

# sign

directions

Nov/Dec 2016 - No.154

British  
Sign Awards  
Winners!

HARRY POTTER  
AND THE CURSED CHILD

PARTS ONE AND TWO

# It's Magic!

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**THE SIGN OF THE YEAR** - NEWMAN DISPLAYS TAKE THE PRIZE

**GIVE ME A SIGN** - THE LATEST SIGN AND DISPLAY SYSTEMS

**ALL LIT UP** - NEW LED SOLUTIONS

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The next issue of Sign Directions will be the January/February issue, which will include features on Printwear and Promotions and Signmaking Materials

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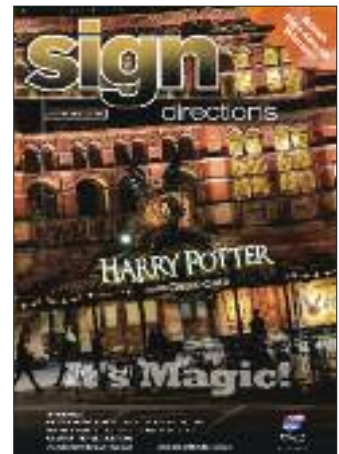
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### Cover Photography

Courtesy of Newman Displays

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### Annual Subscription Rates:

UK £50 \$78 €78  
Europe £93 \$143 €145  
Rest of the World: £114 \$178 €178  
Agents can claim a 10% discount



Introduction

# setting the scene



When I first started editing sign magazines just about every project that crossed my desk concerned either the resigning of a retail chain or a chain of petrol stations. That was at the beginning of the 90s, that heady period when shopping first started to become a leisure pursuit and petroleum companies, banks and building societies, seemed to change their corporate identities at the drop of a hat.

At that time, there were a lot of very large sign companies who were well equipped to produce literally thousands of new signs and to install them overnight to coincide with the fanfare that always accompanies the launch of a new corporate identity programme. A startling number of these companies employed a huge staff and made everything themselves in house, even the elements that required traditional signmaking skills, such as glass blowing, signwriting and gilding. And then came the first of several recessions and gradually, as the mega contracts began to dry up, the big companies also began to disappear, one by one. This downturn coincided with the advent of digital printing and the subsequent proliferation of much smaller companies who were able to enter the industry for the first time for modest capital outlay.

Nowadays, when there is a major resigning in the offing, the contract is often shared between three or more signmakers, whilst at the same time, there is a growing trend for more modest signs that make good use of the vast array of off-the-shelf systems and components that are now widely available, coupled with the customisation possibilities offered by digital printing.

You might be forgiven for concluding then, that signing has become a much more pedestrian affair, with the consequent loss of both the creative and practical skills that were previously synonymous with the industry – but actually, you'd be quite wrong!

The entries received for the BSGA British Sign Awards, the winners of which are showcased in the special awards supplement included within the centre of this issue, are testament to the fact that British signmakers are as imaginative and capable as ever they were in the past. In fact, many of the winning companies have showcased exemplary fabrication, metalworking and illumination skills, often combined with an impressive mastery of all of the digital methods now available to them. Furthermore, with a relative shortage of major signing projects on which to demonstrate their prowess, they have sensibly opted to use their skills to produce individual signs of such eye-catching splendour, that they are arresting enough to easily double as inspirational art installations. And I'm sure that they aren't alone. If you think that your own portfolio includes projects that can challenge those of the winners, please make sure that you enter them for the 2017 edition of the British Sign Awards – details



coming soon. Only after, of course, you've provided me with details and photos so that I can feature them, with all due ceremony, on these pages!

If you want to see what you are competing with, turn straight to the Awards supplement, which includes the latest BSGA Newsletter, and begins on page 23. In addition, you can find full details of the entries, winners and runners up on the dedicated awards website at [www. http://britishsignawards.org](http://britishsignawards.org)

Unsurprisingly, this month's cover star is the winner of the Sign of the Year Award, the iconic Harry Potter sign that is currently wowing theatre goers and tourists in London's west end. You'll find a profile on Newman Displays, the company responsible for creating it, on pages 18-19. In this issue, we offer not just one, but two features: Give Me a Sign, on pages 46-51, details the latest sign and display stand offerings, while All Lit Up highlights what's new in the world of LEDs on pages 52-53. This month's Décor section features Bees on Bridges and elsewhere you'll find all of our regular news pages. Finally, turn to page 58 where Mark Godden urges you to stand up and be judged!

Next month we kick off the New Year with the January/February issue, which will include a preview of the Printwear & Promotion LIVE! Exhibition that takes place at the NEC in February, together with a fresh look at the latest developments in the world of signmaking materials.

Like you, I'm sure, I'll be more than happy to say a not too fond farewell to 2016, one of the most mindboggling, politically turbulent and generally unpleasant years I can remember. I aim to obliterate the ghastliness of it all by imbibing copious amounts of red wine, scoffing my own body weight in chocolate and watching trash on TV and what's more, I plan to start no later than the 12th December! I hope that you'll all join me and I fervently hope that such action will fortify us against the fresh challenges

that 2017 will no doubt offer. Until then, Happy Christmas!



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## Antalis goes the extra mile

**Staff at Antalis recently staged a 500-mile sponsored bikeathon in aid of the CLIC Sargent young person's cancer charity.**

In addition to the bikeathon, which took place on exercise bikes at the Company's Leicestershire-based head office, there was also a cuddly toy sale, staff raffle and cake sweepstake as well as a special bake sale. The proceeds

will be used to fund the family support packages offered by CLIC Sargent immediately after families receive a devastating diagnosis.

Dan Turner, Head of Office Channel for Antalis, commented: "As we have a colleague who is currently being supported by CLIC Sargent, it was wonderful to see the team come together to raise funds for this great

charity, whilst also demonstrating our solidarity with our team member. Best of all, we were especially thrilled to almost double our fundraising target of £1,700, by raising over £3,000 in total!"

**For further information on CLIC Sargent visit: [www.clicsargent.co.uk](http://www.clicsargent.co.uk)** ■



## The Print Show hits the spot



**A host of major brands are now celebrating the fact that their participation in the second edition of The Print Show, which took place at Birmingham's NEC in October, has helped them to generate significant sales.**

The show featured more than 140

exhibitors representing all aspects of the printing process, while also attracting a total of 5,916 visitors. However, Link Exhibitions certainly isn't resting on its laurels, as plans are already afoot to further expand the appeal of the event next year, when The Print Show will be accompanied by a new show, SignLink Live. Both

events will take place simultaneously at the International Centre in Telford on 11th to 13th October.

SignLink Live is designed to showcase the products and services offered by sign industry manufacturers, which will span everything from built-up LED illuminated letters, through to digital signage networks and wrapping materials.

The two shows will occupy the entire International Centre, which spans some 10,500sq m (113,021 sq ft), boasts ultra-modern facilities, and is located just a few minutes away from a large, modern hospitality, entertainment, hotel, and shopping complex.

**For further information visit: <http://www.theprintshow.co.uk>** ■

## SDEA launches Convert Plus



**The Shop and Display Equipment Association used the occasion of the recent 100% Design Exhibition to launch Convert Plus, a user friendly, web-based platform that covers all aspects of sustainability performance and enables suppliers to accurately measure, compare and understand the impact their activities can have on the environment.**

The Association's Director, Antony Behiels said, "In today's increasingly environmentally aware marketplace, Convert Plus will enable our members to work alongside retailers to effectively monitor and reduce their carbon footprint within retail display. It provides a cost effective method of evaluating the key contributors to sustainability, whilst also enabling easy visual integration within client presentations as a PDF." ■

## All change at SDS

**Mike Wolff has announced his retirement as Chairman of the Sign Design Society (SDS).**



Mike, formerly Head of Wayfinding for BAA has steered the Society since 2006, during which time he has curated a programme of monthly talks and introduced the internationally respected Sign Design Awards, as well as a series of seminars and conferences.

Commenting on his retirement, Mike Wolff said: "I have enjoyed my tenure enormously, but 10 years is a long time for one person to preside over a society that thrives on new ideas,

new thinking and new ways of doing things and to ensure that this continues, we need a regular injection of new blood."

Accordingly, the role of Chairman now passes to Sian Kelly, a Director

of the wayfinding and experiential graphic design consultancy The Velvet Principle, who said: "Mike is a hard act to follow and his energy, infectious enthusiasm and curiosity for all things wayfinding and sign design will be sadly missed."

She continued: "It's a huge honour to be elected and I am very much looking forward to working with the society to increase the value of membership and to continue to raise awareness of the importance of our design discipline." ■

## FESPA bids adieu to Nigel Steffens

**Industry stalwart Nigel Steffens has announced his retirement from FESPA following 23 years of service to the organisation.**



Nigel joined FESPA in January 1993 as Assistant General Secretary, was promoted to General Secretary in 2000 and became CEO in 2003. In 2013, he handed over his duties as CEO to Neil Felton, and those of General Secretary to Sean Holt, since when he has served in a consultative role.

Nigel has been instrumental in the development and implementation of a number of important initiatives, including the introduction of the so-called 'mini-FESPAs' in the mid-1990s, which evolved into FESPA's significant

international calendar of regional knowledge-sharing events, seminars and congresses.

Commenting on his time at FESPA, Nigel said: "The greatest reward is to have been part of a team that has helped to ensure our commercial success, which in turn has enabled us to actively reinvest funds for the long-term development of the print community and to help create positive conditions for our members' growth."

FESPA Board Member Lascelle Barrow praised Nigel's contribution, saying: "Nigel's advice and guidance has been invaluable as FESPA has grown from a regional trade body to a global exhibition brand and we will miss his quiet diplomacy. We all wish him every happiness in retirement." ■

## The Mayoral seal of approval



**Preston-based Sign Build was recently honoured by a visit from the city's Mayor, Councillor John Collins, following the company's recent expansion.**

Councillor Collins enjoyed a factory tour, which included demonstrations of the company's new machines, including an Océ Arizona flatbed printer and a Zund cutter, and was also invited to gain some hands on experience on its new Henrob riveting machine! He

was also delighted to receive a unique framed picture of himself with Christoph Tesche, Mayor of Recklinghausen, Germany, Preston's twin city, which Sign Build had created using its new equipment.

Commenting on his visit, Councillor Collins said: "Sign Build really is a thriving business and I'm proud to see a Preston company expanding and doing so well within its specialist sector. I've enjoyed my visit immensely." ■

# HIGH PERFORMANCE

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## Appointments

**Hexis UK** has appointed **Ronan Walshe** as Area Sales Manager for the East and South East of England.



Ronan, who joins the Hexis team from Stanford Marsh Group, has also worked for printMAX, CWES, Atech, Perfect Colours and Sericol/Euromedia. At Hexis he will be responsible for developing all areas of the company's business with both the existing and potential customers operating within his area.

**Kornit Digital** has appointed **Johan Spies** to the role of Key Account Manager EMEA, where he will concentrate on fulfilling the needs of the company's major clients who are involved both in direct-to-garment printing and roll-to-roll production.

Formerly Senior Product Manager EMEA at Mimaki Europe BV, Johan has also previously worked for EFI as both Channel Sales Development Manager for Northern Europe and Product Marketing Manager.



**Signs Express (Telford)** has welcomed new owner, **Martin Geddes-Smith**. Having previously worked within the automotive industry and real estate, Martin has experience in customer service and sales that will prove invaluable in his new endeavour.

**Structure-flex** has recently recruited eleven print production and graphics employees. Amongst the new recruits are **Adam Livingstone** and **Darren Rolfe** who take up the newly created



key roles of Senior Artworker and Printroom Supervisor, respectively.

With over 30 years' experience in the graphic and print industry, Darren is now running the company's ever-expanding print department. Adam will focus on building relationships with Structure-flex's business clients, while also delivering designs for print, social media, digital media, animation, and video.



**Danny Adamson** has been appointed as Group Managing Director for **The Stocksigns Group**.

Danny, who initially joined the company last year as Sales & Marketing Director and subsequently also became responsible for Messagemaker Displays, is now tasked with integrating the individual businesses within the Group to create a total offering, which combines traditional signage, graphics and digital display solutions.



**Drytac Europe** has appointed Marc Hansing to the role of Sales Account Manager. In his new role, Marc, who previously worked for Neschen, here he served as Head of Technical Services and Product Manager in its laminating machines division, will be responsible for promoting Drytac Europe's extensive product range and supporting customers throughout Germany, Austria and Switzerland. ■

## Signs and Print on a roll

**Signs and Print, which is based in Braintree, is continuing its programme of ongoing investment in new equipment with the purchase of a Rollroller 540/220P Flatbed applicator from Spandex.**

The company supplies trade only resellers with all types of signage and this latest acquisition will enable it to reduce turnaround times whilst also maintaining a consistently high quality finish on a wide range of rigid boards. ■

## showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2017

### Trophex 2017

**15th-16th January**

NEC Birmingham

Organiser: Hill Media

[www.awardsandimaging.co.uk](http://www.awardsandimaging.co.uk)

### SGI Dubai 2017

**15-17th January**

Dubai World Trade Centre, UAE

Organiser: Sign & Graphics Imaging

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

### Printwear & Promotion Live 2017

**26th-28th February**

NEC Birmingham

Organiser: Datateam

[www.printwearandpromotionlive.co.uk](http://www.printwearandpromotionlive.co.uk)

### Sign & Digital UK 2017

**28th-30th March**

NEC, Birmingham

Organiser: Faversham House Group

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

### FESPA 2017

**8th-12th May**

Hamburg Messe

Organiser: FESPA

[www.fespa2017.com](http://www.fespa2017.com)

**If you would like your event to feature on this page, please send full information via e-mail to Val Hirst at [signdirections@btconnect.com](mailto:signdirections@btconnect.com)**

## Insign moves on



Managing director Paul Woollatt at Insign's new premises at Parkway Industrial Estate, Sheffield.

