Annemarie Harte focuses on the speakers who featured in the final morning of the conference. The organisers kept their biggest digital disrupters for the start of the second day, with Google proclaiming its next technology wave in 3D and eBay outlining how it is continuing to implement its retail strategy. There was also a breakdown of the latest trends emerging from both the European and US home improvement markets.

The summit, held on the 8th and 9th June in Stockholm, is the largest conference of DIY retailers and suppliers from over 45 countries with a speaker line-up that included top industry leaders, innovators, researchers and professors. It was jointly hosted by leading European DIY professional organisations, the European DIY-Retail Association (EDRA) and European Federation of DIY Manufacturers (fediyma), as well as the Global Home Improvement Network (GHIN).

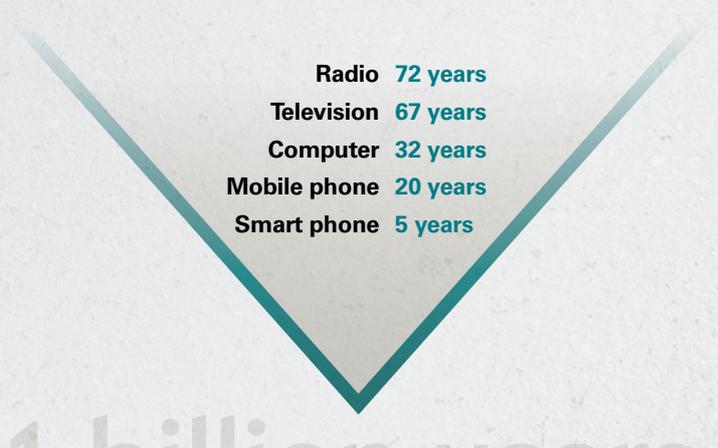
The theme for the summit was 'A Disruptive World – New Trends in Home Improvement'. On the second day of the conference, we were treated to a vision of the home improvement market of the future. First up was the Retail Director of Google Germany, John Gerosa.

Full tilt into the future

Google's Tilt Brush lets you paint in 3D space with virtual reality – just put on the goggles, arm yourself with an interactive brush and go. You can unleash your creativity with three-dimensional brush strokes, stars, light, and even fire. Your room is your canvas and your palette is your imagination. according to Google.

While sitting in the conference theatre, the possibilities of applying this technology to the home improvement market became clear – the user can re-decorate a room, build custom-designed furniture or add stylish accessories. She or he can paint in three-dimensional space.

The emphasis is on ease of use: simply select your colours and brushes and get going with a wave of your hand. Your room is a blank slate. You can step around, in and through your drawings as you go. To get inspired, check out #TiltBrush on Twitter or to experience the capabilities and features of Tilt Brush visit www.tiltbrush.com



Radio	72 years
Television	67 years
Computer	32 years
Mobile phone	20 years
Smart phone	5 years

1 billion users

Figure 1. Comparative rates of evolution of adoption of new technology up to 1 billion users

When John was finished wowing the audience with Tilt Brush, he presented some key statistics including:

- 64% of all in-store sales are influenced by digital;
- 90% of adults use mobile phones in-store; and,
- 34% of DIYers researched online before buying offline in 2015.

He also posed a couple of questions:

- are you a digital brand?
- are you set up for digital?

He reminded us that "all things are connected" and video is evolving to 360 degrees –we only need to look at our Facebook accounts to see how quickly this facility has emerged and developed in the last six months. It's virtual reality for everyone and



machine learning enables smarter replies, smarter translation and personal assistance. He gave the example of Houzz, visit houzz.ie, as an excellent example of leveraging images, contents and suppliers. He emphasised taking advantage of technology and letting that create an advantage for you in DIY or DIFM (Do It For Me) market segments. He commented: "Know your customer micro-moments and focus on transformational thinking." To complete the masterclass on digital disruption in the marketplace, John gave a stark picture of the comparative rates of evolution of adoption of new technology up to the billion-user level (see Figure 1).

eBay accounts for its success

eBay's focus was on how we can work together in its community system based on enabling users to be accountable to each other. Last year, 18 million DIY products were sold in Europe amounting

to €500 million in value terms and eBay says it wants you to have a slice of that pie. For instance, it suggests you might consider setting up an eBay Shop and using PayPal for transactions before you consider going head-first into developing your own bespoke e-commerce site. Visit ebay.ie and search on eBay shops for all you need to know about getting started; however, you should note that you will have stiff competition if you're thinking of competing on the European online sales market as none other than Amazon are the market leader by far.

It's a different story in the USA where online sales are growing, up 10.5% at non-store retailers by June this year (much of this coming from Amazon), but the e-commerce giant doesn't have a toehold in large parts of the home improvement space, such as timber, paint and gardening supplies. Home Depot says only 25% of its business – smaller, easy-to-ship items like power drills and small hand tools – faces tough online competition.

<p>Active buyers 162m</p>	<p>\$82bn GMV in 2015</p>	<p>New items 79%</p>	<p>99% of EU businesses are SMBs</p>	<p>Countries reached by European SMBs on eBay 18</p>	<p>FUTURE DIY STORE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easy to find • Multichannel integrations - interactive shopping • Chill-out-zones vs No-place to think • More emotions vs boring info-notes • Tutorials on evenings and weekends • Same day/home delivery vs click & collect • Mini-stores vs overfilled shelves • Share-points (24hr vendor machines, app-community) • Involve our feedback vs single buyers choice • Sustainability (ethnic products, healthy food corners, no junk)
<p>Listings 900m</p>	<p>314m Users eBay Inc apps</p>	<p>Touched by mobile 55%</p>	<p>SMBs in Europe who export 93% on eBay 26% offline sellers</p>	<p>European SMBs on eBay cross border trade +61% growth 2010 - 2014</p>	

Outstanding Category Performers 2015 in Europe



Bathroom
+8.6%



External House
+6.8%



Safety & Security
+8.1%

That doesn't mean the chain is immune to Amazon. A survey by UBS, the global financial services company, in June found that 11% of consumers planning a home improvement project themselves planned to buy something from Amazon. That is far behind the 36% who said they planned to shop at Home Depot or the 21% opting for Lowe's, but is still up from just 7% a few months back.

Continental trends

To close the Summit, the audience were given some key insights into trends emerging in both the European and US markets. In the US, growth in the home improvement market has been on an upward trend since 2011 even with housing in the US still 30% below normalised levels and entry-level buyers not participating. In 2015, \$40 billion of US retail sales moved online and e-commerce continues to be the retail growth driver. Amazon has made it clear it wants to be a disruptor. This is evident in the statement of its core principles outlined below:

- customer obsession rather than competitor obsession;
- eagerness to invent and pioneer;
- willingness to fail;
- patience to think long-term; and,
- professional pride in operational excellence.

A key point to keep in mind in the short to medium term is that, while Amazon is achieving its goal of being a disruptor and its growth is actually accelerating in the near-term (27% in Q1 2016 vs 24% in Q4 2015), 40-60% of online home improvement purchases continue to be picked up in store, and 25-35% of customers add one more item to each in-store pickup.

Understanding BOPIS

The Summit speakers underlined the importance of perfecting your buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS) strategy. The key factors affecting this strategy are:

- an emphasis on sales, marketing and logistics;
- the retention of stores' competitive advantage over e-tailers;
- the growth in customer store loyalty; and,
- the trades' preference for the convenience of the big box location.

