Keep Britain Tidy unveils Kirstie Allsopp as new ambassador

After a personal application by the star of channel 4’s Location, Location, Location by telephone their mind was made up. Dickie Felton from Keep Britain Tidy said: “Kirstie phoned Keep Britain Tidy personally to put herself forward for the job. It came across at an early stage how passionate Kirstie is about tackling litter. She is an ideal ambassador for us and will help us raise the profile of litter campaigning. She will act as the face of Keep Britain Tidy and promote our messages and campaigns”

Kirstie added: “I am a supporter of Keep Britain Tidy and passionate about promoting the anti-litter message so I didn’t think twice about applying for the ambassador role! I believe the act of dropping litter is as detrimental to society as it is to the environment, which is why campaigning, and educating on the issue is so important – and I am looking forward to getting involved in the campaigns”

During her two year term Kirstie will act as the “face” of England’s anti-litter movement and help promote all of their anti-litter campaigns, the first coming in the form of the Big Tidy Up Campaign. In a plea to locals to get to grips with the problem of litter in their area, Keep Britain Tidy have set themselves the lofty target of doubling the 40,000 bags of rubbish collected last year.

In other news, the charity has launched a new website to coincide with their return to the Keep Britain Tidy moniker after 8 years as ENCAMs. You can demonstrate your support for their work by registering online, where you will receive a free lapel badge. They have also embraced the new media zeitgeist with twitter and facebook pages now operational, links to which are available from their website.

www.keepbritaintidy.org
Advice on avoiding getting sued over health and safety issues

Anybody who has spent an afternoon watching daytime television will be familiar with the advertisements offering “no win, no fee” legal services to anyone involved in an accident. One of the possible consequences of such cases is that employers may face legal action.

Accidents involving slips and falls are all-too-common in the workplace, but simple measures often prove to be the most effective. Every year approximately 11,000 people suffer serious injury as a result of a slip or trip in the workplace, and simple preventive measures can be taken to minimise the risk.

- A risk assessment is important. Check whether spillage controls are in place and that staff are correctly trained to remove obstructions from floors and dispose of rubbish.
- Encourage all employees to ensure their work area is kept as tidy as possible and make them responsible rather than leaving it to somebody else.
- Introduce measures that prevent contamination from spreading into other areas.
- Investigate improving the quality and positioning of lighting and additional signs where possible. If workers are unable to spot hazardous situations, the risk of an accident increases.
- Weather can also prove to be a big factor in creating possible slip and trip conditions — wet floors where people walk through or warehouses where vehicles may carry water onto the floor.
- The condition of the floors is extremely important: holes, uneven floors, loose carpets, and unmarked changes in floor levels all contribute to the risk.
- Changing the type of floor surface to improve grip, and reduce slips, is important when eliminating the risks. Footwear plays an important part in preventing slips and trips and it’s essential that people consider the environment they’ll be working in when purchasing footwear. Where flooring can’t be kept dry or clean, it may be appropriate to purchase slip resistant footwear.

The Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) carries out research on footwear testing for HSE. The results are available on HSE’s website (www.hse.gov.uk/sips/research/footwear.htm) and can help when considering what type of footwear will be appropriate for different work environments'.
Philip Malpass appointed Director General of the UKCPI

The UK Cleaning Products Industry Association have appointed Philip Malpass as its new Director General. He takes over the role from Dr Andy Williams who is retiring after eight years in the role.

Malpass previously held the post of Vice President of Communications for the drinks giant, Constellation Europe. From 1997 to 2005 he held senior external relations positions in other alcoholic beverage sector companies including Bass, Inbev and Interbrew NV in Belgium.

His earlier experience spans a variety of senior communications positions in the pharmaceuticals and chemicals sector, working for Rhone-Poulenc (Sanofi) and RTZ Chemicals (Rhodia). Philip studied marine biology and has an MSc in environmental chemistry and was for four years a lecturer and post graduate tutor specialising in environmental toxicology.

Reality TV Star supports Ladder Exchange Initiative

BIG Brother star Craig Phillips has stepped up to offer his support to a new safety campaign.

The builder, who won the first series of the TV reality show, is backing the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) ladder safety campaign for 2009.

The campaign centres around a ladder exchange, which gives everyone the chance to get rid of old, damaged and broken ladders and trade them for new ones.

More than 5,000 ladders were exchanged under the scheme since it was launched in 2007.

