And the Cleanest Place in Britain is . . .

The finale of the Clean Britain Awards is finally upon us with all eyes on the Cleaning Show 2007, NEC Birmingham on Tuesday 13th March. On this day the BCC will be unveiling the ‘Cleanest Place in Britain’ at the British Cleaning Council (BCC)’s Clean Britain Awards.

Judith West, Chairman of the BCC said: “This will well and truly be a day when all eyes are on the NEC. Councils from all over the UK will attend this gala luncheon presentation to find out if all their hard cleaning efforts have been rewarded. The anticipation is almost over and we will reveal Britain’s cleanest city, town and district.”

The final is taking place in the NEC Gallery Suite at 12pm. Councils from all over the UK, along with key industry figures will convene at a luncheon presentation to find out the winners of Cleanest City, Borough and District.

The Clean Britain Awards have replaced the popular Britain’s Cleanest City competition. Peter Ager, Cleansing Services Director of the City of London Corporation – winner of Britain’s Cleanest City 2003 said: “The City of London Corporation was delighted to win this prestigious award again in 2005. We work hard to provide cleansing services of the highest standards, which are necessary for a City serving the international financial community.”

“However, winning Britain’s Cleanest Award is always particularly satisfying as it provides external verification that we are indeed the best of the best. It is also a unique recognition for the staff of our contractor, Enterprise MRS Ltd, who work diligently in all weathers to ensure that the City remains a clean and pleasant place to live, visit and do business.”

The finalists are:
City Category:

Borough Category:
Ipswich, Lewisham

District Category:
Braintree, Chester, Durham, Mendip, Oadby & Wigston

The BCC would like to thank all those who have entered and supported this new competition. We would like to wish our finalists all the best and look forward to the future growth of this prestigious Awards’ scheme.

For further information tel. 01562 85129, email cleanbritain@britishcleaningcouncil.org, website: www.britishcleaningcouncil.org

GumBusters sponsorship of Clean Britain Awards

GumBusters, a fully owned subsidiary of OspreyDeepclean, became a Corporate Sponsor of the British Cleaning Council’s Clean Britain Awards for several reasons, the chief of which is climate change.

Even in rainy Britain, climate change is beginning to affect us all, with annual restrictions on the use of water for both domestic and commercial purposes now fast becoming the norm, and window cleaners and contract cleaners fearing that they may well be forced to close if they are banned from using water for cleaning purposes.

And although local authorities may well be excluded from any future bans, certain street cleansing operations that do use masses of water, such as pressure washers for chewing gum or fly poster removal, could cause deep resentment with members of the public.

It is apparent that a less wasteful means of gum, graffiti and poster removal be utilised, and we at OspreyDeepclean feel that our sponsorship of the Clean Britain Awards is the best way to promote the GumBusters technology to the local authority market.

GumBusters technology uses pressurised dry steam working in combination with an environmentally friendly bio-degradable detergent that uses hardly any of our precious water resources. 40 litres per day is the maximum. Pressure washer usage can easily exceed that in a minute.

GumBusters is therefore the only technology that can remove chewing gum during the daytime without any obstruction, inconvenience, or resentment from the public.

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The importance of the Clean Britain Awards, reflecting as it does a commitment by local authorities towards a cleaner, better, more healthy and safer environment for everyone, is something that we as sponsors can be proud of.

For further information on OspreyDeepclean, Tel: +44 (0) 1242 513123, Fax: +44 (0) 1242 518666, Email: info@ospreydc.com, Website: www.ospreydc.com
West’s Word
Welcome to our special March edition of the Voice. This issue coincides with the exciting finale of the Clean Britain Awards and the Cleaning Show. The Clean Britain Awards is our very own competition which has evolved from Britain’s Cleanest City. Now towns and districts as well as cities from all over the UK can enter this clean environment award.

I am going to be presenting at the Clean Britain Awards and welcoming our esteemed guests including Lord Mayors and dignitaries from UK councils to join in our complimentary presentation luncheon.