In conclusion, it's clear there is a huge opportunity to increase merchandising efforts within BOPIS. Key points to keep in mind in this regard include:

- the importance of making planned hires in e-commerce much faster (and the importance of hiring the best);
- marketing, sales, and logistics staff additions should be the highest initial priority for companies; and,
- remembering that content management and data analytics can be outsourced.

The winning formula, it is suggested, is as follows: hire an experienced e-commerce leader; ensure that this leader is empowered by senior management; add sales, marketing and logistics support; and increase investment to drive growth.

Next year's 5th Global DIY Summit will take place in Berlin on the 8th and 9th June 2017. Visit www.diysummit.org for more information.

Membership satisfaction survey highlights demand for e-commerce and social media training

During September, HAI conducted internal research to understand satisfaction levels with the Association's service and to uncover training ambitions for 2017. This was the third annual member satisfaction survey and HAI thanks the members who took the time to complete it as it provided an invaluable insight into how we are performing, how we can improve our service and provided us with reliable criteria to plan appropriate training for next year.

Key findings can be summarised as follows:

- Regional participation dip in Dublin and Munster; slight increase in Rest of Leinster and Connacht/Ulster.
- Industry information remains the most important service provided.
- Promoting the industry through the media has dropped in importance since last year and Training/Skills development and HR/Compliance services have increased in importance.
- Members are interested in a variety of training delivery methods with winter and spring the most popular times to hold training.
- E-commerce and social media marketing are high on the training agenda.
- Recommendation of the Association to others has remained at 84%; those who would not recommend the Association has dropped and those who may recommend the Association has increased.

PROPOSED NEW INITIATIVES

HAI also asked members what new initiatives you might like to see introduced. Here we present some of the most popular proposals with an update from HAI CEO Annemarie Harte on each:

Regional Supplier Shows

The CEO responds: "This is definitely something I'd like HAI to host and support. I was approached by a member supplier last year with this suggestion and it was in the melting pot for this year but due to a range of circumstances including holding the Conference and moving premises, it got pushed back."

Industry Awards

"This has been much discussed by HAI's Executive Committee and is high on the agenda. Currently still at concept stage but definitely an area that HAI wants to embrace and deliver to the industry."

Quarterly Business Briefings

"Now that we have our own premises conveniently located on the Naas Road this can become a reality and will be included in the planning process for 2017."

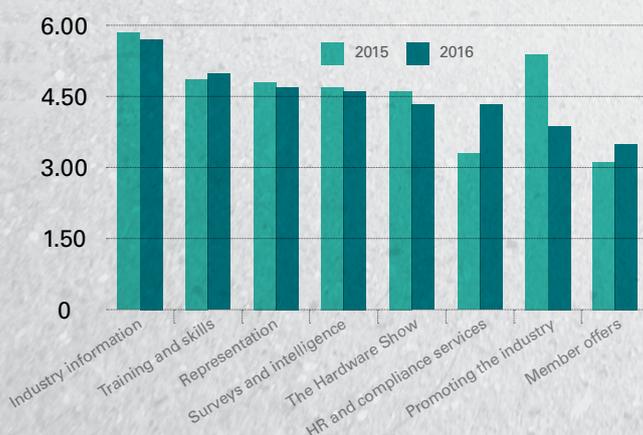
Store Visits

"I have wanted to do this since I started and am determined to showcase best practice in our member stores next year."

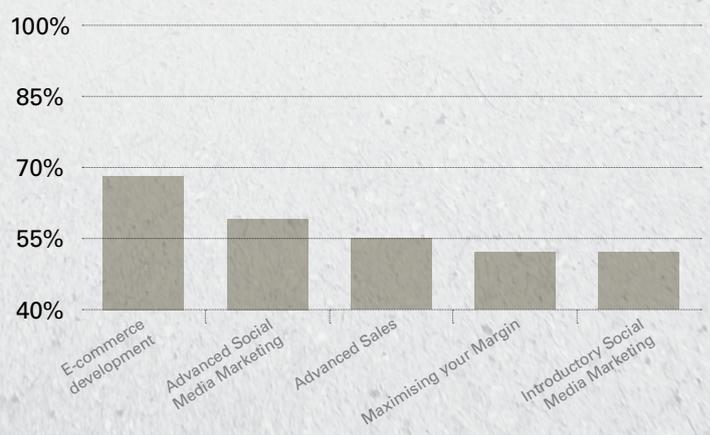
Business Mentoring Service

"I personally have found mentoring one of the most beneficial and important additions to my career. It's going into the mix for next year too."

Q. Please rank these services in order of importance.



Q. What training would benefit your business most in 2017?



Dwelling units approval up 1% in Q2

In the second quarter (Q2) of 2016, planning permissions were granted for 3,141 dwelling units, compared with 3,110 units for the same period in 2015, a slight increase of 1%.

Table 1: Planning Permissions.

'000m ²	2 Quarters (Jan - Jun 2016)				+ - % Change
	2013	2014	2015	2016	
New Construction					
Dwellings	727	632	1,052	1,056	+0.4%
Other New	697	471	564	982	+74%
Total New	1,424	1,103	1,616	2,038	+26%
Extensions	339	354	422	487	+15%
Total Permissions	1,763	1,457	2,038	2,525	+24%

Source: CSO

The figures also show that of the total permissions for dwelling units granted in Q2 of 2016, 2,340 were houses and 801 were apartments (2,637 houses and 473 apartments in 2015). This represents a decrease of 11.3% in the number of houses, but an increase in the number of apartment units by 69.3% in 2015.

Total floor area planned in Q2, 2016 was 1,245,000m². Of this, 44% was for new dwellings, 37% for other new constructions and 19% for extensions. The total floor area planned increased by 17% in comparison with the same quarter in 2015 (1,064,000m² in Q2, 2015).

One-off houses accounted for 42.3% (990) of all new houses granted planning permission in this quarter. This sector experienced 20.6% growth on the same period in 2015.

Increase in planned floor area

In the period Jan-Jun 2016, a total of 2,525,000m² of floor area planned was granted permission representing an overall increase of 24% on the same period last year. Significant increases were seen in particular in Other New Construction, which is up 74%. New Dwellings has remained virtually the same with only a minimal increase of 0.4%.

In the first six months of 2016, the average floor area of a one-off house experienced a slight decrease of 2% when compared to the first half of 2015 (See Table 2: Analysis of Dwellings). Scheme houses showed an 8% decrease.

The average floor area of an apartment is also down, by 10%, at 89m². A one-off house has an average floor area of 239m² and a scheme house has an average floor area of 137m². Of the

Chart 1: House Type by Quarter (No. of Units).