Craig said: “To be a winner in the construction industry, you have to take health and safety seriously. If you take a chance with dodgy ladders, you are risking your life. Every month more than 10 people fall from a ladder at work and suffer serious injuries. So many of these accidents are avoidable and having safe equipment makes a huge difference. I hope companies not just here, but in every city and town in the UK, will be able to trade in old ladders.”

Despite a sustained long term reduction, falls from height remains the most common type of fatal injury. In 2007/08, a total of 58 workers died and over 3600 employees suffered major injury as a result of a fall from height in the workplace. Many of these incidents could be avoided by using the right equipment and taking simple precautions.

To help promote the initiative this year the HSE have used the same award winning imagery on our Ladder Exchange poster and postcard that makes the Shattered Lives messages so memorable, which are free to download from their website. HSE is working in close partnership with industry to ensure that anyone who needs to use a ladder uses the right equipment for the job and uses it safely.

In addition, the Federation of Window Cleaners is introducing an awareness campaign on the benefits of the HSE Ladder Exchange Initiative 2009 to its members, as part of its ongoing and long standing commitment to working in partnership with HSE. Through the FWC Ladder training and indirectly within the Impact43 Group City and Guilds NVQ Level 2 Certification, hundreds of window cleaners are now being educated and trained to correctly select, inspect, and or replace the correct type of ladder.

FWC Chairman Bryan Dolby commented: “The ladder remains an important part of any window cleaners equipment when used safely. The Initiative runs until 31st December 2009 will allow anyone with a broken, damaged or bent ladder to part exchange it for a new one with discounts of up to 50%. This has to be an ideal opportunity to replace and remove damaged or broken ladders.”
WH Smith Rejects Professional Cleaning

Despite opposition from staff and the cleaning firms under contract with the retail chain WH Smith has instructed staff that they will now be responsible for sweeping floors and cleaning stores as part of their general duties. The strategy, implemented over the Summer in an efficiency drive, has meant that professional cleaners that were once used every day by the firms at their 1,000 stores across the UK have been reduced to once a week, with staff required to sweep floors and clean stores instead.

Speaking on behalf of the CSSA and BCC, Andrew Large said that these measures were potentially unlawful and would undermine the drive for good hygiene at a time when this was of utmost importance.

“The position of cleaning workers is protected by TUPE when a cleaning contract transfers, including if it is brought in house. I will be seeking confirmation from WH Smith that TUPE was correctly applied in this case and that cleaners were not made redundant when they should have been employed by WH Smith.”

“The use of a professional contract cleaning company is the best guarantee for retail outlets to make sure that their premises are clean and also hygienic for staff and customers. By asking shop workers to clean stores, WH Smith is depriving itself of the skills and expertise of cleaning professionals. There is no guarantee that the shop workers will have the necessary skills or training to be able to maintain the stores to a satisfactory standard.

The most effective way for organizations to acquire the proper general infection control practices and hygiene measures necessary to reduce transmission of the swine flu virus is through the knowledge and experience of cleaning professionals. As many thousands of us leaf through magazines in WH Smith every day, for WH Smith to be cutting back on this invaluable resource at this critical time is both dangerous and irresponsible, for their staff and their customers.”

When asked to respond to these concerns a WH Smith spokesperson said: “It is our company policy not to comment on staffing matters.”

BTA Annual Conference Launches New Campaign

The annual British Toilet Association Conference and AGM were held at the Stratford Hotel in Stratford upon Avon on the 16th September 2009. Opening the Conference, Mike Bone, BTA Director, provided an overview of the BTA’s political campaign. He also updated the Conference with details of BTA Activity throughout the preceding year.

Nickie Brander, Campaigns Organiser for ERIC, updated the Conference on the issues that the Bog Standard Campaign, promoting better toilets for pupils continues to face. Mike Burton then provided an outline of the Albany Healthy Schools Programme to be launched on 15th October. Albany will be delivering a Hygiene Education Programme into schools which includes Albany Max, an animated character who, through his roadshow, will visit assemblies to teach children how to wash and dry their hands.

Next it was the opportunity for Dave Flanagan of Total Hygiene to explain how correct equipment installed in Changing Places Toilets are improving the lives of less able people and their carers, particularly those with severe and multiple learning difficulties. Dave explained how varying degrees of disability required flexible facilities and how the Clos-o-Mat range of height adjustable equipment can meet all needs. This includes height-adjustable wash hand basins, changing tables and shower seats, ceiling tracking hoists and Clos-o-Mat automatic wash and dry bidet toilets.