The Cleaning Show, which we co-own with Quartz Publishing & Exhibitions, is the biggest calendar event of the UK cleaning industry, taking place every two years in March. The Show was recently ranked one of the top 50 trade exhibitions based on total attendance and net stand space.

The Show is a very social event where plenty of business is mixed with pleasure. Our industry has gone from strength to strength and this Show is bound to be one of the most successful to date with the Innovation Awards and the seminar presentations on industry hot topics.

This issue also features the launch of the all new Golden Service Awards; winners of the Loo of the Year Awards plus much more news from our member associations. You will have read on P1 about the news of our 25th Anniversary celebrations – Westminster here we come! We will be honoured to host our luncheon celebration in such grand surroundings with many VIP guests. The time has come for the cleaning industry to stand up and let the greater world know that it’s a force to be reckoned with.

Judith West
Chairman
British Cleaning Council

CLEANING SHOW 2007

Welcome to all those attending the 2007 industry must – the Cleaning Show 2007. As co-owners of the Show with Quartz Publishing & Exhibitions we thought you’d like to hear a few words from those playing a part in the big event: the Event Director and some of the BCC member bodies exhibiting.

The Organiser

Martin Scott, Event Director, the Cleaning Show said: “This year’s Cleaning Show really does have something for everyone, from contract cleaners and distributors to local authorities and facility managers. The 2007 show promises networking opportunities, an extensive seminar programme and thousands of product launches and demonstrations.

“Already attracting more exhibitors and visitors than in previous years, and many from overseas, the Cleaning Show 2007 will look to live up to its reputation as the must-attend events in the cleaning industry calendar.”

The Exhibitors

Andrew Large, Director General of the Cleaning Support Services Association (CSSA): “This is my first Cleaning Show and I am looking forward to the opportunity to see so much of our industry and so many people under one roof. The Show is a fantastic networking opportunity and I hope to meet as many people as possible in the three days I am there.”

Derek Bolton, PR Consultant, the National Carpet Cleaners Association said: “The biennial Cleaning Show is a must for all professional carpet and upholstery cleaning companies. An opportunity to see what’s what in terms of equipment and chemicals and to meet up with the who’s who of the cleaning world.

“The National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA) are pleased to be exhibiting at the Cleaning Show and look forward to meeting up with current and prospective members, those very supportive Associate members and other industry representatives.”

Richard Beamish, Chief Executive, Asset Skills said: “For me the Cleaning Show provides a unique opportunity to meet employers, suppliers and training providers and to understand better the real issues that concern them, advances in technology and working practice plus to ensure genuine industry input into our world.

“The Cleaning Show is an opportunity to share with others the progress we are making on skills and recruitment on their behalf and to gain valuable feedback on our activity. So attendance is a great investment.”
Does a job as a cleaner go hand in hand with deprivation? Asset Skills is hoping to answer this question along with other assumptions by developing a full profile of the cleaning industry. The project, funded by European Social Fund (ESF), is being undertaken through a combination of desk research, telephone interviews and case studies to try and gain a better understanding of cleaners in England.

Through the use of census and deprivation indices data, a detailed report broken down to ward level will be produced. The mapping can then be used by Regional Development Agencies and other stakeholders to secure funding for training in relation to the cleaning industry for areas most in need, positively contributing to the development of sustainable communities.

Asset Skills is also examining the importance of migrant labour to the industry. The research will investigate a number of issues for both employers and migrants including identifying routes to training, assessing individuals varying needs and improving efficiency.

For further information call Asset Skills on 01604 233336 or email research@assetskills.org, www.assetskills.org
The Association of Building Cleaning Direct Service Providers (ABCD) recently held one of their bi-annual members’ seminars. The purpose of these is to inform those working as cleaners on what hot topics to be aware of in the workplace.