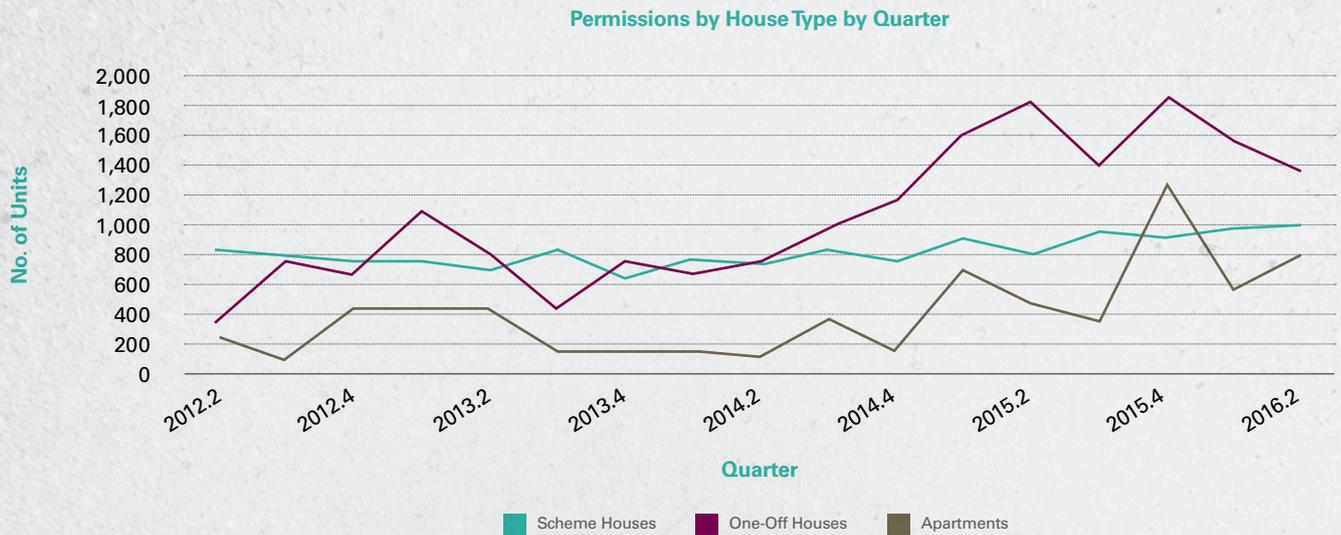


Table 2: Analysis of Dwellings.

2 Quarters (Jan - Jun 2016)	2014	2015	2016	% Change
Multi-Development Houses				
No. of Permissions	118	161	194	+20%
No. of Units	1,412	3,422	2,906	-15%
Floor Area ('000m ²)	205	509	397	-22%
Average Floor Area m ²	145	148	137	-8%
One-Off Houses				
No. of Permissions	1,526	1,729	1,968	+14%
No. of Units	1,526	1,729	1,968	+14%
Floor Area ('000m ²)	375	420	470	+12%
Average Floor Area m ²	246	243	239	-2%
Apartments				
No. of Permissions	112	155	197	+27%
No. of Units	272	1,172	1,358	+16%
Floor Area ('000m ²)	25	115	121	+5%
Average Floor Area m ²	91	98	89	-10%

Source: CSO

total floor area planned for new houses and apartments in Q1 and Q2, one-off houses accounted for 47.6%, multi-development houses 40.2%, and apartments 12.2%. The number of permissions granted on one-off houses is up 14% on the same period last year.

Regional breakdown

There has been an increase in floor area planned in most regions in the first half of 2016, the exceptions being the Mid East which is down 28% and Dublin, down 10%, on first half (H1) of 2015 (See Table 3: Dwelling by Region). The region experiencing the most substantial growth is the South East. Overall, there has been a slight increase of 2% in floor area planned in dwellings.

Source: CSO

Many thanks to Claire Kelly, Tegral, for assistance in compiling this article.

Table 3: Dwellings by Region (Floor Area Planned '000m²).

Region '000m ²	Jan - Jun 2014	Jan - Jun 2015	Jan - Jun 2016	+ - %
Dublin	203	383	346	-10%
Border	59	91	96	5%
Mid East	65	183	132	-28%
Midlands	32	36	51	42%
Mid West	52	56	57	2%
South East	66	79	114	44%
South West	85	129	150	16%
West	70	73	109	49%
Total Dwellings	632	1,030	1,055	2%

Source: CSO

smarter™

Smarter has recently announced the launch of its FridgeCam; a wireless camera that lets owners see inside their fridge without opening it.



Smart moves

connectivity set to spur homeware sales

Gearing up for a new year and new opportunities, *The Hardware Journal* welcomes the return of features focused on Home and Garden. Karen Welsh provides an overview of some of the products trending for 2017. With consumer confidence at its highest for eight years and deliverables on housing high up the Government's agenda, you may be looking to complement your stock with homeware products. We've started with a look at a couple of buzzwords from the DIY Summit back in June – Home Connectivity.

Smart kitchens

Research from retail trendsetters, the US, indicates that home connectivity is the name of the game for 2017. Products that link to smartphones and tablets are all the rage, with customers looking for everything from WiFi-connected coffee machines that allow consumers to make a hot cuppa from bed, to slow cookers that cook a roast at the perfect temperature. One 'cool' invention is Samsung's new Family Hub fridge with built-in cameras that send a snapshot to a linked phone whenever the door is closed, allowing consumers to check

what they have in their fridge whilst they're out shopping. One supermarket chain has even given away free smart fridges in a bid to cut down on food wastage. See Samsung's full range of smart fridges at samsung.com.

For customers who aren't keen to shell out €5,000 for a new fridge, British kitchen company Smarter has recently announced the launch of its FridgeCam; a wireless camera which lets owners see inside their fridge without opening it. These are retailing at €115. For more information on the Fridgecam, visit www.smarter.am

LED Lighting products

It might be a bright idea to invest in some LED lighting products for 2017, either as stock or to cut down on your own energy costs in-store. LED lighting continued to sell well in 2016 and is generally agreed to become mainstream over the next few years, with consumers favouring the energy-efficient, longer-lasting products to fluorescent alternatives.

And the LED trend is only going to get bigger, evolving as it goes. Networked lighting products are becoming more and more popular, with apps now able to activate lights when residents are on their way home, or give the illusion that someone is home in an empty house.

Manufacturers are incorporating LED lighting into a host of other products, including entertainment systems, where lights change colour with the beat of the music. Even smoke alarms are using LED lights as beacons which emit a red glow when the alarm is triggered, to provide better visibility in a smoky room.

For inspiration about the range of LED products on the market visit the US site, ledwholesalers.com

Video doorbell

In this modern age, home security is a big consideration for consumers and one product tipped to be a top seller next year is the smart video doorbell.

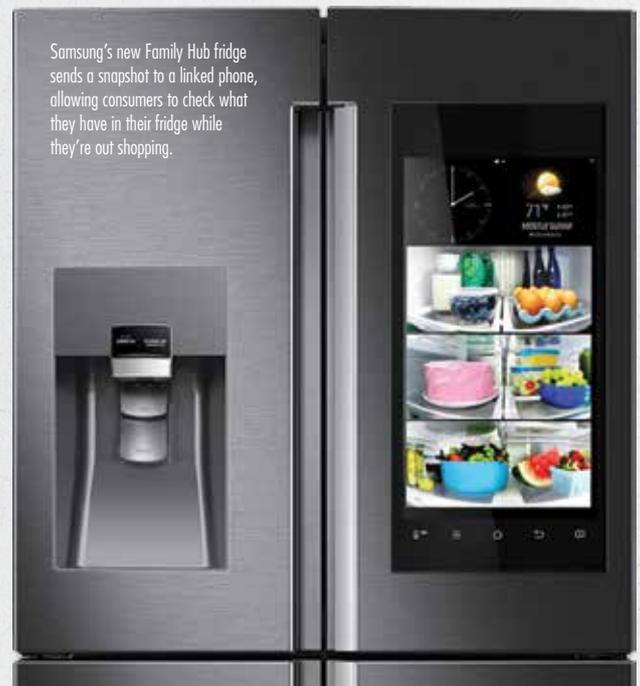
With a built-in camera providing a view of the doorstep, the doorbell allows consumers to pretend they're home when they're not; check who has been loitering around their home; avoid answering the door when unwelcome visitors call; keep an eye out for delivered packages or talk to visitors, even if they are 1,000 miles away. Along with the camera, most smart video doorbell systems contain two-way audio, motion sensors, an app to interact with the system, and the doorbell itself.