Earlier this year, Section 87 (3) (c) of the Public Health Act 1936 was amended to allow local authorities to charge for use of all public conveniences, including urinals. In the next session “How to charge for the use of publicly accessible toilets” Andy Brown, Managing Director of Willings Services, explained some reasons for charging, provided a brief overview of the legislation and standards that apply to toilets/building control, presented an overview of payment systems, and access control barriers. Examples of these systems were also on display and delegates had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with them.

Finally, the BTA “Where can I go?” Campaign was presented and launched to delegates. The Campaign recognises the need for BTA to change focus from a ‘top down’ approach -directed primarily at Central Government, to a ‘bottom up’ approach – directed primarily at local government – (and commercial providers) the actual source and the authority responsible for provision of publicly accessible toilets.

The campaign is a response to the realisation that a ‘call to action’ is needed with the support of other associations and organisations that will add more than the sum of the constituent parts to the force of a new campaign. The result is a campaign that they believe will change attitudes to meeting a basic human need – provision of clean, hygienic, safe and publicly accessible toilets that are available where and when needed for all types of users. The campaign considers the needs of all types of toilet users who all need somewhere to go: the old, those with special needs, babies and children, women, visitors to the UK and those with anxieties about using public toilets.

For further information on this campaign, please see the BTA’s website: www.britloos.co.uk
Communities Unite for Tidy Wales Week

Keep Wales Tidy organised a seven day nationwide clean-up campaign, Tidy Wales Week, which ran from September 21-27th. Environment Minister Jane Davidson kicked off the initiative by riding her bike and trailer along Cardiff Bay waterfront and inviting volunteer litter pickers to fill her trailer with collected rubbish.

Taking the lead from the Minister, the Welsh Assembly staff based in Cathay’s Park gave up their lunch break to remove graffiti and litter from nearby locations. They were followed by members of the Ospreys rugby team and the local lifeguards who supported the campaign by giving up their Sunday morning lie in to remove seabeach litter from the award-winning Aberavon beach.

The number of people estimated to have taken part in activities was a record 50,000 with over 1,200 events taking place across Wales.

Environment Minister Jane Davidson said: “It was fantastic to see thousands of volunteers taking part in this year’s Tidy Wales Week and doing their part for their communities. It is the responsibility of all of us to tackle litter and make sure all parts of Wales remain beautiful. The sight of litter blighting our streets and countryside is not someone else’s problem, but all of ours. Unless we decide to make a difference then nothing will change.”

NHS apprenticeships to boost jobs for young people

The Government has announced funding for facilities management apprentices for the NHS as the new apprenticeship in FM has been officially approved. The finance is part of a £25 million package to more than treble the number of apprenticeships in non clinical roles such as estates and facilities management.

NHS organisations will receive the money to create 5,000 new apprenticeships by March 2010. The funding forms part of the Prime Minister’s commitment made in February to increase the number of apprenticeships by 21,000 across the public sector.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham said: “We are totally committed to being able to provide apprenticeship opportunities for young people. Our ambitious programme to more than treble the number of apprentices will create over 5,000 new apprenticeships in the NHS.”

“Apprenticeships are an excellent way of giving young people the chance to learn life changing skills and offer a genuine opportunity to train clinical staff.”

Richard Beamish, Chief Executive of Asset Skills added: “FM plays such a crucial role across the NHS and the wider public sector and it is only right that this is recognised through investment in skills training. This funding announcement could not have come at a better time with the brand new FM apprenticeship having just received formal approval.”

“Facilities management now has its first dedicated apprenticeship programme,” said Beamish. “This is an enormous step forward for the industry and will help raise skills levels right across the board.”

The new apprenticeship comprises an NVQ in FM, a level 3 technical certificate and key skillstraining. There is also the flexibility to take either the NVQ, or the technical award as stand-alone qualifications depending on individual circumstances and experience. It will provide an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to enter or develop a career in facilities management.

University of Northampton joins with BICSc and Asset Skills

The University of Northampton, in association with the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc) and Asset Skills, is now offering organisations in the Cleaning and Allied Industries innovative management development opportunities. These include:

Certificate in Cleaning Enterprise & Law covering:

- Quantification, Enterprise and Marketing
- Managing Legal Issues
- Environmental Legislation
- Certificate in Infection Control covering:
  - Cleaning Science
  - Hygiene & Health
- Biological and Other Hazards in the Cleaning Industry

Each certificate can be completed in one year of part time study via distance learning.