The event took place in the grand surroundings at Haigh Hall, Wigan on 2nd November 2006. The seminar programme included a presentation on ‘Bad Backs’ from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as well as workshops on Dermatitis, Biohazard Disposal and Machinery Care.

The ABCD events are entitled ‘netshop’ days as they allow cleaners to network and meet colleagues doing the same work as them, as well as learning a thing or two from industry experts in workshops.

Iain Brodie from the HSE spoke about an industry liaison forum that has been designed to deal with industry problems such as musculoskeletal disorders (strains, sprains and injuries) acquired by cleaning staff. It is estimated that 5 million working days are lost in the UK each year as well as costing £5.7 million per year to deal with employees suffering from such injuries.

The HSE has launched a Better Backs campaign to increase awareness of the problem, given that 70% of cleaners last year suffered from back problems. Training for cleaners is necessary to help them carry out their work properly and lower the risk of accidents/injuries. For more information on HSE go to www.hse.gov.uk

The Biohazards workshop also proved interesting for those fighting dirt in the front line. Biohazards such as body secretions or emissions – urine, vomit, mucus, blood, syringes, and dead animals – are just some of the unpleasant substances some cleaners need to clear up.

Cleaners of police cells, hospitals, bins, toilets, public spaces and transport facilities are all at risk of infection/disease for cleaning up biohazards. Risk assessments as well as observations of COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) should be carried out before cleaning contractors carry out clean-ups.

ABCD’s event was a great success for members and they will continue with netshop days in the future. For more information see www.abcdsp.org.uk

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Wheeled Bin Washing in the United Kingdom

News from the NAWBW

Over the past 15 years, councils have introduced over 30 million wheeled bins into the UK.

These are both commercial sized four wheeled bins used by most businesses for the disposal of their waste from clinical waste within hospitals to food waste from catering establishments and supermarkets to general waste from all other types of industry. Also domestic sized two wheeled bins have been introduced by the majority of councils for the disposal of household rubbish alongside green garden waste and even further wheeled bins for recycling.

As a result an industry has developed within the UK that aims to wash these bins on either an ad hoc or regular basis.

Whilst there are a number of established and reputable wheeled bin washing companies, including a number of franchise opportunities, there are also a large number of independent rogue companies that have seen an easy living and endeavour to wash bins whilst ignoring all the legislation and guidelines that are in place.

The Environment Agency has published “Guidelines for Wheelie Bin Washers” that require them to recycle the water used, only use biodegradable chemicals and a number of other requirements. Water companies require them to have a “legal consent to deposit the waste water used”. This is a legal requirement and stops the rogue companies dumping the water in the street or direct into the water course.

To work on the street you should wear hi-vis clothing and have flashing warning lights.

So where is the problem? The number of rogue bin washers who do not comply with the rules and regulations is increasing day by day. This is creating not only an unfair playing field for those who invest in the industry to carry out the job both legally and ethically but it is also creating both mess and a health hazard by those companies who illegally dump both their waste water and any solid waste collected on the road side.

But who is responsible for policing this? Whilst the Environment Agency and water companies have provided the framework, none of them are prepared to police their own polices. Councils who own the wheeled bins and have the responsibility to keep our streets clean and healthy also turn a blind eye to the industry. Having said this there are a number of councils, which we applaud, which are now requiring wheeled bin washers to register for Street Traders Licences and with guidance from the National Association of Wheeled Bin Washers (NAWBW) have set up their own requirements that match those of the NAWBW.

So what does the future hold? If the industry is not regulated soon with wheelee bin washers legally having to comply and be fully insured, there will be an accident with a high powered pressure hose on the streets involving a member of the public and an uninsured operator or a pollution problem.

As always it will be a case of bolting the door after the horse has bolted. The government and local councils along with Defra, The Environment Agency and water companies, need to look at the problem now and establish a legal framework, that is policed, for this industry.

NAWBW was formed by a number of reputable Wheeled Bin Washing Companies to offer guidance to the industry and to set bench marks for both operators and councils alike.