When the doorbell is activated, the device notifies the connected smartphone and sets up a video feed from the front door. Most products record and store the entire interaction for some number of days on a remote server.

The bestselling, highest-rated models are Ring Video Doorbell, ring.com, and SkyBell HD, skybell.com, but there are many models on the market. Most of the popular high end products are retailing at between €180 and €435, while models at the lower end of the scale, which have fewer bells and whistles, sell for around €75.



The Ring Video Doorbell.



Samsung's new Family Hub fridge sends a snapshot to a linked phone, allowing consumers to check what they have in their fridge while they're out shopping.

Trends in the US indicate that home connectivity is the name of the game for 2017. See below a selection of some of the innovative smart products now available

Smart Doorbell		Fridge with internal camera		LED Lighting systems		Other Smart products	
Ring Doorbell	€180	FSAMSUNG Family Hub RF56K9540SR	€5,000	Entertainment RGB controller with colour changing LED strip lights	€45	Slow Cooker Crock-Pot Smart Slow Cooker	€145
Skybell HD	€168 – €435			Networked lighting Philips Hue Ambiance starter kit	€185	Coffee Machine Smarter Wireless Coffee Machine Maker	€214
Zmodo Smart WiFi Doorbell	€335	Samsung RB38K7998S4	€3,370	Smoke Alarm Apollo AlarmSense Smoke Detector	€340	Electricity Control Smart WiFi Wireless Remote Control UK Plug Socket	€10
KKmoon Smart Video Doorbell	€73	Smarter FridgeCam	€135	Smoke Alarm Zerio Plus Smoke Detector with LED Beacon	€290	Energy Saver Loop Energy Saver Gas & Electricity monitors with built in tariff tracker	€67

Debt recovery options



Having reviewed, in the last edition, the various steps involved in debt collection through the courts, Siobhan Kenny of Frank Murphy Solicitors considers the recovery options available once a court order has been obtained.

The options outlined below are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and a claimant might elect to pursue two or perhaps more enforcement steps at the same time. The debt, of course, is recoverable only once and some caution is required. It would be highly unusual for a court to allow a claimant to recover costs in circumstances where they were incurred unnecessarily.

It is also of course prudent to consider the cost-effectiveness of the available options – and undoubtedly an option which might be ideal in one case, will be completely ineffective in another.

After judgement

Once judgement has been obtained – in any of the District Court, Circuit Court or High Court, the claimant has a number of options intended to assist in converting that judgement into payment. A judgement may, in normal course, be enforced at any stage during a period of 12 years from the date on which it is obtained, although if it is older than six years, application to Court may be necessary in some cases.

Publication of the judgement

This requires lodgement of details and particulars of the judgement in the High Court administration office. On registration, the fact of the judgement will be published in the gazettes such as *Stubbs* etc – with consequent impact on credit ratings. Processing time by the Courts is usually two weeks.

Execution order - Sheriff

Upon obtaining the judgement, it is open to the Creditor to refer the judgement to the local County Sheriff – who will attend at the debtor's premises with the intention of seizing goods to the value of the judgement. If the debtor has goods available to seize – such as stock, plant or machinery, this remedy can be very effective. Frequently, however, the Sheriff will come away empty-handed, leaving the judgement creditor with no return, having incurred relatively low fees in respect of the Sheriff's attendance. The time involved can be very difficult to estimate, and the Sheriff may retain the judgement referred to his office for lengthy periods.

Judgement mortgage

Subject to compliance with procedural requirements – a Judgement can be converted into a mortgage and registered as a charge against any property owned by the Debtor. The benefit of registering a judgement mortgage against a property which is already charged to a bank or other lender is limited. The owner of the earlier charge

will take priority, and, if there are insufficient funds to satisfy the charges registered ahead of the judgement mortgage in question, the judgement creditor will recover nothing.

On the other hand, if the property in question is charge free – the registration of a judgement mortgage might be the ideal enforcement option. The process is a relatively straightforward one and will involve the swearing of an affidavit and the lodgement of a dealing in the Land Registry. Both the affidavit and the application have to be prepared, and there will be costs and office fees involved. Once the judgement mortgage is registered, it becomes a charge on the land, and the landowner will have to deal with the owner of that charge if he wants to sell or mortgage his land. In addition, and subject to further court application – involving detailed court proceedings – it might be open to the judgement mortgage holder to seek an order for the sale of the lands in question. Clearly the costs involved in such a process are likely to be quite substantial, and this course is usually considered only where the value of the debt is significant.

Garnishee Proceedings

Once a judgement is obtained, the claimant can make an application to Court for an order directed to a third party from whom the debtor is due to receive a payment (e.g., an employer, a Client under a building contract, a local authority). Under the terms of the order, the third party is required to make any relevant payment to the judgement creditor (i.e., the claimant) and not to the judgement debtor. As you might imagine, this can be very effective.

The process is again relatively straightforward – and involves the swearing of court documents, and the making of an application to court. The difficulty for the creditor is in identifying a paying party, and obtaining an opportunity to make the court application, and serve the resulting order, before the payment is made. This is a relatively cost-effective process – and will usually involve counsel.

Injunctions

An injunction is an Order of the Court requiring a party to do something or not do something. In the context of debt recovery, the relevant type of injunction would be an order freezing assets, known as a *Mareva* Injunction – under which the respondent is constrained from disposing of or dissipating assets whilst the injunction remains in place. This is a complex remedy, and the grounds on which it will be considered are very specific. It is not commonly granted in any but the most complex of commercial cases and, as always when dealing with legal remedies, the costs involved will be directly impacted by the complexity of the matter in issue.

Budget 2017

– a construction perspective

Following on Maria Hewson's article in the September/October 2016 Edition, Elaine Kiernan looks at some of the tax aspects of Budget 2017.

In a year that marked the announcement of Brexit, the widely reported housing shortage in Ireland and the slow, but steady, recovery of the Irish economy, Budget 2017 was widely anticipated.

Housing

Given the current housing situation, it is not surprising that this topic featured heavily in Budget 2017. Minister Michael Noonan unveiled a number of measures in an attempt to ease the burden that affects so many families in Ireland at present. Minister Paschal Donohoe also outlined his commitment to increase the level of housing units available with an announcement to deliver 47,000 new social housing units by 2021.

For first-time buyers, the prospect of owning a home can seem like a remote possibility due to the large deposit required to secure a mortgage. The issue was addressed in Budget 2017 by the introduction of a Help to Buy Scheme which provides relief to first-time buyers of newly built houses in the form of a rebate of income tax paid over the previous four tax years, up to a maximum of 5% of the purchase price of a new home up to a value of €400,000. The rebate will be capped at a maximum of €20,000. No rebate will be available on house purchases in excess of €600,000. The relief applies to new homes purchased from 19th July, 2016 until the end of 2019 and is not extended to second-hand properties.

In an effort to assist those individuals not buying new homes, the Home Renovation Incentive Scheme (HRI) was extended by a further two years to the end of 2018. This scheme provides for tax relief by way of an income tax credit of 13.5% of qualifying expenditure on refurbishment works carried out on a main home or rental property by tax-compliant contractors. There are a wide range of works that qualify for the relief. The tax credit can be set against an individual's income over two years. There has been no change to the minimum spend required to avail of the scheme which remains at €4,405 (before VAT).