**Insign, the Sheffield-based signmaker, has recently moved into a new 10,000 sq.ft headquarters that will enable it to cement its position as one of the country's leading signage specialists.**

The company, which was first established in 1993 and is responsible for the manufacture and installation of a host of iconic signs in and around Sheffield, as well as a plethora of retail signage, reports that it is already benefitting from its increased capacity. ■



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# new projects



▲ Working in collaboration with marketing and events management company **Max Communications, W&Co** recently supplied five FabriTex freestanding display stands for **'The Times Past'**, an exciting new exhibition that took place in in **Southwark Cathedral** during the summer.

Located in the Link concourse of Southwark Cathedral and Café, the exhibition showcased photographs from The Times and The Sunday Times archive.

The FabriTEX display stands were the perfect choice for this project as they are portable, highly impactful and, most importantly, quick and easy to update with the application of new printed graphics when required.

After initially attending a site visit with the client, News UK, and the Cathedral Curator, W&Co produced 3D computer visuals that illustrated how the stands would look when positioned in the Cathedral's internal archways. It then worked closely with 'News Syndication', News UK's reprographics department, which collated and supplied images of the Southwark area taken during the 20th Century, before producing bespoke double sided FabriTEX tension fabric banner stands, measuring 841mm W x 2000mm H x 45mm D and featuring the requisite printed graphics on each side. ■



▲ **Brunel Engraving**, has engraved over 500 bronze and stainless components at **Shakespeare's New Place**, a contemporary heritage landmark site in Stratford-upon-Avon, which opened during the summer.

The site, which was Shakespeare's family home from 1597 until his death in 1616, has been transformed by The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to mark the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death. Designed to reveal a "window on the world of William Shakespeare for the 21st Century", it features beautifully landscaped gardens and specially commissioned artworks celebrating the famous playwright's life and works. Over 18,000 people visited the site in the first month of its opening.

Although Shakespeare's original house is no longer standing in the grounds, the historic garden was preserved and the contemporary landscape beyond the entrance reveals the footprint of Shakespeare's lost family home, discovered during archaeological excavations of the site. A dynamic

new permanent exhibition is housed in a restored and extended Tudor house next door.

All of the intricate engravings, inscriptions, designs and lines from sonnets and plays featured throughout the site are the work of Brunel Engraving, including everything from the inscription on the oak and bronze Gateway that forms the entrance to the gardens, to the intricately designed pattern work etched on bronze circles, which runs throughout the site and was specially designed to reflect the Tudor era.

Over 500 separate bronze and steel component parts, in varying sizes of arcs and flat bars, were each individually engraved by Brunel. The arced pieces featured intricate pattern work that formed different sizes of circles that had to match exactly and their thin border had to be perfectly aligned. Some components took over three days to engrave due to their size, weight, the complexity of the image and the depth of engraving.

Marty Wright, founder and Managing Director of Brunel



Engraving, commented: "Some components required a 4mm engraving depth which made the process even more complex, but happily, all the work was completed successfully and to

schedule and we are very proud to have made our lasting mark on this heritage site that will attract visitors from all over the world for many years to come!" ■



▲ Amongst other areas of application, Braintree-based **Curtis Signs** specialises in the production of promotional property graphics, which require nothing less than a quality approach. So when **Whybrow**, one of its property sector clients required a large printed graphic to be applied to its lower glazed elevations, the Curtis Signs team used Metamark MD3-A, part of the Metamark MD-Class portfolio, which is engineered to deliver premium quality results in short term applications.

The end result was a flawless print and, thanks to MD3-A's Metascape adhesive, which eliminates trapped air and can be repositioned to suit before building to an ultimate bond, its application was flawless too. To provide a really professional-looking finish and to ensure extra durability, the graphic was over-laminated with Metamark's matched matt MetaGuard material. As an added plus, the graphic can be cleanly removed at the end of the promotional campaign. ■



▲ There was a carnival atmosphere in Leeds during September when people took to the streets to celebrate the achievements of Yorkshire's Olympians and Paralympians during a city centre parade.

**Signs Express (Leeds)**, was commissioned by **Welcome to Yorkshire** to add striking branding to the five buses used during the parade, which was organised by Welcome to Yorkshire, in association with **Leeds City**

**Council** and supporting partners including **Yorkshire Water, Slingsby, Yorkshire Tea, Vale of Mowbray** and **Radio Aire**.

Before applying the temporary branding to the buses, which are more usually used for sightseeing tours and general bus hire, Signs Express (Leeds) fully covered the existing graphics with block-out vinyl, whilst also taking care to use the new design to create an impactful and eye-catching result. ■

Supplier News

## 'Cool Cars' winner announced

**3M and Spandex have named Nick Kenway of 3Sixty Wraps in Northampton as the winner of the 'Cool Cars' competition, which invited signmakers to show off their wrapping prowess by submitting photos of the most noteworthy bespoke car wraps they had achieved when using 3M materials.**



Spandex and 3M were delighted with the standard of the 40 entries received, which included numerous imaginative designs, including Nick's winning entry, an extremely cool wrap for a racing car. As his prize, Nick will receive a roll of the popular 3M Wrap Film Series 1080 in a colour of his choice, a Toolbelt, a Knifeless Tape Roll, and free entry to a two-day vehicle wrapping course held at Spandex for the application of 3M's Envision Print Wrap SV480 and LX480 films.

In addition to the first prize, two runners-up, Wrap Monkey of Sunderland and Ecosse Signs of Bellshill, Scotland, both also received free entry to the two-day wrapping course. ■



## Wrights GPX launches latest catalogue

**Wrights GPX, the West Bromwich-based retail display and signage specialist, has launched its latest display products catalogue.**

The revamped design highlights many new products, such as the company's best selling range of acrylic furniture and its corporate and domestic homeware range, thus ensuring that it is the biggest and brightest Wrights' publication yet.



In addition, the catalogue also features a selection of products from Mid West Display, the Shrewsbury-based display manufacturer that became part of the Wrights Plastics Group earlier this year. These can also be purchased directly via the GPX

website and similarly, GPX products also feature in the newly published Mid West Displays' catalogue.

**The catalogue can be found online at [www.gpxgroup.com](http://www.gpxgroup.com)** ■

## SwissQprint announces new subsidiary

**Following the recent announcement that SwissQprint and Sihl Direct would be realigning, the former used the occasion of the recent Viscom Frankfurt exhibition to announce the first personnel appointments for its future German subsidiary, which will be based in the Cologne/Düsseldorf area.**



throughout Germany and distribute the entire SwissQprint range."

The Managing Director designate of the new subsidiary is to be Wolfgang Tropatz, who currently holds the position of Sales Manager at Sihl Direct. He will be joined by Frank Krott, the Technical Service Manager at Sihl Direct, who will work in a similar capacity for SwissQprint. They will be assisted by an experienced team that is also transferring to the new enterprise from Sihl Direct.

This range will include the newly launched Nyala 2, a 3.2m x 2m UV flatbed printer, plus the Impala 2 and Oryx 2.5m x 2m flatbed printers, all of which are designed along modular lines, together with Rob, a loading and unloading robot that operates in tandem with the printers.

SwissQprint and Sihl Direct plan to end their sales partnership by mutual agreement on 1st April 2017. ■

Wolfgang Tropatz commented: "We will establish our showroom, warehouse and administration facilities under one roof, a move that will enable us to support customers





## All change at Pixartprinting

**PixartPrinting, a leader in on-line printing services, has announced some important management changes, which will see the current CEO, Alessandro Tenderini, stepping down in order to explore new avenues.**



Alessandro Tenderini began working for Pixartprinting at its inception in 1998 alongside the former owner Matteo Rigamonti. The company was sold to Alcedo, a private equity company in 2011, before becoming part of the Cimpress empire, which also owns Vistaprint, in 2014.

The role of CEO now passes to Paolo Roatta, who has held the position of Managing Director since July, and will now take full charge of the company, assisted by Plant Manager

and fellow Board member, Alessio Piazzetta.

Having previously worked for multinationals, such as Procter & Gamble and Bertelsmann and founded innovative tech start-ups, Paolo Roatta will be using the wealth of experience he has gained in the publishing, entertainment, mobile technology and e-commerce sectors to further develop Pixartprinting's international growth and development objectives. ■

## Complete CNC Solutions moves on

**Complete CNC Solutions, the distributor of Protek and Tekcel digital cutters and production routing systems, has recently completed its move into larger premises.**



The move to the new facility, which is located on the same industrial estate as the company's previous HQ, but offers more than four times the space, has been prompted by its recent sales growth as well as the expansion of its sales and support team.

In the past year, CNC Solutions has further increased the scope of its Protek range to include systems targeted at the construction and engineering industries, as well as those designed for use in the sign

and allied sectors, thus necessitating the further provision of warehousing, display and demonstration space.

In addition, Complete CNC Solutions plans to offer enhanced application development consultations to clients that are wrestling with particularly difficult manufacturing challenges, in order to provide perfectly tailored solutions. ■



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## Equipment & Material

### Opening up the options

**William Smith has introduced further additions to its VION VP3000 Series of monomeric calendared digital printing films, which was launched earlier this year.**

To date, the VP3000 Series has been limited to gloss white and gloss transparent face films, but now, several new options have been added, including a gloss white film with grey permanent or removable adhesives, a matt white film with grey

removable adhesive and a matt clear film with permanent adhesive that can be used as a base film or overlamine.

As with the existing options in the VP3000 range, all new products are available in widths of 1370mm x 50m and 1520mm and 50m rolls.

Offering a durability of three years, the VION VP3000 Series is suitable for application to flat and slightly curved surfaces and is thus ideally suited to



use with short to medium term promotional signage and short term vehicle graphics.

The new additions are exclusively available from William Smith ex-stock, with same day despatch provided on orders received before 6.00pm. ■

### Let the colour flow



**Europoint is now stocking the new ColorFlow series, part of the Avery Dennison Supreme Wrapping Film range**

Offering five colour shifting iridescent shades, the range is designed to meet the modern trend for transforming vehicles into works of art, whilst also providing superior performance and conformability around curves and recesses.

The ColorFlow series, which features Avery's patented Easy Apply technology to ensure exceptional durability and long-term removability, is available in a choice of inspiring new shades that include Fresh Spring, Urban Jungle, Rushing Riptide, Rising Sun and Roaring Thunder, all of which are stocked by Europoint for next day delivery. ■

### The versatile choice

**Grafityp UK has introduced the Grafiprint M Series, a range of attractively priced monomeric vinyls, which can be digitally printed and applied to flat surfaces.**



The range comprises 10 different films that offer a choice of white, clear, matt and gloss alternatives, plus a selection of different acrylic adhesive options. They are available in 50 metre roll lengths and three popular widths, 762, 1370 and 1525mm.

To further complement the M

Series, Grafityp is also offering two new over laminates, M101 clear gloss and M011 clear matt, both of which are 80 microns thick, offer a pressure sensitive acrylic adhesive and up to three years outdoor durability. ■

### Triple celebrations

**Innotech is celebrating both its record-breaking sales, as evidenced by a 29 percent annual increase in its turnover, plus the launch of two new products, Kinetix, a printable magnetic materials range and VMAX, a bubble-free Window Cling material.**



Part of Innotech's well established wide format media offering, the Kinetix range

encompasses printable magnetic sheets in gloss and matt finishes, vehicle magnet materials, ferrous sheet textiles and self-



adhesive magnetic vinyl.

Additionally, the VMAX Window Cling material, which forms part of Innotech's VMAX range of self-adhesive materials,

has been introduced to provide sign and print companies with an easy to apply, temporary window display solution that leaves no surface residue, thus making it ideal for use in retail applications. ■



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## Equipment &amp; Material

## Transparent textures

**As a current distribution partner for Altuglas Acrylic Sheet products, Europoint has recently been appointed as UK distributor for Altuglas Signature.**

This superior quality acrylic glass, which is half the weight, but offers twice the transparency of conventional glass, is a popular choice with fabricators, architects and designers involved in the creation of point of sale displays, interior design and various forms of building construction.

The Signature range is available in a collection of seven textures that are contained within the material itself, including grids, meshes and lacework. For total creativity there is



even an opportunity for users to create a fully bespoke version using their own fabric design.

The texture options include Large and Small Gold Grid, Large Silver Grid, Large Silver and Black Grid, Non-Woven, Moire and Lace, all of



which meet all the stipulations of the relevant impact and heat resistance tests. It can be line-bent or drape moulded, tinted, smoothed, pierced, screwed or sawed and fabricated in the same way as wood, without the constraints of fibre.

In addition, when edge-lit with LEDs,

Altuglas Signature provides optical effects that can be used to change the colour of a room and create a totally different ambience. Depending on the power and illumination angle, a close mesh will make the sheet opaque, whilst a non-woven material unveils a dramatic 3D effect. ■

## Dazzling additions

**The nine dazzling new additions to 3M's popular 1080 Series Wrap Film range offer sign and print companies the opportunity to produce more imaginative wrapping solutions for their clients.**

The 3M 1080 Series, which can be used to cover both flat surfaces and simple curves, is a long term, removable dual cast film that features 3M's Controltac Comply pressure-activated adhesive to facilitate ease of handling without the need for application tape. It is easy to reposition and offers excellent opacity together with up to six years durability.

There are three flip shades to choose from, Gloss Flip Electric Wave, Satin Flip Caribbean Shimmer and Satin Flip Glacial Frost, which feature vibrant hues



of iridescent purple, deep teal and soft blue, that shift and change depending on the viewing angle and lighting, together with a selection of neutral tones that are further enlivened with the addition of textured sparkles and vibrant sheens. The available colourways include Gloss Storm Gray, Satin Gold Dust Black, Gloss

White Gold Sparkle, Cinder Sparkle Red, Gloss Ice Blue and Satin Frozen Vanilla.