The NAWBW can be contacted at 18, Ladfordfields Industrial Park, Seighford, Stafford ST18 9QE or Telephone: (01785) 281308, Fax: (01785) 281300 or e-mail info@nawbw.co.uk.

website: www.nawbw.co.uk

Flushed with Success

2006 was another eventful year for the British Toilet Association (BTA) and the Loo of the Year Awards.

The campaign to raise standards had a boost from Local Government Minister, Phil Woolas, who advised that ‘No 10’ had indicated support for the campaign, and wants to set up a Steering Group before a UK wide public toilet provision strategy is prepared.

The 2006 Loo of the Year Awards was the BTA’s most successful yet, with over 1100 entries across the 55 different entry categories. The Camping and Caravanning Club won the overall trophy.

Other major trophy winners were; The Alnwick Garden, the Multi-storey Car Park, Leighton Buzzard, Moto Hospitality, Andy Mobile Loos and Applegarth. Attendant of the Year trophies were won by Festival Place Shopping Centre, Staffordshire County Council and Danfo UK.

2007 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Loo of the Year Awards (LOYA) and the BTA are planning a number of celebratory functions to ensure that all those who clean, manage or provide ‘away from home’ toilets can share the celebrations.

The 2007 – 20th Anniversary Awards will be launched at The Cleaning Show. The BTA will be on stand H17 at the show, which takes place at the NEC between 13th and 15th March.

The BTA would like to thank corporate champions and ordinary members and sponsors who make it possible to run the campaign and Loo of the Year Awards.

Richard Chisnell, Director of the BTA/LOYA said: “I believe the campaign is on the threshold of some significant political developments and the Awards are poised for further substantial growth in 2007. All of us at the BTA/LOY wish you a very successful 2007.”
TIME TO STUB IT OUT

By Paul Verrico

Generally regarded as either a vile habit or a necessary relaxant, people’s opinion tends to divide depending on whether they use tobacco or not. For the first time, though, opinion becomes less relevant, as opposition to smoking in public is about to become set in English law.

Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, announced late last year that smoking in Public Places will be banned from July 1 2007. Through the Health Bill 2005, the government is determined to ensure the pledge it made in its election manifesto to ‘legislate to ensure that all enclosed public places and work places other than licensed premises will be smoke free’.

The Welsh Assembly have set the date even earlier for Wales - 2 April 2007. In Northern Ireland, 30 April 2007 is the relevant date.

The ban on smoking which the legislation is due to bring into effect is far reaching, extending to all substantially enclosed spaces to which the public have access at any time, and all workplaces where there is more than one person employed, even if the employees do not work at the premises at the same time. It is expected that 99% of workplaces will be covered by the ban, which also extends to work vehicles, if used by more than one person.

This means that if you smoke, and you either employ someone or work for someone, the work vehicle has to become smoke free.

The objectives of the Bill bolster the duties currently imposed by the Health and Safety at Work Act, promoting the health of employees by eliminating exposure to second hand smoke, discouraging social smoking, to smoke and ultimately saving lives. The ban is also expected to have benefits for employers, with reductions in sickness levels, an increase in productivity resulting from fewer cigarette breaks and lower risk of fire damage and cleaning costs. The positive effects of similar bans are already being felt in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland and North America.

The compliance rate for bans in other jurisdictions has been overwhelming, with 97% of businesses successfully implementing the regulations in Scotland since their introduction in March last year. The draft Regulations for England and Wales provides for extra responsibilities to be placed on employers as follows:

- Under present proposals all substantially enclosed premises are to be designated ‘no smoking’. Substantially enclosed means premises with a roof or ceiling and walls surrounding more than 50% of the space.