Rental Properties

The knock-on effect of the housing shortage on the rental sector was also highlighted in Budget 2017 by the announcement to improve existing measures. The mortgage interest deduction available to landlords of residential property was increased from 75% to 80%. Restoration of full deductibility for mortgage interest is expected by 1st January, 2021. The mortgage interest deduction available for commercial properties remains at 100%.

The annual limit on exempt income generated from the Rent-A-Room Relief was increased by €2,000 from €12,000 to €14,000.

Rent-A-Room Relief allows rental income generated from the letting of rooms in an individual's sole residence to be exempt from income tax.

Other Measures

Although the housing crisis dominated many aspects of Budget 2017, other widely anticipated changes were also included. One such issue is the topical Universal Social Charge (USC). The three lower USC rates were reduced by 0.5%. In addition, there was an increase in the entry point to the 5% band from €18,668 to €18,772. The Government reiterated their intention to phase out the USC in the future subject to resources being available. The gap between PAYE earners and the self-employed was further narrowed in Budget 2017 by increasing the earned income tax credit by €400 from €550 to €950. Although this measure will be welcomed by the self-employed, one could argue that not enough is being done to bridge the gap between PAYE earners and the self-employed due to the fact that the maximum rate of USC payable by PAYE earners remains at 8%. Where a self-employed individual earns over €100,000, USC at a rate of 11% is payable.

Conclusion

Whether the measures announced in Budget 2017 will make a significant difference to our economy remains to be seen given the possible impact of Brexit. There is no doubt that the impact of the budget measures relating to the construction and DIY sector will have a continued positive effect on the sector in the year ahead.

This information takes account of the Finance Bill which was published on Thursday, 20th October. There may be further amendments prior to the passing of the Finance Act which is anticipated to take place at the end of the year.

Please consult your own financial/tax adviser to see how this information affects you personally.

Elaine Kiernan recently joined Byrne Casey & Associates as a tax consultant having previously worked in the tax department of KPMG. Elaine is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Irish Tax Institute. Elaine specialises in personal taxes.



THE HARDWARE SHOW 2017

HOME - GARDEN - BUILD - DIY

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LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS AND INSPIRATION?

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THE HARDWARE SHOW 2017

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We are now three months away from the Hardware Show 2017. Over 80% of exhibitor space has been sold and plans are well advanced for innovative new features which are sure to attract just as much attention as the new products on offer and the special deals available from select exhibitors.

Our Show supplement will be available with the next edition of *The Hardware Journal* so make sure you receive your copy in advance to see the final list of exhibitors, the floor plan, information on where the Show features are located and full schedules, as well as news of new products available and who has what deals over the two days of the Show. With over 3,600m² of space in RDS Simonscourt arranged to maximise your experience, it will be the industry event of next year, taking place on Sunday, 5th and Monday, 6th March.

If you require extra copies of the next edition of the magazine please email info@hardwareassociation.ie with your name, address and number of copies before 15th January.

If all that was not enough to have you signing up immediately, the first 500 registrations will receive free parking and a goodie bag, so **REGISTER NOW** at www.thehardwareshow.ie

Focus on Home and Garden

One of the key attractions for visitors to the Show is that it caters for two sectors of the industry that have acted as a boon in the difficult years post-construction crash – Home and Garden.

According to Bord Bia's research in 2015, the gardening market is growing again. The overall market is valued at €631million which was an increase of 22% since 2011. The market is showing strong signs of recovery, particularly in the areas of hard landscaping and outdoor and flowering plants. Occasions of outdoor and flowering plants purchases have increased by a fifth since 2011, and the market value is up 13%. An improving economic environment with plans for significant investment in social housing and an upward trend in housebuilding will provide further impetus to the market.

The Hardware Show is recognised for bringing together leading brands across the retail and merchant sector and the extra capacity at the RDS means more opportunities for suppliers and visitors alike. Many companies that supply garden and outdoor-related products have already booked space including Ames True Temper, Bord na Móna, Crown Paints, DS Supplies, Dulux, Jefferson Tools, Kilsaran, McLoughlinsRS, N&C Enterprises, Ronseal and Westaro Hosing.



Annemarie Harte, CEO of HAI says: "Garden and outdoor living is an important feature of many retailers' businesses and is a growing market. Visitors come to The Hardware Show not just to look for new products but for advice and support in developing this part of their business. Our exhibitors have responded by taking bigger stands this year to showcase a plethora of new and innovative products in the sector."

See page 32 for information on the latest products and trends in homeware that could be sitting on your shelves post-Hardware Show.

The President's Ball

The President's Ball gala dinner and dance is returning to its original slot of Saturday night to kick off the Show in style. The social highlight of the industry calendar is the perfect setting to rekindle old friendships and make new ones. The Ball will take place on the evening of Saturday, 4th March, at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel on Burlington Road, Dublin 4.

The Ball is also the first opportunity for the industry to welcome the new President of Hardware Association Ireland, Kieran Burke, Group Procurement Director, Grafton Group plc, who will be hosting the Ball in 2017. Kieran personally invites merchants and suppliers to attend the evening with him. Tickets for the Ball are €75 each and tables of 10 can be booked at €750. Book your ticket at www.thehardwareshow.ie/presidents-ball Kieran invites you to book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment.

HAI has negotiated a preferential rate of €150 (single occupancy) and €170 (double occupancy) for bed and breakfast on the Saturday night of the President's Ball. A limited number of rooms on the Sunday night are available at the same exclusive rate to HAI.

Book early as this special rate has limited availability. Call the Doubletree on +353 1 618 5600 or email: DTDublinHotel.Reservations@hilton.com quoting The Hardware Association Ireland Dinner. Alternatively, book online by visiting the Show website at www.thehardwareshow.ie/presidents-ball

Five tips to grow your business online

As Jeff Harte and Prerna Gupta of Google discussed in their previous article, the DIY & Home Improvement sector in Ireland is seeing a continuous growth in consumer interest moving online. Searches for terms like 'DIY' and 'home improvement' are growing at 38% and 270% respectively in the last four years. With this growing interest, having an online presence is becoming imperative to maintain growth in business. In this article, Jeff and Prerna offer five tips to grow your business online.

1. Build your online presence

The first and the most important tip to improve your business visibility is to have a website that explains who you are and what you do. Treat this as the first impression a potential customer will have of your business and how they perceive you in the future. Services such as www.gettingbusinessonline.ie are free resources that will help you take the first steps in setting up your business website and to building an online presence.

2. Get found

Once you have a website to engage with your potential customers, ensuring that they can find you during their research phase becomes even more crucial. In Ireland, 85% of online users use search engines to find businesses and gather information. Getting found, providing relevant information about your products or services, and providing an engaging user experience to capture this growing online interest is key. Use search engine optimisation to influence these users searching online.

3. Show the customer what they want to see

Use advertising to direct customers to where you want them to be. If someone is looking only for your store opening hours, direct your search results to a page that has this information. Similarly if someone is looking for a particular product that they are in the market to buy, it makes sense to link them directly to that product on your website instead of: Home Page > Product Search > Category Page > Sub Category > Product. Here, you run the risk of your customer losing interest.

Tailor your website and your advertising messaging with this in mind to call out specific products or ranges and bring customers straight there.