To find out more, please contact Louise Maxwell by calling 01604 892380 or emailing louise.maxwell@northampton.ac.uk. Alternatively, contact Suzanne Moen on 01604 678710 or email suzanne@bicsc.org.uk

The CEIH announce new Food Safety Awards

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has announced the Level 2 Awards in Food Safety will replace the Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene. Aimed at anyone working in a catering environment where food is prepared, cooked and handled, this new qualification provides fundamental food hygiene knowledge for food handlers and is designed to address the specific food safety needs of the catering sector.

Successful completion of this course will enable candidates to understand:

- The laws that apply to food businesses and food handlers
- The concepts of food hazards
- The importance of utilising appropriate storage conditions for different types of food
- The importance of high standards of cleaning in food premises to promote good hygiene

More information can be found at http://www.ceih.org/training.html
ICMMA fights for vacuum cleaner standards

Vacuum cleaners carry a risk of causing explosions in explosive atmospheres, due to sparks that can be created in both the motor, and within the hose itself. Because of this and other risks there is a European Directive that sets out what types of electrical equipment, including vacuum cleaners, can be used in certain explosive atmospheres. In the UK this Directive is enforced by the HSE, which has produced a categorization system called ATEX to clarify this.

Unfortunately, as currently written, the guidance implies that small craft bakeries do not need an ATEX vacuum cleaner, by virtue of their size alone. This overlooks the risk of dust explosions caused by flour and has given rise to confusion in the market place. Moreover, equipment suppliers run the risk of being charged with not supplying the correct work equipment, if they knowingly supply a non-ATEX vacuum cleaner for work in a potentially explosive atmosphere.

ICMMA has already raised this issue with the HSE and we will be looking to redraft the relevant parts of the guidance so that it is clear that the risk of explosion is the sole criteria in determining the vacuum cleaner to be used.

Asset Skills Relicensing Success

Asset Skills, one of the four Sector Skills Councils, has been successful in its bid to be relicensed, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Lord Mandelson has announced. After receiving an overall performance rating of “good” for its work within facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking industries, the Government formally ratified their recommendation that they should continue their work.

Lord Mandelson said: “The four SSCs relicensed have shown that they are of the highest calibre and are providing a good service to employers in their sector. The comprehensive assessment process all SSCs undergo as part of the relicensing process will assist in raising standards even further, and ensure that SSCs have the confidence and support of employers in their sector.”

Richard Beamish, Chief Executive of Asset Skills, said: “We are delighted to have been successful in our relicensing application. The process has taken more than nine months and has been a comprehensive evaluation of our progress. Businesses in our sector are undergoing huge change. The recession has created additional demand for social housing and for staff with the right skills. And environmental regulations are changing the skills requirements for facilities managers, cleaning operatives and people working in property. We are delighted that our new licence will mean we can continue important work in these areas.”
New Press Officer at the BCC

This summer saw the departure of the British Cleaning Council’s Press Officer Eibhlin O’Somachain to set up her own PR and marketing consultancy firm, followed by the appointment of Peter Carrol as her replacement.

Peter, whose background is in marketing and journalism, will be continuing Eibhlin’s work of maintaining and growing the BCC’s media profile as well as creating a comprehensive information archive for the industry and a manifesto for the British Cleaning Council.

CIEH label ‘Studentification’ a major problem in some areas of Britain

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has called on the government to clarify local authority planning laws in order to prevent too many houses in multiple occupation (HMO’s) being set up in one area.

The comments are made in response to a Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on HMO’s, amid concerns that some towns and cities were being blighted by ‘studentification’. A disproportionately high number of students in urban areas can lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour, damage to public property and litter during term-time, causing great strains on public councils and local authorities.

In its response the CIEH criticised the consultation for its narrow focus on student housing rather than the wider problem of HMO proliferation.

CIEH Principal Policy Officer Andrew Griffiths said: “Studentification is very clearly a major problem, but only in a few areas. The most effective solution would be to require planning consent when a house ceases to be used for single family occupation and to set a clearer HMO definition.”

Based on research carried out by specialist consultants ECOTEC, the government has put forward three options to curb HMOs. These include encouraging higher education institutions to work more closely with landlords, amending planning regulations to allow councils to refuse applications to shared housing with more than three residents and granting powers to prevent properties converting to HMOs.

But opponents say the powers would affect migrant workers and young professionals as well as students and will effectively dictate where people can live based on their income.

In response, the National Union of Students has announced its objections to the proposed licensing legislation stating that it would reduce the number of lowest price accommodation affordable to students and impinge on students’ free choice of where to live. Wes Streeting, president of the National Union of Students (NUS) added: “It is extremely foolish to propose that we displace all of these people in the middle of a housing crisis”.