The new 3M 1080 Series colours are available from William Smith, ex-stock, as full or part rolls and same day despatch is provided on orders received up to 6.00pm. ■

## Smart covers



**Smart phone users will be interested to learn that TheMagicTouch has introduced a new range of universal pouches for all past, present and future smart phones, including the long awaited iPhone 7.**

These high quality pouches combine a 3.5mm rubber compound with a white polyester jersey surface and heat-resistant thread that offers a printable and durable surface on both sides for transfer personalisation.

They are available in three sizes in order to accommodate all past, present and future smart phone models. ■



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# It's Magic!



London WCI isn't necessarily the most obvious postcode to find a fully-fledged sign company, but for Newman Displays it's the perfect location. First established 30 years ago, the company's speciality is the manufacture and installation of highly imaginative signage for theatres and cinemas, such as its awe inspiring creation for Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, the hit play that is currently being performed before packed audiences at The Palace Theatre. In fact, the sign so perfectly symbolises the magic that surrounds J. K. Rowling's eponymous boy wizard that since its installation earlier this year, it has become a bone fide tourist attraction in its own right.

However, it was a sign that so nearly didn't happen. Mark Hollington,

Operations Director of Newman Displays reveals that it was only after all parties had recognised the shortcomings of an altogether more pedestrian option that the decision was made to go for something far more ambitious. There followed an eight-week scramble, which included the super speedy application for, and granting of, planning permission, endless creative consultations and a turbo-charged production process, all of which culminated in the stunning sign that not only promotes the play, but also enhances the gothic architecture of the building, all but transforming it into a credible version of a wizards' academy.

Unsurprisingly, the sign scooped both the Sign of the Year award, plus the award for Sign Construction at the recent British Sign Awards, but when I visited Newman Displays



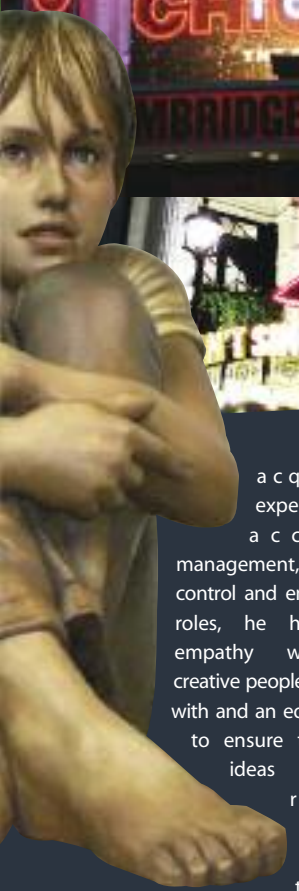
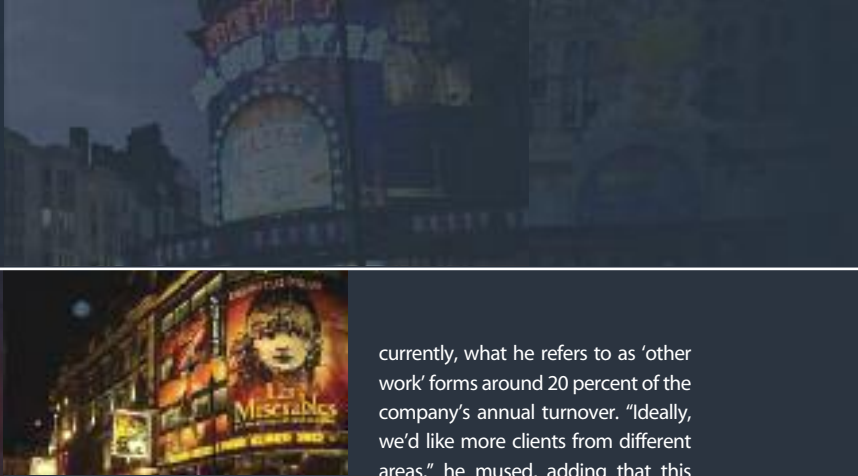
shortly after its double win, celebrations were the last thing on Mark Hollington's mind. Rather, he was already thoroughly immersed in the challenges posed by the company's latest entertainment related project.

He explained that the flurry of activity that preceded the Harry Potter sign is by no means unique, saying: "Because a lot of the work we undertake requires something out of the ordinary, there are always creative, logistical and practical problems to be solved," before adding that often, the time frame allowed for resolving these issues is perilously short.

Despite this, Newman Display's clients, who include most of theatre land's leading impresarios, need have no worries. To Mark and his team, it's inconceivable that the company would ever fail to deliver everything required of it in time for an opening night.

Working with what he describes as, 'the wonderful team at Sonia Friedman Productions, the production team for the show, and the fantastic Marketing Agency AKA', and aided by a knowledgeable, dedicated and hardworking staff of 28, including an eight-strong in-house installation crew, Mark remains sanguine in the face of even the most exacting demands. Having originally trained as a graphic designer, before





the venue remains in tip-top condition. Mark confirms that last minute phone calls from venue managers to replace a faulty light or repair accidental, or otherwise, breakages are cheerfully regarded as par for the course and a Newman Display's team is immediately despatched to implement the necessary work.

With so much often riding on a project's speedy turnaround, it's just as well that the company is able to carry out practically all signmaking functions in house, equipped as it is with facilities for metal and plastic fabrication, vinyl decoration and digital printing and, unusually, even neon glass blowing too. When anything requires outsourcing, Mark turns to a tried and trusted group of equally committed craftspeople, such as Aiden Hynes Sculpture Studios, which was responsible for creating both the child and the willow nest, which is such an appealing facet of the Harry Potter Sign.

It also helps that many members of the Newman Displays' workforce are longstanding employees who are helping to provide a continuum for the traditional signmaking skills that the company so cherishes and which Mark believes provide an excellent foundation for all signmakers, especially when visualising how the different elements of a sign can fit together. This isn't to say though, that the company eschews modern technology. In addition to its a sizable vinyl shop it also uses HP Latex and Jetrix printers, the latter of which has so impressed Mark that he is already planning to supplement it with the purchase of a second, similar machine.

With all of these creative and practical facilities at its disposal Newman Displays is obviously qualified to serve clients other than those in its specialist areas and Mark related that

currently, what he refers to as 'other work' forms around 20 percent of the company's annual turnover. "Ideally, we'd like more clients from different areas," he mused, adding that this would help the company to better navigate the peaks and troughs that come with its more artistic endeavours. "The summer is a traditionally quite a slow period in the Theatre and with our cinema work, all of the blockbuster films seem to come together, so we do sometimes have little lulls."

To this end, Mark explains that every enquiry is treated with all due seriousness, and whilst some very small jobs are passed on to colleagues more ideally suited to their fulfilment, he is assiduous in following up every possibility. He said: "I've often been pleasantly surprised by the ultimate potential of a job that started out modestly but grew to be something quite fantastic and I've learned over the years never to make snap judgements!"

It's clear though that Newman Display's success hasn't been achieved without a lot of hard work. Mark confided that the day before the Sign Awards presentation ceremony he and Phil Loveday visited a regionally located potential client to take a brief. He remembered: "We worked out an initial plan for what was needed, briefed a designer, and gathered together costings on the return journey, so that we could complete the quote on the train journey up to the Sign Awards luncheon in Nottingham the following day and then finesse it on the way back!"

Before I leave, I ask whether Mark has ever had a ridiculously difficult request. He has and he laughingly details it for my amusement. He adds though, that on the whole, Newman Displays really relishes being involved with even the seemingly impossible projects, asking: "Why wouldn't we, when it enables us to work with great people on memorable projects?"

Why not indeed, when it results in this sort of magic! ■

acquiring experience in account management, stock control and engineering roles, he has great empathy with the creative people he works with and an equal desire to ensure that their ideas are fully realised, while also ensuring that production, safety and budgetary constraints are fully satisfied too.

effective, workable and cost effective alternative solution that will do justice to their product."

This collaborative approach also applies to the company's dealings with the local authorities responsible for issuing the planning permission for the deliberately provocative signage it produces. Mark remarked: "We've built up really good relationships with the various planning departments over the years and they know that we will always be respectful to the sensitivities of the architecture of the wonderful buildings we work on and the surrounding environment, which makes it easier when we need to push something through really quickly."

Apart from its work for theatres – Newman Displays has supplied 19 of the last 20 signs that graced The Palace Theatre – the company also provides signage for all of the major London cinemas too, work that is no less demanding in terms of tight timescales and the ongoing maintenance required to ensure that the signage both inside and outside

He observed: "We often find ourselves in the situation of having to fulfil the sometimes conflicting interests of several different parties and have learned over the years that it really pays to take a collaborative approach wherever possible, so that everyone feels involved."

Mark continued: "Happily, since we have worked with some of our clients for such a long time, if we ever say that something simply can't be done, they trust us come up with an

## I-Sub enhances textile-printing options

**I-Sub has added the EFI VUTEK FabriVU 180 and 340 high-resolution fabric printers to its extensive textile-printing portfolio.**

The printers can be used to produce robust soft signs and fabric displays that retain the requisite drape and soft handle that users demand and can also be washed and dried without

wrinkling, folded without leaving marks, and reused time and time again.

Using EFI water-based CMYK disperse dye inks, they can be used to print either direct to textile or onto transfer paper, thus enabling users to select from a larger range of fabrics, while also saving money.



Available in both 180cm and 340-widths, the FabriVU machines can be used to process fabrics weighing from 40 to 300 gsm and paper weighing from 40 to 160gsm. ■

## ImagePerfect gets HP approval

**Spandex has received media certification for 10 of its ImagePerfect substrates for use with the HP Latex 300 series of digital printers.**

The certified substrates include a range of 10 self-adhesive vinyls, namely ImagePerfect 2503 Plus,

2503PA Plus, 2504, 2506, 2506PA, 2553, 2553PA, 2554, 2556 and 2556PA, which, when used in combination with HP Latex Inks offer scratch resistance and are suitable for use in both indoor and outdoor applications.

In 2015 Spandex also launched a series of free printer profiles for its



compatible ImagePerfect substrates for use with the HP Latex 300 series of printers. ■

## Mimaki breakthrough in textile printing

**Mimaki has announced the launch of a brand-new 1.8m wide textile printer, the Tx300P-1800B (Belt), which is specifically designed to address the need in the textile and apparel industries for cost-effective, short run textile printing.**

Its unique design makes it ideally suited for use on a wide variety of fabrics, including bulky textured materials, as well as sheer fabrics and stretchy materials, such as knits. When used in conjunction with Mimaki's TP400 textile pigment inks, it also eliminates the need for steaming or washing, thus reducing the space required for on-demand textile printing.

In order to accommodate the wide range of potential applications, Mimaki will be offering five different ink types with the Tx300P-1800B. These include the Sb420 Sublimation Dye Ink, which is designed for use with polyester-based

textiles, either direct to fabric or to a sublimation paper for transfer by heat press. It also offers a broad colour gamut, including a deep and powerful black.

The Dd400 Dispersion Dye Ink delivers high light-fastness and outstanding build-up on polyester and micro-polyester for use in sportswear, curtains, outdoor textiles, home textiles and the automotive industry, while the TP400 Textile Pigment Ink, which is probably the most flexible of all the textile inks, can be used to print onto a wide variety of textiles, including polyester, cotton, silk, viscose, rayon and wool. It also eliminates the need for steaming or washing, thus reducing time, costs and potential water pollution, although in order to achieve the desired quality level, it

is recommended that a binder or primer be used.

Also available is Mimaki's Rc400 Reactive Dye Ink, which is suitable for printing onto natural fibres, such as cotton, silk and wool and its Ac400 Acid Dye Ink. The output from both of these inks requires pre/post-treatment.

The new Mimaki Tx300P-1800B, which is capable of printing at up to 50 square metres per hour, and can also achieve print resolutions of up to 1,440dpi, will be exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services and sold via its specialist dealer network. ■



## The Edge is back!



**Twenty-three years after its initial launch, Gerber's exclusive European distributor, Spandex has introduced a new edition of the legendary GERBER EDGE FX in celebration of the printer that revolutionised the sign industry**

Originally launched in 1993, the GERBER EDGE, which was arguably the world's first affordable, computer-controlled printer for use with vinyl and film substrates, provided an alternative solution to the cutting and applying of individual letters to create signs and graphics. As Gerber's exclusive European distributor, Spandex saw the machine's potential and supplied it to signmakers right across the continent.

In 1999, the original printer was succeeded by the EDGE 2, which included all the features of the original, while also offering increased speed and output quality and, in 2005, the GERBER EDGE FX.

Today, the GERBER EDGE FX 40th Anniversary Edition thermal transfer printer, which includes an updated firmware for speedier production, plus a new backlit keyboard for greater legibility, is the ideal solution for the quick creation of durable, short run graphics for a wide variety of specialist applications. With its small footprint, it offers users a complete matched technology system when combined with Gerber's own OMEGA workflow Software and the Gerber 15" sprocketed plotters. It is also compatible for use with over 30 EDGE READY materials and 75 GerberColor Foils. ■



## More machines get VersaWorks

**Roland DG's VersaWorks Dual RIP and print management software now supports several additional Roland DG inkjet printers and printer/cutters.**

The RIP is currently bundled with the latest generation TrueVIS VG Series and SG Series of printer/cutters, the SOLJET EJ-640 high-production eco-solvent printer and the VersaUV LEF-300 UV-LED inkjet printer and now it will also be available with the SOLJET PRO 4 XR-640, the VersaCMM VSi Series and SPi Series, the VersaSTUDIO BN-20, VersaEXPRESS RF-640, VersaUV LEJ-640, LEJ-640FT, LEC Series and LEF-20, as well as the Textart RT-640.