4. Further footfall

When researching online in Ireland, users are looking for store information 29% of the time and for business operating hours 27% of the time. These are the 'I-want-to-buy' moments when the user purchase intent is high and businesses should look at influencing consideration of such users. Creating a 'Google My Business' account helps a business get its business hours, phone number and directions to stores on Google Search and Google Maps. This enables a business to control where they appear, ensure accuracy of business information, and provide photos and reviews of their business, for free.

5. Invest in customers

Getting found and providing the most relevant information can often require more than an organic search listing. Online advertising through Adwords can help your business listing get on the top of the search result page. It's particularly useful for smaller businesses to build brand awareness and influence consideration as statistically users who end up clicking on an ad will click on the first ad in the search result page. For businesses that operate in this online world, a multi-channel strategy to target potential customers, where they are and with what they're looking for, can help win the moments that matter. Getting these basics in order will put your business in place to capture some of the growth from customers who are out there searching for you right now. And it will also set you up to enable you to expand your presence in much more advanced, engaging and interesting ways.

Jeff Harte and Prerna Gupta work at Google as Sales Account Managers for Home & Garden advertisers.

For any members that have questions or comments for Google, they have kindly set up a dedicated email address for Hardware Association Ireland, it is hai-questions@google.com

WEB TRAFFIC



Innovation paints a new picture

Sustainability, functionality and safety have become key factors in consumer paint choices.

The architectural market has utilised new technology by using electronic tools to estimate the accurate amount of paint needed per project in order to reduce paint disposal costs and wastage. Many paint companies are also providing paint with lower odour and lower emissions in correlation with increased demand for improved indoor air quality following a recent painting project.

Safety first

As people move into new or first homes, they look to products that promote health and wellness by making their homes safer with the likes of products with fungicidal, anti-bacterial or antiseptic qualities in rising demand. More affluent consumers are demonstrating an increased interest in purchasing 'green' products along with a keen interest in the heritage of the paint they purchase due to value placed

on tradition and craftsmanship.

Both formulators and suppliers are maximising the quality and value of coatings, delivering products with desirable features that meet the demand of customer feedback, such as scrub resistance, low dirt pick up and stain-resistant paints.

Digital boost

In the digital age, communication and technology have allowed for innovative ways for consumers to choose and view paint before purchase, with smartphone apps allowing the user to digitally 'paint' their space through the use of their phone camera and chosen paint colour.

In the Irish market, several companies have developed innovative products that take into account aforementioned consumer interest when it comes to choices in specialist paints.

THE EUROPEAN COATINGS SHOW 2017

The European Coatings Show will take place in Nuremberg from 4th – 6th April, 2017.

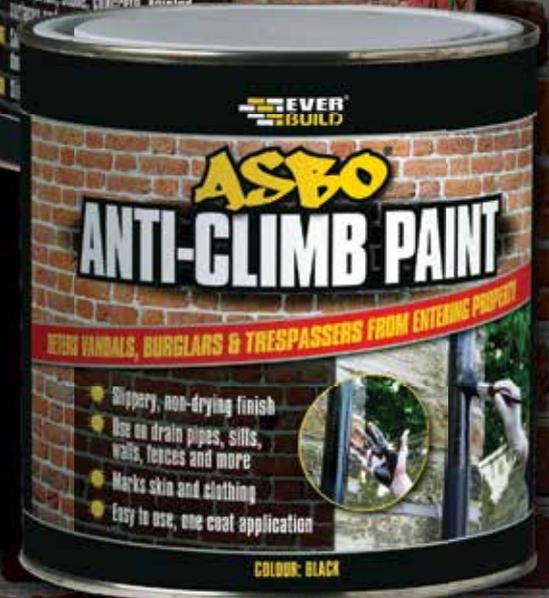
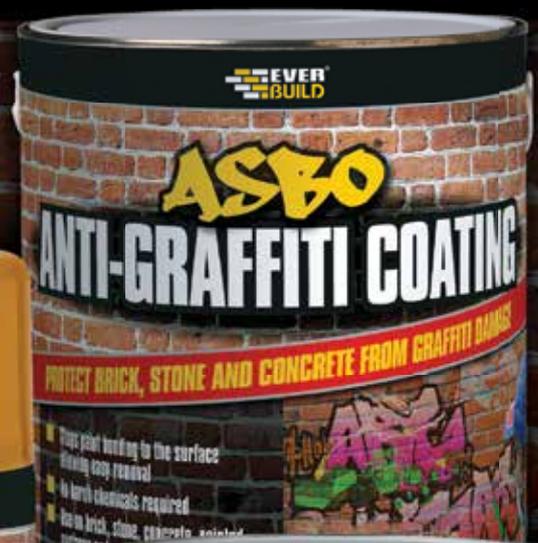
Visitors will include the formulators of paint, coatings, adhesives, sealants and additives. Representatives from industrial processors, science and research are also expected to attend.

For more information visit www.european-coatings-show.com/en/exhibition-info

DAMAGE LIMITATION

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Our new ASBO anti-vandal product range features high quality products including Anti-Climb Paint, Anti-Graffiti Coating and a Graffiti Remover. Together these products provide the perfect solution to aid prevention of vandalism and graffiti.



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Website: www.everbuild.eu

Everbuild range tackles graffiti

To combat growing concerns about vandalism and graffiti, Everbuild, a Sika company, has launched the new ASBO range, providing both the prevention and cure to the problem. ASBO Anti-Graffiti Coating is a semi-gloss, clear coating designed to protect against costly damage caused by spray paints, marker pens and fly posting.

"Once applied, the coating prevents paint from bonding, causing it to crack allowing for easy removal using just water and detergent, eliminating the need for any harsh chemicals, while posters will fall off on their own after a few days. The coating can be brush- or roller-applied to concrete, brick, render, masonry and previously-painted surfaces," a company spokesperson explained.

ASBO Anti-Climb Paint is a non-drying, solvent-free paint which remains slippery and greasy making climbing virtually impossible. The thick, black paint also marks anyone who touches the surface making the intruder easily identifiable.

Finally, ASBO Graffiti Remover is a non-drip aerosol formula which Everbuild says can penetrate deep into the graffiti allowing easy removal of paint, felt tip and biro marks left by vandals. ASBO Graffiti Remover can be used on all surfaces including brick, stone, metals and concrete.



Lowes leaves rust in the dust

Curust Industries Ltd has added eight new colours of Lowe Rust Paint to complement the original Lowe Rust Primer range, which was first produced in the early 1980s in Fleming's Place, Dublin 4. "The original formula of Lowe Rust Primer was changed slightly to facilitate the addition of gloss resins and colour pigment to create a high-quality rust primer with a smooth mid-gloss finish available in black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, silver and slate grey," according to a company spokesperson.

The name Lowe has been synonymous with rust prevention in Ireland for more than a generation. Initially, it established its strong brand identity, the spokesman said, through its then innovative ability to be used straight onto rust and for its lead-free properties. "People used it on cars, gates, machinery, boats and anywhere that rust was a problem."

In the 1990s, the decision was made to outsource production in order to cater for growing demand. Product quality was ensured by strict adherence to the original formula.

Although 'tile red' was the dominant colour at the time and Lowe Rust Primer did not require an over-coat, it became clear that users of the product wanted to be able to over-coat to a colour of their choice. With this in mind, Curust introduced 'dove-grey' as an option that could be more easily over-coated, and sales grew further. Lowe continues to adapt to changing customer needs, hence, the recent development of multiple colour options.