- Exceptions will be in place for hotel bedrooms, hospices, care homes and prisons, where designated smoking rooms may be provided. However, staff will not be permitted to smoke in these rooms, as the focus of the Bill is the promotion of health at work. Although there is no specific offence of allowing employees to smoke in designated smoking rooms in the exempted categories, allowing such practices could breach an employers’ responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

- Signage must be in place at every entrance to a workplace covered by the ban, and there are strict criteria about the size and content of the signs, which must display the universal ‘no smoking’ circular symbol. There must also be signs in work or public vehicles. You need to start thinking about purchasing these signs now, in readiness for the ban. Display the sign prominently.

Anyone caught flouting the ban either by allowing smoking in their premises, failing to install adequate signage or by smoking themselves could receive a fixed penalty of between £30 and £200, or even face criminal prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2500, depending on the charge brought.

The ramifications to the industry are many. Some business opportunities will be lost, others will be gained. For instance, pubs, clubs and restaurants will likely require less ‘cosmetic’ deep cleaning as the presence of nicotine is removed and contracts will likely have their cycles increased in length. This may also impact on pricing, as cleaning should become easier and require less chemicals. As the amount of money generated from a contract falls, businesses may look for new contracts. Wise contractors will be thinking ahead, contacting their customers and offering a deep clean for the time of the ban, to remove residual nicotine smells. A sideline activity could be the provision of signage to your customer base.

At work, the biggest change will be to vehicles. Employees may struggle to understand the need to go smoke free when they are the only users of a vehicle, but the consequences of breaching the new law need to be emphasised.

Employers may wish to add a provision into employment contracts with specific ‘no smoking’ requirements while in a vehicle company or on company or customer premises. This will assist if an employee decides to flout the new law.

The final form of the new regulations had not been set at the time this article went to press, but Ms Hewitt launched the website http://www.smoke-freeengland.co.uk/ which outlined the government’s plans and the potential benefits that they hope will be derived from the ban. The new regulations should be available from that site.

If you are concerned about the changes to the law, please contact Paul Verrico, E: paulverrico@eversheds.com, T: 0845 498 4084

Paul Verrico operated a contracting company from 1995 until 2004. During that time he also lectured at various further and higher education establishments on the law of obligations and criminal responsibility. He is a solicitor in the Regulatory Group at Eversheds LLP, based in Leeds.

Eversheds has the largest and most experienced team of recognised environmental and regulatory lawyers in Europe. They routinely represent clients in corporate criminal defence and civil proceedings, and in corporate and property transactional work. Eversheds specialises in environmental and health and safety at work as well as covering other areas of regulatory work such as food safety, trading standards and healthcare.
NEWS ROUND-UP

Carpet Cleaning Courses for 2007

The National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA) is inviting those new to the trade, or wishing to brush up on their skills, to attend their new cleaning training courses for 2007. The course provides up-to-date knowledge of all types of cleaning equipment and chemicals along with advanced cleaning techniques. Teaching is given in carpet and upholstery construction as well as background on the fibres used in their manufacture.

Forthcoming course dates are:
13th to 14th April 2007
3rd to 4th August 2007
5th to 6th October 2007
30th November to 1st December 2007

All courses will be held at NSPCC Training Centre, Leicester. For further information contact NCCA on tel. 0116 2719550, or email info@ncca.co.uk, www.ncca.co.uk

Invitation from the UK Housekeepers’ Association (UKHA)

This year’s UKHA Annual National Summer Ball will be held at the De Vere Oulton Hall Hotel, Leeds on the Friday 1st June. Application forms for tickets are now available by emailing the National Chairman ian.hughes@ukha.co.uk

RoSPA TARGETS CLEANING AND FM PROFESSION

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) is targeting organisations in the cleaning and facilities management profession to enter the 2007 Occupational Health and Safety Awards.

Entry is open to organisations large and small, across the UK and beyond. Both private and public sector organisations have an equal chance of winning these prestigious awards, as do ‘first time’ entries and new firms.

John Stinton, General Secretary of the British Cleaning Council said: “Health and Safety of the employee must be first priority for any employer. The BCC urges its members to enter this prestigious and long established awards programme. The Government is introducing more regulations including the Work at Height Directive as well as ‘corporate manslaughter’. New legislation can be more effective if everybody in the workplace put safety first.