VersaWorks Dual builds upon the intuitive, easy-to-use capabilities of VersaWorks to provide high-quality printing while adding enhanced processing and editing functions to ensure faster RIP times and increased efficiency, quality and ease of production. ■

## Mimaki's small flatbed upgraded



**Mimaki's upgraded UJF-6042 Mkl small format UV flatbed printer, which is now available for demonstration at Hybrid Services, Mimaki's exclusive UK and Irish distributor, offers a number of new features including increased productivity, with print speeds 20 percent faster than previously, combined with exceptional print quality.**

The UJF-6042 Mkl was launched in September along with the smaller UJF-3042 Mkl, which replaces the UJF-3042HG, with both new models printing onto substrates up to 153mm thick. Their compatibility with a range of Mimaki's versatile UV inksets, including LUS-120, which offers flexibility of up to 170 percent

and LUS-150, with its superior adhesion, appeals to users operating in several different industry sectors.

The new Mkl printers will sit alongside Mimaki's other offerings in the UJF series. These include the affordable entry-level UJF-3042FX and the UJF-7151plus, which provides high quality on-demand printing at industrial productivity levels.

Hybrid Services' customers can arrange to see demonstrations of the UJF-3042 Mkl, using a variety of ink types to process a wide selection of direct-to-object applications at Hybrid Services' Crewe showroom. To book an appointment telephone Hybrid Services direct at 01270 501900. ■

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# Worthwhile Investments

## Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use

**MAKE Aberdeen**, the new digital fabrication facility created at **Robert Gordon University**, recently welcomed the installation of a **JETRIX KX3 printer**, which extends its already extensive portfolio of scanning, printing and prototyping technology.

MAKE Aberdeen, which is supported by Aberdeen City Council, Creative Scotland and the UK Government Super Connected Cities programme, aims to create a studio that makes high-end digital design accessible to anyone who wants to realise their creative ideas. Open to both students and members of the public, it provides the latest cutting edge technology, including 3D printing, 3D scanning, rapid prototyping, laser cutting and wide format digital printing equipment, thus enabling the people

who use it to produce a production ready design in a fraction of the time and for a fraction of the cost.

Phil Chaplain, Chief Technological Officer at Robert Gordon University, explained: "We were keen to break down any community barriers and to offer this facility to the widest possible audience so that we have the opportunity to collaborate with private individuals, north-east businesses and other organisations that have great ideas."

The JETRIX KX3, which was carefully chosen to suit both the environment and the size of the space available in the city centre venue, features an easy to use interface, together with intelligent, simultaneous two and three layer printing, plus the facility to

add a spot UV varnish. Assured quality from the six-picolitre head nozzles ensures the output of razor sharp edge-to-edge prints onto a wide diversity of media including glass, metal, plastics, wood, fabric, cardboard, ceramics and paper.

For MAKE Aberdeen, the biggest challenge came with the flatbed's installation. Because of the city centre location, space was limited and a 2m x 3m pane of glass had to be removed so that the robustly built machine, which measures a whopping 1,220 x 1,220mm, could be gently eased into place. The effort though has proved to be exceptionally worthwhile.

Ben Woodruff, Head of National Sales at InkTec, the printer's manufacturer, commented: "We are particularly



proud of this project as it encourages the local community to share and explore ideas, while also potentially encouraging more people to enter the print sector. It is also one of the first of our printers to be installed in an educational establishment, which highlights the KX3's versatility – it's the perfect piece of kit for this fantastic venture." ■

Following its appointment as a Ricoh Partner, **Atlantic Tech Services** has installed a **Ricoh Pro L4130 Latex Printer**, at **Vinyl Decals Direct**, which has recently moved into new larger premises as part of a planned business expansion.

Steve Tanner, Managing Director of Vinyl Decals, which specialises in the production of vinyl labels and POS products, reported: "Atlantic Tech helped us chose a new print, cut and lamination package and we are very pleased with the Ricoh machine as it has already opened up a number of new business opportunities. We are discovering that it can output sharper images and vibrant colours, quickly and without the need for de-gassing, which is ideal when you are servicing the sometimes exacting demands of larger clients!"

Commenting on the machine's installation, Keith Pratt of Atlantic Tech said: "The Ricoh Pro L4100



Series Latex Printers are ideal for companies that are looking to install a latex printer. The machines feature the long lasting Ricoh GEN5 high-speed printheads, which when used in combination with the new Ricoh AR fast drying Latex inks, offers a printing speed that is up to 50 percent faster than other printers in its class. Furthermore, the AR Inks, which come in 600ml bulk ink packs, are virtually odourless, thus ensuring a more pleasant working environment.

The complete range of Ricoh Production printers, which includes the C9100, C7100X, Latex L4100 models, plus a range of office and business printers, are nationally available from Atlantic Tech Services. ■



In line with its strategy for expansion, **Mida Sign Services** has recently invested in a **Signracer 3200 large format UV LED Hybrid Inkjet Printer** from **SSE Worldwide**.

Established in 1984, the company, a long term installer of signs and now also the producer of printed graphics, relocated in 2013 when it increased its floor space by 300 percent, while also expanding its production capability in order to meet the demands from customers nationwide. At the same time, it also took the opportunity to introduce its print division, which now supplies a wide range of wall and floor graphics.

Mike Smith, Director and owner of Mida Sign Services explained: "The Signracer has immediately made a significant difference to our business as it has helped us to re-organise the way we work, while also helping us to increase, improve and maximise our production services across the board.

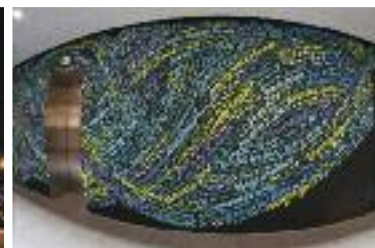
"In addition, the Signracer's Ricoh Gen 5 printheads ensure that that we can offer high quality digital printing direct to substrates such as ACM, Foamex and Correx, at speeds that will enable us to increase our productivity and, most importantly also our turnover! ■





BRITISH SIGN  
**AWARDS**

Sponsored by **3M**



**A VINTAGE YEAR**



# A VINTAGE YEAR FOR THE BRITISH SIGN INDUSTRY

*The BSGA British Sign Industry Awards, supported by 3M, is designed to celebrate the achievements of UK-based sign businesses - and 2016 proved to be a vintage year.*

"When it came to choosing the winner of the ultimate accolade – the 2016 Sign of the Year – the judging panel had a real dilemma," said David Catanach, Director of the British Sign and Graphics Association, organiser of the awards. "Such was the standard of entry that no less than six projects were under consideration."

Sign of the Times, winners of the top award in 2013 and 2014, were again in the running for a remarkable 'Paper Planes' centrepiece for Dublin Airport, as were John Anthony Signs for its incredible 'Butterflies' creation for Monsoon, Signs Now for its beautifully crafted 'Flotillas', floating lotus flowers at the NEC, isGroup for a magnificent illuminated signage scheme for 'The Printworks' in Manchester, and Signbox with The Graphic History Company for 'The Author Mural', a fantastic piece of wall art spanning six floors at the London HQ of publisher Hatchette.

In any other year, any one of them could have taken the top award but, in the end, the judges opted for a little bit of magic and awarded the Sign of the Year to Newman Displays for the sign that heralded the arrival of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child at the Palace Theatre in London's West End – a complex, beautifully crafted, illuminated sign that is already a landmark and tourist attraction in its own right.

The awards – covering a total of 13 categories – were presented at a gala ceremony held at the East Midlands Conference Centre in the grounds of Nottingham University on Thursday, November 3rd.

"It was, without doubt, an outstanding occasion," said David Catanach. "The awards is the best sign industry networking event of the year bringing the whole industry, including signmakers of every type and persuasion, plus a wide range of industry suppliers, together in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere."

"We had over 320 people at the awards and, following a reception where they were able to enjoy an aperitif and a stroll around the sponsors' showcase, they sat down to an excellent three course lunch. The formal proceedings were hosted by Broadcaster Bill Turnbull, fresh from the BBC's Breakfast sofa, who regaled the audience with tales of his years in front of the cameras and explained how one slip of the tongue on national TV can result in global media coverage."

It was then on with the presentation of the Awards, the actual trophies for which were produced by Trade Etching Direct, sponsor of the Craftsman Award, who this year did a superb job, combining acrylic with carefully etched mirrored stainless steel and, in the case of the Sign of the Year, adding the final extra touch of gold plating.

The following pages pay tribute to both the winners of the awards and the other entries that were singled out for special mention by the panel of judges.

"The winners and highly commended entries really are the best of British signmaking but all this year's entries – over 250 across all categories – demonstrate the huge capabilities, creativity and skill that our industry has to offer," said David Catanach.







# SIGN OF THE YEAR 2016

*Winner*

**Newman Displays**

*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child,  
Palace Theatre, London*

In a year of outstanding entries, Newman Displays created a magical sign in London's West End. Already a tourist attraction in its own right, it combines traditional signmaking elements with hand sculpted features and dramatic illumination. The sign was designed to reflect the Harry Potter 'brand' and complement the architectural style of the Palace Theatre.

(See the feature on Newman Displays on pages 18-19).

# YOUNG SIGNMAKER OF THE YEAR

Joint Winners



**Damian Jacobs**  
*Allen Signs*



**Kirsty Donald**  
*Owen Piling Graphics*

This award was inaugurated and is supported by Roland DG (UK) with the intention of highlighting the vital role young people play in the sign industry and the importance of delivering effective, structured training to aspiring signmakers. The calibre of this year's entrants, all of whom have completed formal apprenticeships, is testament to the impact effective training can have both on the development of young people and the companies they work for.

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Highly commended:



**Dan Pickthall and Josh Oliver,**  
*Ast Signs*



**Ryan Gomersall,**  
*The Sign Group*

**Sam Harris,**  
*HNS Signs*



**Jason Lee,**  
*Spectrum Sign and Display*

# ROLL-OUT PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR



**Winner**  
**Sign 2000**  
*The Post Office Transformation*

Sign 2000 has been responsible for the design, production, manufacture and installation of more than 75,000 signs – internal and external – at 6000 High Street locations. This is the UK's largest re-branding project for more than 25 years.

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Highly commended:



**Allen Signs**



**Castleton Signs**



**Arnold Clark**



# COMMERCIAL VEHICLE GRAPHICS OF THE YEAR



Winner

**Elite Signs**

*Seasider Bus Fleet for Stagecoach*

Elite wrapped a fleet of buses operating routes in Skegness working to designs supplied by Stagecoach's own designer. Each bus was given its own personality (and name) but still managed to promote the overall brand. Great fun and expertly implemented.

Sponsored by



**William Smith**  
established 1832

*Highly commended:*



**Ast Signs**



**Identity Group**



**Premier Signs**

# ARCHITECTURAL SIGN OF THE YEAR



Winner

**John Anthony Signs**

*'Butterflies' at Monsoon, Westfield Shopping Centre.*

An incredible installation created from 4,500 butterflies, produced from three types of copper, in four different sizes. The butterfly 'swarm' starts inside the store, swirls across the front of the glass facade, floats across a glass reveal and then flies up into the atrium of the first floor.

Sponsored by



*Highly commended:*



**Sign of the Times**



**Signs Now**

# THE INNOVATION AWARD



Sponsored by



Winner  
**Shimmerdisc**  
*Sequinned displays*

Shimmerdisc brings a new realm of possibilities to digital printing by enabling the production of shimmering sequinned displays by using thousands of light reflecting, printed discs to produce photographic quality images up to billboard size.

Highly commended:



**Sign of the Times**



**Spectrum Signs**



**Sign 2000**



# INTERIOR SIGN OF THE YEAR



Winner  
**Signbox and the Graphic History Company**

*The Author Mural at Hatchette, UK*

Designed by The Graphic History Company and produced and installed over six floors at Hatchette, this extraordinary artwork celebrates 250 years of literary history and features 3,500 author's names laid out in a 'river' pattern.



Highly commended:



**Castleton Signs**



**Adam Bourne**



**Sign of the Times**



# LEISURE INDUSTRY SIGN OF THE YEAR



Winner

**Signs Now**

*'Flotillas' at Resort World, NEC*

Created as a centrepiece for the lake at Resort World at the NEC in Birmingham, the eight floating lotus flowers were created from copper and are illuminated by an RGB LED system that allows the colours of the flowers to be changed constantly. The project combined great craft skills with outstanding engineering know-how.

Sponsored by



Highly commended:



**Graffiti Signs**



**isGroup**



**Granthams Signs**



**Image Technique**

# THE CRAFTSMAN AWARD



Sponsored by



Winner

**Sign of the Times**

*'Paper Planes' at Dublin Airport.*

The team at SOTT produced 600 individual 'paper dart' planes from stainless steel. Each was hung by hand from the structure using three wires to create the desired murmuration effect.

Highly commended:



**Signs Now**



**Redbox Signs**



**John Anthony Signs**

## WRAP OF THE YEAR



Winner

**PVL (UK)**

*3D effect wrap of a Fiat 500 for Gatwick Diamond Business.*

PVL (UK) cleverly produced a 3D effect by mounting PVC discs to the Fiat's body and roof prior to applying the overall wrap to create an extremely tactile effect that invited people to touch the car, thus possibly making it the first ever interactive wrap!

Sponsored by



Highly commended:



Grafix



Paul Turner



Russell Joyce

## ILLUMINATED SIGN OF THE YEAR



Winner

**isGroup**

*The Printworks in Manchester.*

Over the years the Grade Two listed building had been disfigured by advertising boards. isGroup was appointed to transform the building with a new illuminated signing scheme that was designed to reveal the architectural features of the building, while still delivering effective signage for the tenants. Star of the show is an eight metre wide replica of a Les Paul Gibson guitar – complete with golden, neon style, strings for Hard Rock Cafe.