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Rust-Oleum's lick of paint works wonders

Rust-Oleum's lick of paint works wonders

Ideally suited to the upcycling trend, Rust-Oleum's new additions to its furniture paint range includes Chalky, Satin or Gloss finishes as well as metallic gold and silver finishes.

The range includes three finishing products including a clear, matt Furniture Lacquer for use over the chalky finish paint. A Finishing Wax is available in clear or dark shades to ensure water-resistance and as protection against stains and marks. There is also an option available for flooring with Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish Floor Paint which can resist scratches and be applied directly over old paint and varnish. This floor paint can be used on both wooden and concrete flooring and is available in nine new shades including butterscotch, laurel green, hessian, and ink blue – increasing the range to 25 classic colours.

"Rust-Oleum Satin Finish Furniture Paint adds a smooth, velvety look with a light, mid-sheen to any furniture. This versatile satin finish reflects more light than a matte finish, enhancing contemporary interiors and is available in eight elegant colours including teal, slate, blue sky and carbon," a spokesperson said.

For a more sleek look, Rust-Oleum have a Gloss Finish Furniture Paint available in five classic colours including liquorice, mineral grey and white frost.

Rust-Oleum's Metallic Furniture Paint, available in silver and gold, is an easy way to introduce subtle detailing on mouldings or design features. This product can also be used as a base coat under Chalky Finish Furniture Paint which can be lightly distressed to reveal metallic areas beneath.

"All our furniture paints can be applied direct to furniture and are water-based meaning they have virtually no odour and are perfect for indoor projects. In addition, the Chalky Finish, Gloss and Satin Rust-Oleum furniture paint ranges and the Furniture Lacquer have been certified toy-safe, meaning they all meet the stringent requirements of the European Union EN-71-3 toy safety standards," the spokesperson added.



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Rust-Oleum Furniture Paints are perfect for updating the appearance of furniture new and old. Apply directly to furniture in one easy application. Add a timeless mid-sheen lustre with a silk touch satin finish, choose a sleek gloss for a cool, modern twist or create a shabby-chic effect with a chalky, matt finish. For more information, project ideas, how-tos and stockists visit our website.



www.makeityours.co.uk

Available at: **dycon**

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COLOUR TRENDS FOR 2017

Designers predict three moods will dominate colour trends next year – composed, confident and comfortable.

COMPOSED

In 2017, aqua and earth tones will bring a touch of natural serenity to interiors. Palettes that revolve around low-key greens and blues emulate the ever-changing colours of the sea and offer gentle transition from shade to shade.

Neutral greys remain a popular choice by acting as an essentially darker blank canvas. The likes of charcoal shades still retain enough warmth as to avoid feeling overtly oppressive. Instead, these sublime greys slip into the background, allowing accent pieces to really make an impact.

These palette shades could easily be worked into any size interior design scheme. Its calming influence may also be highly appropriate for offices and other commercial spaces, where workers can appreciate a softer, gentler influence in their work lives.

CONFIDENT

While composed colours are content with keeping their presence on the quieter side, those on the confident scale are far more outspoken and daring with shades that are bold, brash and brilliant.

Internal walls will be splattered bright red in 2017, creating spaces that scream style and substance. Lush jades, dusky blues and citrus shades will also prove to be popular paint choices. The confident palette is all about adventure while taking bold, brave steps to design unconventional and interesting schemes.

Dynamic spaces such as sports and recreational centres as well as arts and crafts spaces are prime areas. This palette can also be effective for office developments that focus on creating a buzz amongst staff.

COMFORTABLE

This palette is all about creating interiors where inhabitants can unwind free from the stresses of the modern world. Plenty of neutral shades and pastel hues fall under the umbrella of this palette

Picking the perfect Comfortable palette revolves around pastel shades – baby blues, pinks and youthful yellows are all ideal choices. Soft colours are not only easy on the eye, they can brighten even the smallest of spaces and can help liven up natural surroundings too.

Ideal residential applications include children's bedrooms, living spaces and bathrooms. Due to the calm, comforting feel of these shades they are ideal for use in health care facilities as well as educational centres and other public areas.

(source: www.worldbuild365.com)



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Ironmongery plays key role in home interiors

Ironmongery is a market where tastes evolve gradually and innovative design is highly valued. Here, we look at some of the dominant UK trends in ironmongery products this year.

Often overlooked, ironmongery can play a key role within a home's interior design. As a trend, it is not subject to seasonal transformations and new themes develop at a slower rate compared to their more decorative counterparts such as fabrics and furniture.

Recently, in the UK there has been a shift towards door furniture and brassware being used as style statements, where these practical objects are transformed into decorative focal points. Often considered by designers as the jewellery of the home, these details provide an opportunity to act as a visual accent or contrast depending on the choice of material and colour.

Unlike general finishes which are mostly selected purely for their visual impact, we all physically engage with ironmongery on a daily basis.

Designers have begun to focus on this tactile element and consumers are seeing greater variety in the shape and materials offered, from hand-stitched leather pulls to matt black brassware.

(Source: bandaproperty.co.uk)

Four key luxury design trends have dominated interiors and ironmongery design this year, including the continuation of the use of metallics, architectural products, and a return to eclecticism and artisan craftsmanship.

1. Form, shape and lines

Ironmongery products within this trend are defined by modern, cutting edge statement design complemented by finishes that provide a warmer opulence such as mid- to dark- brass or polished nickel for a contemporary feel. Sliding doors are also part of this trend to create clean lines and save space.

2. Metallics

2016 has seen a continuation of 2015's key trend of metallics. Copper, bronze and antique brass were very popular in 2015, and this year we are seeing an increased use of soft warm-toned metals, including golds, copper and rose gold.

The mixing and layering of these metals warm up a space and diffuse light around a room, creating natural elegance for any project. Metallics are teamed with a softer, pastel paint palette, including this year's hottest shade Rose Quartz, which acts as a soft backdrop for statement furniture and ironmongery. An accompanying trend, particularly for kitchens, is the use of matt black stainless steel appliances and accessories.

3. Mixing it up

Mixing materials, textures and styles for a more eclectic feel has been big in the design world this year. Interior designers have been using a variety of opposing or different styles to create truly personalised spaces, as well as blending both modern and traditional styles.

4. Made locally, sourced globally

The trend for artisanal products continues to grow reflecting a desire for items in the home, handmade textures and a touch of human craftsmanship.

This direction combines with a revival of using natural fibres and textiles, organic shapes, handcrafted fixtures and accessories. Ironmongery design has reflected this through a move to more tactile surfaces and textured finishes, where handcrafted methods used contrast effectively with contemporary forms and plain metals. Knurled products are also becoming increasingly popular as a result.

(Source: www.josephgiles.com)



The fire-rated spring hinge from Locks & Hardware.

Expertise at Locks & Hardware

It has been an innovative year at Locks & Hardware with the introduction of the Ultimate Door Pack. This versatile and stylish product will look good in any setting, but has the added appeal of being the only door pack currently available on the Irish market, suitable for use in apartment dwellings. Check it out at www.ultimatedoorpack.ie

Another recent addition to the market is our fire-rated spring hinge. As well as prioritizing style and functionality for our customers, we want to adhere to the highest safety standards, and sell products that meet all fire regulations for both commercial and residential projects. We are proud of our knowledge, quality and product compliance with relevant fire testing, CE marking is available on all relevant items.