Liz Peace, chief executive of the British Property Federation (BPF), said: “You can’t use the planning system for social engineering or to tackle anti-social behaviour.

“Only a tiny fraction of places suffer from high concentrations of HMOs and using a broad brush approach to deal with the issues relating to anti-social behaviour makes no sense.”

First successes in public sector NVQ for Hampshire hospital

A 78-year-old man is proving age is no barrier to learning, having undergone his first ever qualification. Harry Racey-Brighty is a cleaner at Lymington New Forest Hospital in Hampshire and studied for an NVQ in Customer Service as part of a new scheme.

The programme aims to raise skills in public services through the Public Service Skills Framework (PSSF) following research that showed a lack of customer service in the public sector.

A total of 53 hospital workers employed by facilities services group OCS were awarded a level 2 NVQ in Customer Service which included teamwork, Health and Safety, and equality and diversity.

The PSSF equips staff with skills over and above those needed for their basic role to help improve their job prospects and give increased motivation and improved morale. For many of the staff this is their first nationally accredited qualification and OCS has been keen to support this pilot scheme.
NEWS ROUND-UP

CHSA Educational Scholarship Programme
Now in its tenth year the CHSA Educational Scholarship Programme continues to forge strong links between the cleaning industry and education.

Employees of all CHSA member companies are eligible to apply for a bursary of up to £3,000 as a contribution to their higher education fees.

After a rigorous selection process including interviews at Coventry University, with an independent panel comprising representatives of both industry and education, Pollyanna Cotterill has been selected for this year’s award.

CSSA continues its philanthropic activities
Doug Cooke, CSSA Chairman, presenting Deepa Korea of the London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy with the cheque for £2000 following the CSSA Annual Lunch Raffle.

The British Cleaning Council shows its support for McMillan Cancer Support
The British Cleaning Council donated £650 to MacMillan Cancer Support after participating in a sponsored scrubber dryer obstacle race.

DIARY DATES

ABCD Host Netshop Day
The Association of Building Cleaning Service Providers has announced that they will be hosting another Netshop Day at Haigh Hall in Wigan on Thursday 15 October 2009. The purpose of this event is to allow cleaners to network and meet colleagues who do the same work as them, as well as picking up some tips from industry experts at the workshops.

There will be a welcome and introduction from Ken Baxter, ABCD chairman and presentations on ISA and its implications, machine maintenance, body fluids and spillages, pandemics, and marketing. More information can be found on their website www.abcdsp.org.uk

Golden Service Awards Ceremony, Friday 30 October 2009
All 15 winners of the Golden Service Awards 2009 will be announced at the prestigious awards ceremony at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London on Friday 30 October 2009.

There is still time to reserve your tickets. Please contact the Golden Service Awards organisers by telephone on 08000 192 422 or e-mail gsa@suzannehowe.com

NCFA Spot and Stain Removal
Spot and stain removal requires a higher degree of skill and knowledge than almost any other process undertaken by the professional carpet cleaner.

On 23rd October 2009 the National Carpet Cleaners Association are holding another of the Spot and Stain schools at the NSPCC Training Centre, Beaumont Leys, Leicestershire. During training the course delegates will be taught how to identify a stain, what specific things to look out for and how to advise the client prior to carrying out any work.

The idea of the school is to assist in understanding the item/s being worked on, identify the stain and establish the chemical solution to be applied. It will also teach how to determine the expected results, not forgetting that complete removal of a stain should never be guaranteed.

The course is open to both members and non-members. For further information please contact the National Carpet Cleaners Association on: 0116 271 9550, or admin@ncsca.co.uk

BACS Hosting Sustainable Ingredients Meeting
The British Association for Chemical Specialities (BACS) are due to hold a Speciality Surfactants Group meeting on 3 December 2009 at Bredbury Hall, Stockport, Cheshire.

Sustainability is high on the political agenda, both nationally and at EU level, through various SCP (Sustainable Consumption and Production) initiatives which encompass the whole chemical supply chain, while also becoming a powerful marketing tool for ingredient suppliers, formulators and retailers alike. The cleaning and maintenance sector has embraced the concept of sustainability for many years and many renewable raw materials are used in part to produce surfactants and other ingredients.

This meeting intends to offer a choice of ingredients to formulators of cleaning products whereby they may have further options to develop ‘greener’, more sustainable formulations.

Details of the full programme, a booking form and directions to the venue are available from the BACS office (enquiries@bacsnet.org / T: 01423 700249 - Jackie Hall).

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