Sponsored by



Highly commended:



Newman Displays



Signbox



Spectrum Signs



## RETAIL SIGN OF THE YEAR



Winner

**Identity Group**

*Eurotunnel Terminals*

Sponsored by



The terminal buildings are now 20 years old and it was starting to show. Identity Group was retained to deliver a refresher in the form of 'Big Welcome' signage that would be effective day and night. It also wrapped the complete roof of the UK terminal – 260 huge vinyl drops installed from cherrypickers 12-metres above the ground, which effectively made the building a beacon for passing traffic.

Highly commended:



Sign 2000



N1 Visual Solutions

## THE WIDE FORMAT PROJECT OF THE YEAR



Winner

**4D Creations**

*Humberside Building Wrap*

Sponsored by



4D Creations is a business still in its infancy, but showed its potential with this building wrap in Humberside that helped transform a disused hanger into an appealing warehouse space. The judges were impressed with both the scale of the project and the fact that 4D successfully applied the wrap to the corrugated surface of the building.

Highly commended:



Signbox



Digital Tyger



Image Technique



Sign of the Times

## WAYFINDING SCHEME OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by



Winner

**isGroup**

*NOMA development in Manchester.*

isGroup used its own dynamic Way2Go system to produce wayfinding signage for the 20 acre NOMA development in Manchester. Whilst offering a readymade signage system, Way2Go enables a wide variety of materials to be used, and the signs for NOMA featured glass, aluminium (cut in a filigree pattern) and West Moreland stone, together with LED illumination.

Highly commended:



Signbox



Dyson Signs

## THE SIGN CONSTRUCTION AWARD



Winner

**Newman Displays**

*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child at the Palace Theatre*

The sign incorporates a wide range of elements, including the hand sculpted features, and had to be 100 percent accurate in terms of colour finishes and illumination to reflect the Harry Potter brand while blending perfectly with the architecture of the building.

Sponsored by

**SignLink**

Highly commended:



isGroup



John Anthony Signs



Signs Now



Hollywood Monster



## SMALL SIGNMAKER OF THE YEAR



*Winner*  
**N1 Visual Solutions**

Sponsored by



For a small business, N1 completed an astounding selection of work over the past year, ranging from a roll-out for barber shop Everyman, (which was shortlisted for the retail prize), through internal and external large format graphics for a variety of clients, to vehicle wrapping of the highest order – including the captured dinosaur wrap for a huge truck.

*Highly commended:*



**Print Sauce Solutions**



**Redbox Signs**



**KLE Solutions**

## PRODUCT OF THE YEAR



*Winner*  
**SkySiren PCS**  
*(pre-crush sensing) from Nationwide Platforms*

Sponsored by



SkySiren, developed by Nationwide Platforms, is the first safety system on mobile elevating work platforms to use ultrasonic sensors to detect and alert operators to potential entrapment hazards. While its primary purpose is to increase the safety of crews, its early warning system also prevents potential damage to buildings and structures.

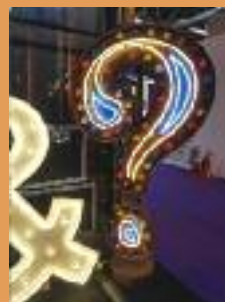
*Highly commended:*



**DecorMark by Metamark**



**Way2Go by the isGroup**



**NeonPlus RGB by The Sign Group**

## Sign Awards Achieving their Goal

The British Sign Awards were launched by the BSGA in 2014 to provide the sign industry with an opportunity to celebrate the creativity and diverse skill set offered by UK signmakers of every type and size.



"Our aim was to create an awards scheme that had real meaning and value to all those businesses that entered and, based on the size and quality of this year's submissions, we are achieving that goal," reported David Catanach, Director of the BSGA. "The dramatic impact that winning an award can have on a business both externally, amongst customers and potential customers, and internally, amongst management and staff, is now a matter of record.



"Over 250 projects were entered in this year's awards and, virtually without exception, they were of an exceptional standard, demonstrating that signmaking in the

UK is a vibrant and exciting industry that combines traditional craft skills with constantly advancing technology and materials.

"The quality of the projects gave the judging panel, made up of independent experts from across the full spectrum of the industry, a really difficult task," said David. "Some of the entries submitted were considered more art installation than pure signage, but all were produced by signmakers and demonstrated the increasingly diverse capabilities of the sign industry in the UK.



"Signs are a visual medium so the judges look, initially, for visual impact, but they also look for the skill, creativity and know-how required for successful manufacture and installation.

"There can be only one winner in each award category but the standard of this year's entry is reflected in the fact that the judges awarded commendation certificates to more projects than ever before. Any company that has received a commendation should be really proud of their work.

"The consolation for those businesses that didn't make it to the shortlists for the awards is that they were participating in a year of outstanding signs.

"The awards will be back next year and will provide new opportunities for sign business to claim the top spot."



# Saluting the winners

The awards were presented, under the guidance of host Bill Turnbull, at a gala celebration held at The East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 3rd November. Here we acknowledge all those who received trophies at this year's event.

## SIGN OF THE YEAR

*Newman Displays for Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*



Bill Turnbull (picture with l to r) Phil Loveday, Production Manager and Mark Hollington, Operations Director, Newman Displays and Stuart Bennett, National Sales Manager for the Commercial Solutions Division of corporate sponsor 3M.

## YOUNG SIGNMAKER OF THE YEAR

*Damian Jacobs and Kirsty Donald*



Host Bill Turnbull with joint winners Kirsty Donald of Owen Pilling Graphics and Damian Jacobs of Allen Signs. Their trophies were presented by Mark Jones (right), Head of Rolandcare at sponsor Roland DG.

## ROLL-OUT PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR

*Sign 2000, Post Office Rebrand*



Bill Turnbull with Steve Spackman of Sign 2000 (centre) and Peter Douglas, Operations Director with sponsor Nationwide Platforms.

## COMMERCIAL VEHICLE GRAPHICS

*Elite Signs, Seaside Bus Fleet*



Bill Turnbull with Michael Tinker, Ambassador for Elite Sign (centre) and Mark Brown Director at William Smith, sponsor of the award.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGN OF THE YEAR

*John Anthony Signs for 'Butterflies' at Monsoon.*



Bill Turnbull with David Fagg, Sales and Marketing Director at John Anthony Signs (centre) with Dennis Parker, Managing Director of sponsor Blackburns Metals.

## THE INNOVATION AWARD

*Shimmerdisc sequinned displays*



Bill Turn with Andrew Ainge of Shimmerdisc (centre) and Sian Kelly, Chairman of the Sign Design Society, who presented the award on behalf of sponsor Epson.

**THE INTERIORS AWARD**

*Signbox and The Graphic History Company, The Author Mural at Hatchette, UK*



Bill Turnbull with (from the left) Mark Bartlett, MD at Signbox, Kate Forrester of The Graphic History Company and Paul French, CEO of sponsor Metamark.

**WRAP OF THE YEAR**

*PVL UK, for Gatwick Diamond Business car wrap.*



Bill Turnbull with Will Clarke, Sales Director at PVL UK (centre) and Ben Scammell from sponsor Spandex.

**WIDE FORMAT PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

*4D Creations, Building Wrap at Humber Enterprise Park*



Bill Turnbull with (from the left) Lee Ford, MD, Jess Reed, Business Development Manager, 4D Creations, and Andrew Simmons, Sales Director with sponsor Soyang Europe.

**LEISURE INDUSTRY AWARD**

*Signs Now for 'Flotillas' at the NEC*



Bill Turnbull with (left to right), Carlo Matarazzo and Bill Dunphy from Signs Now and James Hirst from sponsor JMH Digital.

**ILLUMINATED SIGN OF THE YEAR**

*isGroup, The Printworks, Manchester.*



Bill Turnbull with (left to right) Jane Whitehouse, MD, and Paul Dyke, Sales Director, isGroup with Mike Smith, General Manager of Signfab UK.

**SIGN CONSTRUCTION AWARD**

*Newman Displays for Harry Potter at the Palace Theatre, London.*



Bill Turnbull with (left to right) Phil Loveday and Mark Hollington from Newman Displays with Brendan Perring, Editor of sponsor SignLink.

**THE CRAFTSMAN AWARD**

*Sign of the Times, Paper Planes at Dublin Airport*



Bill Turnbull with Darren Roughton, MD at Sign of the Times (centre) and Kai Gordon, representing sponsor Trade Etching Direct.

**RETAIL SIGN OF THE YEAR**

*Identity Group, Eurotunnel Terminals*



Bill Turnbull with Paul Gietzen, Chairman of Identity Group (centre) and Mark Godden, who presented the award on behalf of sponsor Complete CNC Solutions.

**PRODUCT OF THE YEAR**

*Nationwide Platforms, Skysiren PCS*



Bill Turnbull with Peter Douglas, Operations Director at Nationwide Platforms and Val Hirst, Editor of Sign Directions Magazine, which sponsored the award.

**SMALL SIGNMAKER OF THE YEAR**

*N1 Visual Solutions*



Bill Turnbull with Paul Atherton from N1 (centre) and Neil McCarthy, Head of Sales and Marketing at sponsor Pyramid Display Materials



# HSE demands more protection on routers

Flatbed routers and even flatbed printers used by many signmakers could be targeted by the Health and Safety Executive if they are not equipped with what HSE inspectors consider are adequate protective barriers, the BSGA has warned.



Businesses using this type of equipment could be made to retrofit safety devices at their own cost and pay HSE 'intervention' fees.

The warning comes after a signmaker was spot checked by HSE and received a notice of a 'material breach' of Health and Safety rules concerning a router because there was a lack of protective guarding.

It has been generally accepted that, as these machines travel at speeds of less than 25 metres per minute and have a guard around the spindle/drill bits, together with an emergency stop button, they were acceptable. However, HSE has now made it clear that it considers routers that are not guarded by additional protective devices, such as a light

barrier, pressure sensitive mat or bumpers, unacceptable.

"The BSGA has issued this warning because we don't want sign businesses to face interruptions to business or the costs that could arise as a result of an HSE spot-check," said David Catanach of the BSGA.

"We suggest that businesses that already have routers discuss available options with their suppliers or, if they are considering buying a new machine, they should make sure the specification includes protective devices that conform to HSE requirements. If businesses are buying used machines they will need to factor in the cost of adding the required level of protection."

## Beware the patent 'ambulance-chasers'!

**Sign businesses on mainland Europe have found themselves falling foul of patent law and as a result, could face retrospective licence fees which can be levied as a percentage of the signmakers' turnover.**

"It appears that the industrial equivalent of ambulance-chasing lawyers have got in on the act," said David Catanach of the BSGA. "They appear to be going on fishing expeditions, calling on sign businesses and saying they believe them to be in breach of patent law. Once on the premises, they endeavour to prove their case.

He continued: "We are informed by our colleagues in the European Sign Federation that this has already happened in Europe, where the lawyers have gone directly for

signmakers and it could start in the UK.

The advice, should any approach be made to a UK sign business about possible patent infringement, is to respond by asking for further details in writing. "Do not, under any circumstances, invite or allow anyone on to your premises."

"Patent law can be very complex and some areas where patents have been granted are, to say the least, very confusing," he added. "If anyone is uncertain about their right to use a product or a particular technology, they should check very carefully. It is usually better to pay licence fees up front, rather than face the potential of a much heavier retrospective charge."

## New Members

**Membership of the BSGA continues to expand and, over recent weeks, the following businesses have joined the Association:**

### **Make it Happen Signage Consultancy**

This new venture, still in its first year, has been launched by Sam Armstrong and is based on her 16 years experience in the sign industry. Sam now offers a wide range of services to companies involved in the industry, ranging from project management and problem solving, to supplier sourcing and product advice.

**For further information visit:**  
[www.makeith.co.uk](http://www.makeith.co.uk)

### **Wizard Signs, Bideford, Devon**

Wizard Signs offers a comprehensive bespoke signage service from its base at the Habat Enterprise Park in Bideford, Devon, including the provision of shop signage and fascias, vehicle graphics and wraps, exterior signage, as well as a wide range of digitally printed materials.

**For further information visit:**  
[www.wizardsigns.co.uk](http://www.wizardsigns.co.uk)

## Planning Watch

The BSGA and its advisors continue to monitor plans submitted by local authorities and, where necessary, to object to elements which may adversely affect signmakers. Over the past three months, the BSGA has objected or asked for amendments to plans issued by the following local authorities:

- North East Lincs
- Redcar & Cleveland
- Wycombe DC
- Burnley
- Redbridge
- Islington
- Ipswich
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Welwyn & Hatfield
- Watford
- City of London
- Hyndburn





# BRITISH SIGN AWARDS

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# Bees on Bridges



**Signs Express (South Durham & Teesside) has been working closely with local artist Vicky Holbrough and Tees Valley Arts organisation to brighten up two bridges in the largest park in Darlington.**

Tees Valley Arts is a government-funded organisation working across the five boroughs of the Tees Valley to encourage creative participation with people of all abilities, ages and

backgrounds. It has been the orchestrator of numerous bespoke creative activities across the region, all of which are delivered by freelance artists using many different art forms.

For this project, which was designed to encourage people to reconnect with the River Tees, the organisation appointed artist Vicky Holbrough, who specialises in drawing, print-making and sculpture. Charged with producing artwork to enhance the Geneva Bridge, which forms part of a heritage trail that meanders through Darlington's South Park, Vicky designed a bee inspired mural and commissioned Sign Express to help her bring her creation to life.



Commenting on the project, Vicky said: "Creating artworks for public spaces isn't always straightforward as the end result has to meet the brief and enhance the surrounding environment, while also taking account of the prevailing site conditions. However, in this case, the team at Signs Express was extremely measured in its approach and enabled me to realise my

original idea very successfully."