The Ultimate Door Pack

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Positive outlook in construction product sector

Providing a range of basic materials such as stone and aggregates and a range of concrete products, including readymix concrete, blocks and precast concrete elements, the construction materials and building products sector is a strategically crucial element of the construction supply chain.

The most recent analysis of the construction materials sector across the island of Ireland published in 2015 by InterTradeIreland, the Irish Concrete Federation and the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland, noted "some growth in construction output and market demand" across the island in the recent past, but in specific geographic areas.

Reasonably strong growth

Official data shows that construction industry output in volume terms has fallen in Northern Ireland but has grown by small amounts in the Republic. While economic indicators generally suggest that economic growth should be reasonably strong in the near future, housing output is far below what is needed across the island; infrastructure spending is very low and the EU supported Rural Development Programme is getting under way slowly, the study notes.

Construction materials and products suppliers are very largely dependent on local markets. However, a number of companies across the island have developed markets in Great Britain for stone and precast concrete products. The development of off-island markets has been important for a number of companies in the sector.

A key challenge facing the sector is competition from unauthorised, non-compliant operators. This affects all parts of the island, though the issue seems more serious in the Republic. Product standards, planning compliance and quality assurance requirements exist in the industry and the cost of meeting the relevant standards – the cost of compliance – is estimated at being between 10% and 15% of the selling price of the various materials. Companies and organisations such as Tegral and the Irish Concrete Society are responding to the need for training to enhance standards.



A group of trainees pictured in the Tegral Academy.

Tegral Academy expands training reach

The Tegral Academy, Ireland's dedicated training facility for roofing and slating, has now trained almost 900 roofing contractors. Part of Tegral's "Raising the Standards of Roofing" initiative, the Academy launched in early 2015 and, Tegral reports, has been hugely successful to date. Tegral offer training two days a week in its factory in Athy, Co. Kildare, where roofers learn all about codes of practice, BC(A)R regulations, common mistakes and how to prevent them, ventilation and much more. Everyone that attends receives a certificate of attendance and is listed as a 'recommended roofing contractor' on the Tegral website.

Roofers can register to attend by visiting the website or by contacting their local Tegral representative.

Builders merchants can also get involved in the initiative by advising their roofing customers about the Tegral Academy. In 2016, after feedback from builders merchants, Tegral started

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offering training days dedicated to builders merchants who wish to send their roofing customers as a group. Tegral is also now offering separate training which provides product knowledge and coaching specific for the needs of builders merchants and their sales teams.



The Irish Concrete Society has announced the launch of the Concrete Ticket, a course which provides training for operatives working with concrete.

Concrete Ticket

The Irish Concrete Society has announced the launch of the Concrete Ticket, a course which provides training for operatives working with concrete in Ireland. Achieving a high quality concrete building requires knowledge of the material from design through to construction on site. European and Irish standards demand that concrete construction is carried out by operatives with the necessary skill and training.

The Concrete Ticket is a half-day course which provides guidance on the correct ordering, handling, finishing and curing of concrete. Courses will be held across the country in classes not exceeding 20 and will include a formal assessment. Successful candidates will receive a photo card, the Concrete Ticket, which will be valid for five years.

The Concrete Ticket is suitable for anyone responsible for receiving, placing and finishing concrete after its arrival on site. The course will also be of benefit to those who manufacture, transport, receive orders and dispatch ready-mixed concrete. It will also be of interest to those involved in the sale of concrete and to building inspectors/clerks of works.

Course content is broken into four parts:

- Part 1** - Materials, Properties and Reinforcement;
- Part 2** - Ordering, Production, Delivery and Formwork;
- Part 3** - Placing, Compacting and Finishing; and,
- Part 4** - Curing, Protection and Joints.

This is followed by multiple choice question test. Courses are being held throughout the country in 2017.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CHANGES HOW IT DOES BUSINESS

As the construction industry continues to evolve over the last several years, so has its way of doing business, according to a recent report by Ardmac Consulting. Construction companies are rapidly changing how they work and the tools being utilised.

1. TECHNOLOGY

Building Information Modelling (BIM) has been a growing trend for years. BIM delivers the ability to provide more consistent, more accurate and less time-consuming project document generation. Cloud based systems that allow the remote sharing of data on a construction site in real time, like Raken, Simply Workflow and BaseStone, will replace the traditional paper based review method. These reporting apps, available on a variety of devices like smartphones and tablets, are used for reporting on such items as time keeping, project planning, and snag lists.

Asset mapping focuses on operational equipment, including heating and air conditioning, lighting and security systems, collecting data from serial numbers, firmware, engineering notes of when it was installed and by whom, and combines the data in one place.

2. GOING GREEN

Commercial construction has typically led the pack in green adoption. The growing trend is driven not just by a desire to produce environmentally friendly structures, but by consumer demand, higher-quality results and lifecycle cost savings. Companies will be aiming for certifications like the BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

3. BATTLE FOR TALENT

A by-product of the recession was the emigration of qualified talent and the downturn in applicants into university programmes and apprenticeships in the construction industry. This has left a skills gap in the marketplace.

4. MODULAR CONSTRUCTION

Permanent modular construction will be a huge trend in the coming years. It offers the benefit of reduced construction time, less waste and possible cost savings.

5. DRONE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The work carried out by the drones can now go towards creating 3D models, providing specific numeric data on the scheme of work's progress, and even be used to create live interactive maps of projects for clients.

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Power tool growth set to continue

When it comes to the tools sector, global demand for both hand and power tools is heavily influenced by the buoyancy of the construction industry. While the economic downturn lessened demand for hand and power tools, there has been steady growth in recent years as the global economy and the building industry recover.

Approximately 200 million units of electric power tools were sold globally in 2015, a significant lead over pneumatic power tools of which 88 million were sold. Although pneumatic power tools are expected to gain market share during the medium term, electric power tools sales will continue to dominate the global power tools market.

Powering ahead

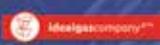
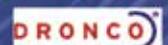
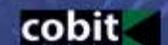
Global demand for power tools is projected to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 5% to US\$36.2 billion in 2020 and US\$46.5 billion in 2025. In contrast, hand tool market revenues are projected to witness growth rates of above 3%, as end-users show an increasing preference for power tools. Although cordless power tools are more expensive than their corded counterparts, ease of use and enhanced safety are making them popular, especially among DIY consumers. Due to the popularity of cordless power tools demand is expected to increase in the future, as use grows in developing countries. Demand for power tools can be broadly categorised into industrial and household. The industrial segment is anticipated to remain the highest end-use sector for power tools for the foreseeable future, however, demand is expected to remain steady from the household segment owing to the growth in DIY.

(Sources: www.futuremarketinsights.com and www.freedoniagroup.com)

Demand for hand and power tools in the Irish market is strongly related to product quality, according to Rhino Distribution.



HOME OF THE BRANDS

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Find out more @ www.rhino-dist.com

Tools for success from Rhino

Rhino has recently added new Edma slate and flooring tools to its product range, as well as new Cobit power tool accessories and Ambrosol sprays.

"The focus continues to be on introducing quality products and brands to complement our existing ranges. We are finding that as the economy continues to recover tradesmen and keen DIY consumers are moving away from the cheaper options when it comes to hand and power tools and are demanding those tools and brands that are going to stand the test of time and usage. We here at Rhino have the brands and products that will satisfy our customers' needs," a company spokesperson said. "Rhino Distribution offers a wide range of quality brands and products, together with regular promotions, plus a top-class service."



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