For the second year, the awards are sponsored by the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH).

Presentations to winners will be made at ceremonies alongside the Safety and Health Expo exhibition and RoSPA’s Occupational Health and Safety Congress at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, on May 22, 2007

For entry details please call 0121 248 2090 or go to www.rospa.com/awards

Brushing Up on Carpet Cleaning

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) UK would like to announce more training courses for 2007. Training will be taking place in the following subject areas at varied locations:

Applied Structural Drying; Carpet Cleaning; Upholstery & Fabric Cleaning; Fire & Smoke Damage Restoration and Water Restoration.

For further information please contact Claire Barton on tel. 01883 334484.
NEWS ROUND-UP

Dealing With Hazardous Waste

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management is hosting the event Hazardous Waste – An Inspector's Report on 26th March 2007 at Hamilton House, London. The course comes at a time when major changes have been introduced to the way that hazardous wastes are managed in England and Wales. The seminar will look at a report on progress to date on facilities to manage hazardous waste and the impact on those operating a waste regime. It will discuss the way forward for legislators, regulators, hazardous waste producers and managers of hazardous waste. For more information email events@ciwm.co.uk

Steve Presents Wrightful Winner

Steve Wright, Master of the Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners (BCC member) presented an award on 18th January, to the City of London Corporation’s Street sweeper of the Year. At the time Steve Wright said: “I am honoured to be presenting this prize as Master of the Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners to winners of such an important category. As sponsors of the event the Worshipful Company recognises the need to commend those who toil in all conditions to keep our streets clean and tidy”.

The award is one the council’s annual Clean City Awards which was designed to celebrate cleanliness standards in the City. The presentation took place at Mansion House, London, with attendance from the Lord Mayor. The competition winner is Peter Ward plus runner-up Peter Adjei-Boayke, both employees of MRS who run the council’s cleaning contract. Both winner and runner-up received a cheque and a framed certificate in recognition of their efforts.

Fund for Fly-tipping Victims

Community groups in the South West Wales area, who are victim of illegal fly-tipping, are to receive help towards the cost of clear-up in the form of funding from the Welsh Assembly. Grants totalling £20,000 have been allocated to pilot the Fly-tipping Clearance Assistance Fund which aims to help owners of private land which provides a benefit to the local community, such as local sports clubs or volunteer groups, to restore their land fit for use by the public following fly-tipping incidences.

The initial pilot scheme will be run by Keep Wales Tidy until March 2007 across Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot. It will then be evaluated to see if it can be rolled out across Wales.

For more information visit: www.keeptidytidy.org or contact KWT Projects Director, Louise Tambini on 02920 256767.

Accidents Happen

Independent risk management company BOMEL is looking for companies to take part in a study on accident trends and safety management.

The project, which is for the Health and Safety Executive, will gather best practice which can be used to assess and improve a company’s safety management system.

BOMEL will be looking at the factors which influence accidents and what works in terms of safety management.

Accidents within a company can depend on a number of factors such as a change or increase in staff to changes to the work which is undertaken.

However, accident trends will also be influenced by other elements such as the attitudes of managers, the awareness of employees in terms of reporting and industry-wide factors such as market forces and industry standards. BOMEL will be carrying out detailed interviews in different industry sectors in order to explore the various components which may influence accident trends and safety management.

BOMEL would like to spend around half a day at companies that are willing to participate and is looking to interview at least three people; a health and safety manager, an operations manager and a supervisor/safety representative.

All information that is provided will remain anonymous and be kept strictly confidential. If you would like to take part in this study or would like more information, please contact: David Jamieson (Tel. 01224 564 467) davidjamieson@bomelconsult.com

Toni Close (Tel. 01628 777 707) toniclose@bomelconsult.com

The BCC welcomes articles for the publication. Please forward any suggestions to press@britishcleaningcouncil.org

Tel: 01942 612616