Daniel Pickersgill, owner of Signs Express (South Durham & Teesside), added: "We really relished the opportunity of working with a local artist on such a quirky project and we are now looking forward to helping Vicky to decorate a second bridge in the area with one of her eye-catching designs." ■

## An uplifting experience

**When after 100 years at the same site, Liverpool's Alder Hey Children's Hospital relocated to a new building in 2015, Amanda Rees, the hospital's Clinical Research Facility Operations Manager, was determined to create a less clinical and more relaxing environment for her young patients.**

Having decided that the way to achieve this was with the installation of a series of custom made murals featuring nature images chosen by the children themselves, she began to research suitable wall coverings and soon discovered HP's PVC-free Durable Smooth Wall Paper, an innovative new printable wall covering that is certified environmentally safe for use in hospitals and other sensitive environments. Furthermore, it is also Type II Compliant, thus tough enough to withstand intense wear and tear.

The installation was completed in collaboration with HP large format media provider, BMG, and the Liverpool-based digital print specialist, Colour Create, which printed the wallpaper on its HP Latex 360 Printer.

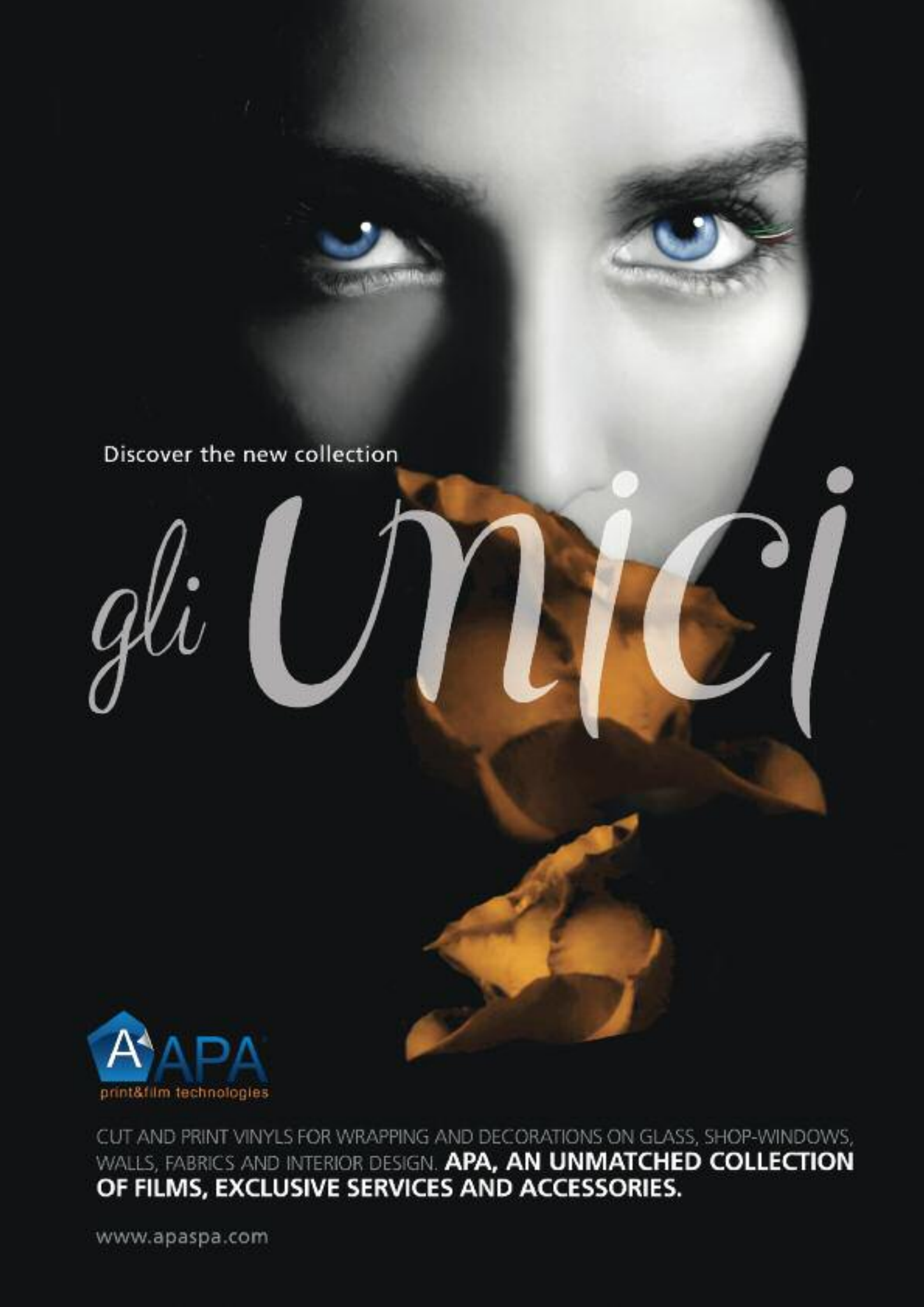
Explaining the efficacy of the Latex printing method, Barry Hodgson, a Director at Colour Create, said: "HP's water-based inks can be safely used in sensitive indoor environments, such as hospitals, as they are clean, harmless and odourless. As for the HP PVC-free Durable Smooth Wall Paper, well it prints like a dream!" He added that as it is scratch- and tear-resistant and can be used in conjunction with common adhesives, it is perfect for use in commercial environments.

Commenting on the success of the installation, which was carried out whilst the hospital was in use, Amanda Rees said: "The prints were



chosen by the children visiting the Clinical Research Facility and reflect the park land in which our hospital is located, thus bringing the outside in. We've had a fantastic reaction from patients, parents and staff and are very appreciative of the efforts of everyone who helped to create a more colourful, calming and uplifting experience for the children we treat here." ■





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## Modularity is the key

**Bobcat Digital has installed a Zünd G3 L2500 as part of an investment package from CMYUK, which will help it expand and evolve at its own pace.**

Until recently, the Newport Pagnell-based print company, which was founded around three years ago by Robert Blackburn and Louise Owen, relied upon a 1.3m-wide Mimaki printer, a small Xerox production printer and hand tools for cutting, but with a growing client base that spans the retail, exhibition and, increasingly, the construction sectors, it became clear that the company would have to increase its production capacity, especially since it is now regularly producing large quantities of hoardings and health and safety signage.

Accordingly, it decided to invest in a new EFI VUTEk wide-format printer from CMYUK, but this presented a new dilemma, namely Bobcat's inability to match its increased output speed with its hand finishing techniques. Robert Blackburn explained: "Having accepted

that we needed to increase our cutting facility, we went to Sign and Digital UK 2016 to see the various cutting solutions on offer and, after seeing the Zünd machines and gathering intelligence from local users, we visited Zünd's demonstration centre in St Albans so that we could see the G3 in action."

Robert confesses that this visit proved to be a real eye-opener. He continued: "We were very impressed with its flexibility and the fact that its modular construction enables it to be changed and updated as and when, production demands evolve, thus eliminating the need to invest in a whole new system as the business develops."

As with all Zünd digital cutting tables, the Zünd G3 is robustly designed and constructed and can be precisely tailored to suit the individual needs of different customers. Its

energy-efficient vacuum generators ensure that materials with a thickness of up to 50mm remain in



place during processing to produce the perfect finish, while intelligent safety features protect operators from the machine's powerful cutting tools.

The Zünd G3 L2500, which was installed at Bobcat Digital around two months ago is currently used mainly for X-Y cutting on standard Foamex board, plus routing and engraving on acrylic, wood and thick Foamex to produce commercial signage. However, Bobcat

Digital is hoping that once it has fully discovered the full potential of the G3's capabilities it will be able to further expand the scope of its services next year.

Robert Blackburn concluded: "So far it's all going very well – brilliant really and, as we are always open to providing whatever people want, we anticipate that the G3 will enable us to really ramp things up in 2017!". ■

## Graphtec appoints Irish distributor



**Graphtec GB has appointed Dublin-based DBC Group as the Irish distributor for the recently launched i-Mark automatic digital die-cutter. Located on the Naas Road Business Park, the DBC Group comprises three specialist companies, one of which supplies a wide range of industrial and commercial print finishing solutions.**

These include leading-brand roll laminators, dye-sublimation products, graphics media, digital printers, heat presses and now the i-Mark digital die-cutter.

Commenting on the appointment, Graphtec GB Director, Phil Kneale said: "There has been a huge interest

in and demand for the i-Mark digital die-cutter since its launch just a few months ago and the DBC Group appointment portends further expansion of the Graphtec GB distributor/reseller network for this product. One of the key features of the cutter is that, depending on the thickness of the material, it can handle up to 120 sheets in a continuous cycle, with the ability to add further sheets on demand without interruption of the die-cutting process. This is an attribute of the i-Mark machine that sets it apart from any comparable sheet-fed system."

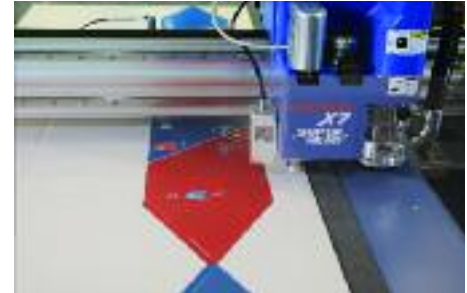
Based on the popular Graphtec CE6000-40 plotter/cutter and i-Mark hardware and software, the die-

cutter can be used for a range of print and cut applications, including short-run label production, digital prints and packaging and will handle sheets of material of varying thicknesses and in sizes ranging from A4 up to Super A3 (330 x 483mm). It is especially suited to short-run label printing and, since the die-cutting is performed automatically it eliminates the need to purchase expensive dies. Furthermore, the machine's extremely compact footprint enables it to be mounted on a table as small as 60 x 67cm. The cutter will handle both thin materials such as adhesive sheets and thicker board materials up to 350gsm. Average cutting speed for each sheet of material is 30-40 seconds. ■



# New Opportunities for the Colour Crew

Based in Milton Keynes, The Colour Crew takes huge pride in its ability to turn quotes and the consequent projects around for customers with lightning speed and uncompromising quality. However, the company is always looking to further enhance its service levels, which is why it recently invested in a DYSS X7 digital cutting table from AG/CAD.



Nick Goodall, The Colour Crew's Managing Director, explained that it purchased the X7 to help it reduce lead times and costs, and it seems that these expectations have already been realised. He said: "We were outsourcing a lot of work that often required die cutting and a cutting forme, with all of the consequences for turnaround times that involved. The obvious solution was to invest in our own digital cutter, which as well as enabling us to offer a speedier service, would also enable us to exert full control over the whole production process."

After reviewing the various machines on offer, Nick decided that the DYSS X7 was the best option for a number of reasons. He lists its robust build quality and the fact that it uses the industry leading KASEMAKE CAD software, as two of the key factors, but adds: "I also heard lots of anecdotal tales of the excellent service and support provided by AG/CAD, so after taking everything into account, we went ahead and I'm glad that we did as I'm confident that the X7 will pay for itself within two years."

The Colour Crew offers complete print, signmaking and PoS solutions, which means that it uses a wide variety of materials, including everything from foam display board and FBB, through to laminate, vinyl, acrylic, corrugated plastics, high impact polystyrene and aluminium composite, to name but a few. Prior to the X7's installation, the company often had to turn down projects that involved the cutting of geometrically challenging shapes, but not anymore. Nowadays the X7

SuperHead cutter, which also features a roll-feeding capability, works in perfect tandem with its large format roll-fed Mimaki digital printer and UV digital flatbed and has no trouble keeping up with the output delivered by both.

This flexibility has enabled The Colour Crew to process almost a quarter of its finishing work on the X7 and, since its installation, the company hasn't outsourced any cutting. More importantly, it has also eliminated its labour intensive hand-cutting operations.

John Goddard, the Colour Crew's Warehouse Manager, reported: "We do a lot of work for the Domino Pizza Chain that used to involve hand cutting pizza boxes and boxes for sauces and dips, a task that took one employee at least one to three days a week to complete, but now the K7 cuts hundreds of boxes in no time. In addition, we previously used to send 1000+ quantities of dip-boxes for die cutting, but the K7 also makes easy work of this too."

Nick Goodall observed: "Since the K7 arrived, lead-times have been cut by up to half, depending upon quantity, material type and complexity and on some jobs we can even offer same day delivery, something that wasn't previously possible. The faster throughput has also increased our capacity and enabled us to take on more work – we regularly process batches of 300 to 500 jobs and very often a thousand or so parts from 3m by 1.6m boards or 50m rolls, whilst

simultaneously creasing and cutting one-off prototypes. In fact, the design and prototyping of POS, boxes and FSDUs has proved to be a very successful addition to our repertoire as the KASEMAKE software enables us to turn out such samples really quickly, while the three-tool SuperHead provides us with the finesse to cut vinyl and crease thin materials, whilst also delivering the power and stability

to process Dibond ACM and 19mm thick foamed boards with excellent edge finishes."

Nick concluded: "We are delighted with both the machine and the service provided by AG/CAD - it is really helping us to open new doors and so confident are we of our ability to take things to the next level, we have employed a sales person to promote our new capabilities and the extra capacity that the K7 has given us." ■

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## An all round winner

**Having been in business since the early eighties, Cobal Signs is now driven by strong service-led ethics and a consultative approach to product development, combined with an amalgam of engineering and design skills.**

The company may be cast in the role of a sign manufacturer, but it is actually much more, as it uses its decades of experience to deliver sustainable and manageable wayfinding solutions that perform from day one and evolve in line with changing customer requirements. These and its other products are designed and developed in house and the company is always looking

to make further efficiencies and creative potential in its manufacturing processes, which is why it recently installed a Protek Unico CNC production routing system supplied by Complete CNC Solutions.

Cobal Signs has to process a wide range of resistant materials including plastics, metals, and woods and thus used the occasion of the Sign & Digital UK exhibition to compare machines and to carry out cutting tests. The Protek Unico CNC acquitted itself well and a further demonstration was arranged at Complete CNC's headquarters.

Unusually for a sign company, Cobal

Signs' cutting requirements include heavier machining operations involving bulk material removal, rather than simply profiling operations in lighter materials and so it was impressed to note that the robustly constructed Unico CNC excels at burning down such varied workloads.

The demonstration fulfilled some very specific needs, processing substrates such as aluminium, foamed PVC, 18mm thick oak and various other print clad materials that were cut to exact register. The finish was also exemplary and helped to seal the deal.

Complete CNC's CompleteCare

team advised regarding the electrics and other support services needed in advance of the machine's installation, and its 9:00am arrival was followed by final commissioning processes that were completed by 15:00pm, enabling live production to begin on the same day.

The Complete CNC Solutions' team then provided Cobal Signs with two days of intensive training to ensure that its operatives were competent to use the Unico CNC and its integrated safety systems.

This machine, which was the first to be installed within the UK, was fitted with a flatness probe, mist coolant system and registration camera and

## Upping the tempo at Smith

**Marking the introduction of the Smith brand as the new manufacturing arm of its business, leading trade-only supplier William Smith has invested significantly in new production machinery.**

In addition to a powder-coating unit, this has included installation of a large-format AXYZ 4020 CNC router supplied by AXYZ International. It complements the existing AXYZ 4010 machine, but now offers an enhanced production capability. Both routers are a feature of the recently enlarged Smith fabrication facility.

Production Manager at Smith, Martin Rodgers commented: "Installation of the AXYZ 4020 router has led to a 30-40 percent increase in output and a commensurate reduction in turnaround times. It has also enabled access to an increased volume of large contract work involving primarily the manufacture of sign trays for major corporate ID projects."

The router is used to process a wide

range of signmaking materials, including aluminium sheet, aluminium composite material (ACM), acrylic, PVC, wood, MDF and foamed board.

The AXYZ 4020 is part of a family of 4000 routers supplied by AXYZ International. It offers a processing width of 1524mm and a processing length of 1220mm that can be extended to over 10m by increments of 610mm. The router incorporates a seven-station automatic tool change (ATC) facility and the latest helical rack and pinion drive system, representing a significant upgrade to the existing AXYZ 4010 machine that did not include this particular production tool enhancement. The system features a multiple gear teeth configuration that helps spread the work load more



evenly, leading to faster throughput rates, less material wastage, quieter operation and ultimately a longer than normal machine life.

As with all AXYZ routers, the 4000 series can be supplied with a number of optional production tool enhancements. These include the latest A2MC machine control system, the AXYZ Vision System (AVS) and the AXYZ Auto Zone Management facility that ensures the material being processed is always held securely

during the routing/cutting cycle.

Since installation, the AXYZ 4020 router has, according to Martin Rodgers, "performed flawlessly with no operating problems." He concluded: "We were very impressed at the level of proficiency demonstrated by the AXYZ International team, prior to, during and after installation. The on-site training provided by the AXYZ installation engineer was in-depth, comprehensive and easy for our operators to understand." ■



also features a 12 bay auto tool changer.

Cobal Signs is now equipped to react to customers' needs with a solution that's not only an exact fit, it's produced wholly in-house to the highest orders of quality. The system has enabled the company to pursue production efficiencies, to introduce new products and to expand the scope of its offering to existing markets and beyond.

Complete CNC reports that the Protek Unico CNC production routing system has earned itself something of a reputation for its focussed and highly productive role. It's advancing the industry by giving its users the ability to do more, to do it in less time and with lower operating costs. ■



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# Give me a sign

With easier access to a wide range of off-the-shelf sign and display systems, supplied either as fully assembled products or in component form for on-site assembly, customisation and installation, even the most complex sign and display projects can be fulfilled without recourse to expensive alternative bespoke solutions. Mike Connolly reports on some of the more innovative systems now available and highlights his pick of recent applications.

## Ticking all the boxes

**In-store point-of-sale image systems that can be readily changed are now a familiar feature in many retail environments. These eye-catching units enable striking images to be displayed and changed within minutes to accommodate fresh marketing/promotional campaigns.**

For such applications, the textile-based NovaTex system from NOVA is said to tick all the right boxes. Available in four different profiles to enable wall-mounted and suspended sign and display options, as well as a freestanding option for single- and double-sided applications, the system works via

the incorporation of a silicone edge to the perimeter of the textile which, when pushed into the seating channel of the profile, tensions itself within the sign box or frame. Furthermore, a discreet pull tab is positioned in one corner that allows the graphic being displayed to be simply pulled from its housing and replaced by another. If required, security screws can be fitted to prevent unauthorised removal of the skin.

The NovaTex suite of profiles comprises a single-sided box section with a 83mm depth, a double-sided profile with a depth of 100mm and two single-sided framing sections measuring 40 x

19mm. Manufacture of the system could not be easier, with the 19mm frame featuring an internal chevron cleat system and the 40mm frame and two box sections being assembled using a 'fast fit' corner angle facility that delivers a perfect mitre joint. The two box sections can be LED-illuminated, while both frames can be backlit using LED light sheet.

NovaDisplay is another textile-based display system, but with a difference. As there is no silicone edge on the skin, the need for any face preparation prior to printing is eliminated. The skin is retained by use of a gripper arrangement located within the face and the



graphic is simply pushed into its seating groove using the tool provided.

The 'soft nose' design of the system imparts an attractive edge to the visual. Two profiles are available: a single-sided box with a depth of 90mm and a double-sided box with a depth of 100mm. Both profiles make use of internal corner fastenings and can be used in freestanding, wall-mounted or suspended applications. ■



# Huge savings with Ashby

Leading manufacturer and supplier to the trade of high-quality sign blanks and fabricated sign trays, Ashby Trade Sign Supplies takes pride in its ability to guarantee same-day delivery at what are described as ground-breaking low prices.

The short lead times and keen pricing structure have evolved during 20 years of service to the UK sign and display sectors. Aluminium remains the dominant material used in a manufacturing process that comprises cutting/routing, channelling and punching of the aluminium sheet, subsequent packaging and same-day delivery. Ashby also stocks a range of grey, white and mill-finish posts to accommodate virtually any post and panel sign and display system



requirement.

Ultra-competitive low pricing, combined with a clever and aggressive buying strategy, has sustained Ashby's status as a much sought after trade supplier, while solar panels and innovative plant

solutions installed at the company's manufacturing facility have helped reduce energy costs and thus enabled even lower than normal prices to be offered during what remains a difficult economic period. ■

## Vista points the way



**A college in the US has installed a directional signage solution supplied by Vista System. The requirement was for large bold graphics housed within a modern-looking signage solution that would blend with the overall décor.**

Flag, room and office signs and pylons were chosen for Nazareth College in Rochester New York and were printed, assembled and installed within a four-week period.

Pierrepont Visual Graphics chose to share some images of the end result. ■



# Spandex at the double

**information/directional directory sign and display systems are among the key products in the Spandex portfolio. Both Infopanel and Slatz can be supplied either as cut-to-size extrusions for on-site assembly, or as fully assembled and customised solutions using the cut-to-size and full assembly service available at four**

**strategically located Spandex Sign Systems centres.**

Infopanel can be used either as a freestanding or wall-mounted interior/exterior directory, with illumination provided by the complementary Infopanel Luminaire. The edge and brace components of the system enable the production of customised panels in any size to add impact to exterior directories and to enable installation of the system in virtually any location, including alcoves.



a design classic, the simple yet versatile Slatz interior directory system has similar characteristics to Infopanel. It can be used as single- and/or double-sided wall-mounted, freestanding, projecting and suspended formats to enable integration into a total interior sign and display programme. ■

Described as



# Catching the eye in a digital age

**The Tensator Virtual Assistant digital solution has become a familiar sight in airport lobbies, retail environments and railway stations across the world, where it is helping to boost consumer engagement in areas such as retail promotions.**

Its usage is a response to the growing concern that people have become desensitised to traditional forms of signage, a fact that was highlighted in a recent survey conducted by US marketing firm Rich Multimedia Technologies, which found that 63 percent of people are more likely to be attracted by digital signage.

A typical example of this can be found in the Grafton Shopping Centre in Cambridge, which became the first in the UK to introduce the technology in 2014.

In one of the centre's main restaurants, the Tensator Virtual Assistant was used to advise consumers how to claim 20 percent off their food bill, resulting in 100 redemptions against a typical 10 percent follow-through rate. This means that 1,000 customers effectively engaged with Tensator Virtual Assistant, thus increasing traffic flow and boosting sales in the process.

It is further evident that interactive technology has the ability to bring about behavioural change. In an entirely different sector, Virtual Assistant has helped reduce the number of items confiscated at major airports across the world by five percent since its introduction in 2011. The fully programmable assistants were strategically placed at the entrance to baggage check areas, where they reminded



customers about restricted items in carry-on luggage.

Digital signage technology thus has the ability to significantly increase consumer engagement across a variety of sectors when used in combination with sound strategy and personalised messaging. ■



## T3 in action

**The high degree of flexibility and customisation provided by the T3 display system from Tecna Display helped exhibition display company Golden Strength in the US to design a stunning array of visuals for a major fashion event.**

Working with Tecna Display, Golden Strength used a variety of display techniques to create a unique and eye-catching visual show to excite and thrill visitors. The entire display comprised 14 graphic stands, two floating walls and two encased pedestals that were built in the lobby of the venue, facilitating the use of huge stunning visuals on the stands,



clothed mannequins on the pedestals and for a variety of products to be showcased on the

floating walls.

Using a combination of Tecna Display's steel-sided fusion tubing and connectors for the framework, the magnetic strips attached to the large graphic panels enabled the graphics to be mounted securely and without hassle. This was attributable to the versatility and ease of construction of the modular T3 system. ■



**In a separate project, the T3 system was used to create a large freestanding wall display for a high-profile customer of a leading display specialist. The T3 system was chosen because of its distinctive curves, which helped to make the display both functional and visually attractive, as the graphics and supporting texts could be seen from different angles.**

The display also featured a 65-inch monitor attached securely to the frame using a rigid support bracket. This enabled the client to easily update the digital information that formed part of the display. ■



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# Smith for signs



Through the recently established Smith manufacturing/fabrication arm of its trade-only business, William Smith offers a diverse range of sign and display solutions, which are available either as bespoke or 'off-the-shelf' products and include directional/information, projecting, suspended, tray and traffic formats.

Smith's well-established and highly adaptable multi-directional Stylos fingerpost system incorporates 'fingers' that can point in up to eight different directions and at a varying height. A key design feature is the concealed inner fixing arrangement that makes it extremely difficult for the fingerposts to be vandalised, thus making the system the preferred choice of many local authorities. It is supplied either as a finished product, complete with graphics, or in component form for on-site assembly and graphic customisation in any stove-enamelled BS, RAL or Pantone colour specification.

Complementing the Stylos solution is a range of wooden fingerposts. Crafted in solid oak and designed to blend harmoniously with rural environments, each 'arm' insert and fingerpost pointer is routed out of solid oak planks, with infilled engraved lettering in any colour

incorporated as required. To provide a natural finish, the fingerposts are coated with a wood stain varnish.

Smith's modular and freestanding post & panel information display system incorporates metal slats that are easily interchangeable, thus making it an ideal display solution for locations that are subject to constant change, while its range of projecting signs can be tailored to provide a bespoke or vintage look. They incorporate a steelmounting bracket for added strength and durability, and can be fully customised and supplied in both a LED-illuminated and non-illuminated format.

The company's tray signs range can be supplied powder-coated and finished on-site via the application of vinyl or digitally-printed graphics in addition to fret-cut, push-through or stand-off lettering.

Manufactured by William Smith as early as 1930, the traffic signs now supplied by Smith comply fully with the European standard BS EN 12899 and meet the latest CE standard. For those companies yet to obtain this accreditation, Smith can manufacture and supply on a sub-contractual basis traffic signs that are fully CE-compliant.

Completing the sign and display



system line is Smith's wide range of sign faces and sign blanks, which are supplied in a number of different finishes, including mill, vinyl and reflective. Also

available is a range of 'off-the-shelf' sign components that includes, clamps, posts, base plates and screw bands. ■



# Premium Beauty

Following the recent opening of Essex's first John Lewis department store in Chelmsford, W&Co is celebrating 10 successful years supplying its lightboxes to the UK's favourite retailer.



The relationship between the two companies began in 2006 when W&Co's sleek, ultra-slim T5 tube illuminated light boxes were originally selected for a trial run at the John Lewis Glasgow store, where their robust build quality, high brightness and even illumination proved to be just what was required. A nationwide roll-out followed, with the first lightboxes being installed in the Perfumery and Beauty departments at John Lewis' flagship store on London's Oxford Street and thereafter at its stores at Bluewater, Edinburgh, Milton Keynes, Leicester and Newcastle.

Five years and several stores later, LED versions of the ultra slim light boxes were installed at Westfield, Stratford City in time for the London 2012 Olympics. The LED light boxes offered higher brightness in a slimmer frame and, most importantly, had a lower energy consumption too.

In 2014 the lightboxes received a further modification, with the snap frame being replaced by magnetic lift off front cover to facilitate quick and easy updating of the graphics. In addition, the slimmer profile of these new ultra-thin Tanto lightboxes



enabled them to be fully recessed into the new, trellis-like framework in the store's Premium Beauty department. The first examples of this new style were installed in the York, Oxford Street, Exeter and High Wycombe stores and is now also being rolled out at Chelmsford, the first John Lewis store in Essex, which includes beauty counters for M.A.C, Charlotte Tilbury and Nars. In addition, W&Co will also equip the new John Lewis stores that are opening in Leeds, Oxford and Westfield White City between now and the end of 2017. ■



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# Pop-up problems solved



**First impressions count, and there's nothing that shows off what a company can do and offer quite as effectively as an impressive pop-up display stand. However, with so many ranges now available, it can be difficult to choose the right one. Marcus Norman, Senior Account Manager at Innotech, highlights the key considerations, trends and common problems surrounding pop-up designs.**

"Pop-up stands are widely recognised within the sign and display sectors as providing an effective, affordable, backdrop display that can help drive awareness of a product, service, or a business brand, but there are a few important considerations to bear in mind before making a selection.

To begin with, why is the stand being used? Is it to promote a brand or to sell a specific product? If it's the latter, information on the product or service's unique selling points should be included on the stand graphics, with perhaps a cost-led message.

Secondly where will the stand be used? Will it be taken to an exhibition or will it grace a reception area? Its location will help to determine the stand's size, although typically, panel sizes are 673mm x 2225mm for curved systems, and 733mm x 2225mm for straight pop ups and can be used in three to seven panel width configurations.

When it comes to design, it always pays to remember that as far as banner designs are concerned, less is almost certainly more, so think about how to maximise impact



with the judicious use of pictures and the minimum amount of carefully selected text.

It's also worth considering at this point how much usage the stand will get. If it is to be used more than once, it's important to ensure that the graphics will stand the test of time, so be careful when including information on time sensitive offers and promotions.

A trend currently proving to be very popular is the 'all magnetic system', which includes magnetic bars, headers and frame connectors that enable pop-up systems to be set-up quickly and easily. To fulfil this demand we have recently launched the Contester pop-up system that includes magnetic buttons on the headers to allow for adjustment across all panels, enabling the graphics to be perfectly aligned. Unlike the traditional plastic alternatives, the magnetic versions are robust and hardwearing and ensure that nothing on the system can break. Other features include a powder coated aluminium frame with a stylish square profile, colour-coded headers for easy identification of the pop-up system permutation and a hard-wheeled case that includes internal light



storage in the lid and a fixed rigid internal divider, as well as a metal profile on the case enabling the wrap to be attached

Each pop-up system is unique, and features vary from supplier to supplier, which makes things difficult when users are looking to replace parts or



graphics, as stockists will need to ensure they are matching the correct components to the right system, something that can often only be done when the system is in front of them.

For example, the header kits from systems offered by different suppliers and manufacturers are not generally interchangeable, thus resulting in those using the stand being restricted when it comes to choice of panel lengths and widths and case wraps.

However, the Contester unit overcomes these challenges, particularly when users are looking to reprint graphics for an existing system. Available in a range of variations and sizes, each one comes with uniquely colour-coded parts. This makes it easy to distinguish the panel size required and removes the hassle for users, as they're able to confidently match the correct replacements." ■





# Making waves



With the large number of customisable sign and display systems currently available, companies are frequently faced

with a difficult choice as to what is the best solution for a specific project. This is a situation constantly being addressed by Signwaves through its on-going product development programme.

From twists on tried and tested favourites, such as the digitally-printed Frameworkz snap-frame system, to the latest POW retail forecourt sign, Signwaves' products are said to be meeting a huge variety of disparate end-user requirements. Suitable for both interior and exterior applications, the Frameworkz system is fully customisable to include printed logos, text, images and patterns. Poster designs can be bled on to the frame using the print process or designs can be separate for long-term branding

applications.

The POW forecourt sign is a new innovation for large-format freestanding displays. It can be used to create dynamic signs or displays via customised panel shaping and vibrant printed manifestations, with the water-fillable base and the largest available panel enabling displays of up to six and a half feet to be achieved. With POW, it is possible to radically extend creative possibilities above and beyond the impact of standard rectangular posters and banner sleeves.

Many customisable display solutions also have a practical usage. Typically, open/closed signs, floor mats and



basket liners can all be adapted to accommodate other end-user requirements as well as opening hitherto untapped advertising opportunities and providing another promotional route to market. ■

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# All lit up

Given its subjective nature, lighting used in sign and graphic applications requires very careful attention to detail as well as special consideration for the environment in which it is to be employed. Here, Mike Connolly showcases some of the latest LED lighting technology, which is providing a more cost-effective and environmentally sensitive alternative to conventional fluorescent and neon systems.

## INFLATABLE SOLUTIONS

With a range comprising many different sizes, forms and shapes, Airstar's air-inflated lighting balloons, which can be fixed on a stand or truss or ceiling suspended, are extremely robust, easy to install and can be customised with vinyl graphics or digitally printed covers.



Airstar lighting balloons are in demand at major festivals around the world, including Glastonbury, Lollapalooza and The Burning Man, where they are used to highlight visitor facilities, such as toilets, restaurants, bars and first aid and information points, as well as the different concert zones. ■





# ASHBY KEEPS IT COOL

**In spite of a slightly higher initial outlay when compared with fluorescent tubing, LED-powered trough lighting systems offer longer-term operational and environmental benefits to end users that more than compensate for the investment.**

The new IP65-rated Stryder Trough Light system from Ashby Trade Signs uses LEDs that produce a cool 6000K of white light, while the custom-designed, curved and ribbed lens provides excellent light distribution

with no spotting. The system comprises a customised slim-line extrusion that is available in a single-piece length of up to six metres (longer if required) and with a diameter less than 55mm. It features a single strip of powerful 24v LED modules that provide 1200 lumens of light per metre and comes with fully customisable fixing brackets.

The nine currently available fixing brackets, all of which are made from extruded aluminium, enable the trough light to be sited on virtually



any surface and at any angle or projection. The range includes an adjustable bracket that has been designed for use where the level of lighting must be varied or where the exact angle cannot be determined before installation. The length of the brackets can also be varied as well as

extended to accommodate light panels of up to two metres in depth.

The Stryder Trough Light is available from stock with a black, white or mill finish or powder-coated with a choice of over 100 RAL colours but on a slightly longer lead-time. ■

## PERSPEX HAS IT BOXED

**With the introduction of the new SloanLED PosterBOX3 system, Perspex Distribution has extended the range of LED solutions it offers the sign and graphics industry.**

The system was developed to facilitate the illumination of large lightboxes up to a massive three metres in width using a 1700 lumen-per-module capability to deliver one of the brightest LED

solutions currently available. Each module fits easily into the lightbox frame using a built-in spacer device that ensures a perfect LED pitch and ultra-bright uniform lighting. This simple technology makes it even easier for end users to illuminate their own lightboxes and, in particular, the large textile-faced models that are a familiar sight in retail outlets.

LED technology experts are



available at the five Perspex Distribution branches to provide free layout drawings and estimates as well as technical

advice on the most efficient solution for specific LED projects. ■

## SOLAR 'FIRST' FOR ZETA

**With the launch of the SmartScape Solar Bollard, Zeta has added the first solar-powered solution to its SmartScape range of street and area lighting systems.**

The system has been designed to capture and store solar power using integrated PV panels. No on-grid connection is required, making the system ideal for installation at walkways, cycle paths, parks and residential areas where there is no mains-fed power supply.

Designed and developed in-house, the SmartScape Solar Bollard is

manufactured in extruded aluminium or sustainably sourced wood finishes. It contains two LED modules, the first of which runs continuously at a low lighting level to ensure it is visible from a distance and the second downlight reflector lamp incorporates integrated PIR sensors that automatically increase the level of lighting when there is activity in the area, thereby saving energy and reducing light pollution.

Once installed, this low-maintenance, robust and vandal-resistant solar-powered system has zero running costs.

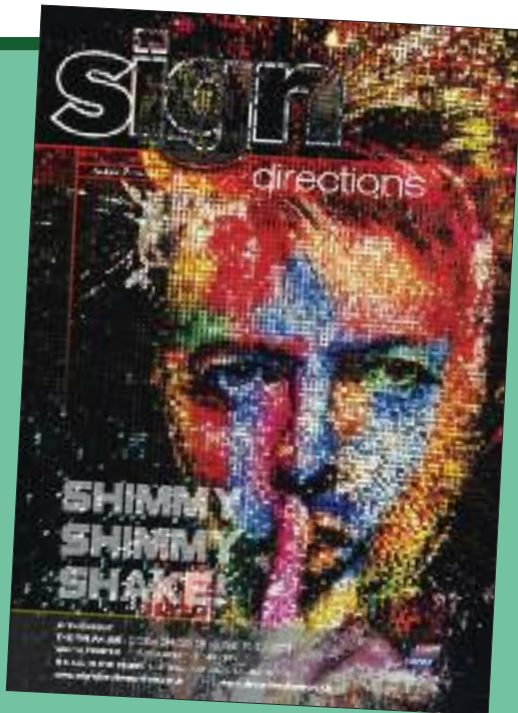


A new LED Light Guide Panel (LGP) has also been introduced by Zeta. This flexible and energy-efficient solution can deliver optimum illumination for a range of applications, including various forms of signage and poster displays. Each Light Guide Panel is made from highest quality UK-manufactured acrylic and incorporates a unique etched grid pattern designed to deliver shadow-free illumination



and uniform light distribution.

This maintenance-free and low-power alternative to fluorescent light sources has an average rated life of 50,000 hours and can be used in both indoor and outdoor locations. The complementary ultra-efficient LED modules from Zeta are available in a range of colours and RGB options to enable different effects and mood lighting. ■



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This month, **Mark Godden** urges signmakers to



## Stand up and be judged!

I was up very early this morning, 04:30 to be exact. I don't know why, but sleep eluded me. I decided to put this unwelcome free time to some use and so I picked up my phone and got dug into my LinkedIn feed.

Now, I don't know whether the post I'm about to comment on is merely a way of gaming LinkedIn so as to spotlight the author, or whether the intent behind it was genuine, but either option appears to have been satisfied if thirty thousand plus comments is any measure.

The post in question comprised a picture depicting five or so versions of a logo design in development and a short written message inviting people to express a preference – 'just a number will do'. I decided not to transcribe the whole thread to Excel in order to discover which of the logo's various versions had won, instead, I wondered at the worth of the exercise if it was genuine.

For a start, the poster could have no clue whatsoever as to whether the people commenting were in any way qualified to do so. Those who chose to comment saw only a logo, so how could its suitability for the job be evaluated with absolutely no background? And then there was the sheer volume of responses. Wisdom of crowds and all that good stuff aside, where is the value in thirty thousand opinions of provenance unknown?

The whole subject of peer review is rendered in stark relief these days, because it's so easy to solicit and to express. If the review in question is delivered by those expert in the field, its value can be inestimable. Nice try, sir, but you still have no clue as to which logo is going to get the job done for you. However, I hope you have fun with the torrent of data you've received if you're applying it to some other purpose.

I suppose the ultimate form of valuable review any business can

receive is the tacit one that's delivered as standard every time a customer favours said business with an order. Running that an extremely close second, I'd like to nominate our own British Sign Awards.

The Awards, to use the familiar, recently had its annual outing in Nottingham, at which I was a guest and, although I don't have precise numbers to hand, it was very well attended.

If you entered The Awards this year you deserve a huge pat on the back for doing so. You put yourself and your business under the scrutiny of a group of industry experts and opinion leaders along with many other companies. The calibre of the entries overall, I'm told, was extremely high.

If you made it as far as the short list, your work is held in the highest regard and I'd encourage you to stay in the chase in the coming year. It's absolutely worth the time invested.

If you took home a trophy, that's just about the most powerful and positive physical embodiment of a peer review you can get your hands on. You won. The technical merit, the craftsmanship, the design skill and execution are all bound up in that priceless block of Perspex and it's the result of a thorough and scrupulously fair process of judging.

Anything that's entered for The Awards gets put in front of the judging panel in a 'sterile' form. That's to say, all references as to who made the sign, when, and what equipment and materials they used to produce it are removed. It's all thoroughly scrutinised, debated and agreed before the panel gets to know whom

it has nominated as a winner in each category. Winning is a reflection of qualified opinion – that's a very valuable thing.

Seen through the winners' end of the telescope, an award is a very valuable thing to receive. If you were a winner, I'd encourage you to make sure you treat it as news. There's not a local paper in the country that wouldn't send a reporter round to get your news into print. That has to be good for business and local business at that.

Your award will probably be of interest to those involved in the industry that your winning signs and graphics are promoting, too. Most industries have trade associations, websites and magazines that would be happy to include your achievement as news, as it also reflects well on them. Put together a press release and send it on a speculative basis. If you need help writing it, get in touch with the company that sponsored your category, they'll likely have their own PR facility and I'm sure that they would be delighted to help.

Although I don't officially speak for The Awards, or for the BSGA, I'm sure neither would mind me saying thanks to those who sponsored the event this year. They're mostly from the supplier fraternity of course, and many will see the sponsorship as a way of putting something back into the industry they serve. It is. Sponsors enjoy the profile The Awards achieve and it's also offers the chance to network with lots of creative and active sign producers and even press the flesh of a competitor or two.

Perhaps though, the most valuable opportunity The Awards delivers to

the feet of the signing and allied industries is a chance to promote itself. If the event is widely reported and news travels as I've suggested above, it's enables the industry to set out its stall for the people who ultimately buy signs.

There's always been a bit of a gulf of understanding between an industry that's manifestly capable of making pretty much anything, and those on the buying side of the table. The Awards could be at least one wheel on a vehicle capable of bridging that gap, by promoting the industry's creativity and capability and thus growing the market for all.

It costs nothing beyond the time you care to invest to enter your business for an award. What that time invested might buy you can be put to work for a long time, underpinning your reputation and standing as a testament to your capabilities. Enter, and you're in with as good a chance of winning as anybody else.

It's not too early to consider your tactics now. Start by taking a long hard look at the work you're doing. Remember, it will be judged by your peers, so if you think it's notable, it probably is.

I'd advise against seeking opinion on LinkedIn. Keep your powder dry, throw your hat in the ring and who knows, next year, it could be you and your company that's faced with the question of just how you put the ultimate endorsement to work for your business.

See you there.

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