

Standardising standards

One of the principal objectives of the Federation of Traditional Metal Roofing Contractors is to improve the workmanship standards of installation and widen the technical design knowledge necessary to protect the integrity of the installation.

The revival in the use of copper, zinc, stainless steel and galvanised mild steel in the fully supported metal roofing sector over the last 20 years has highlighted a shortage of skilled installers and the gap in formalising up to date codes of practice suited to modern construction requirements with in the United Kingdom.

At present, existing Codes of Practice and technical specifications relate to the 1950's or 1970's when the use of these metals previously enjoyed popularity among specifiers and the architectural practices of the period.

Manufacturers publish recommendations for their own product, but these individually prepared guidance notes vary in content and detail, due in no small part to the varying countries of origin in which they are produced.

The initial task for the FTMRC is therefore two fold:-

- To establish a centre of training excellence
- To collate and publish a comprehensive technical “Guide to Good Practice”

The training centre will, with the assistance of manufacturers and other organisations such as the CITB develop and co-ordinate practical skills towards a formal qualification such as NVQ. To this effect we have already generated substantial interest from the manufacturing sector which has pledged practical support in material and personnel. We are also linking with the Lead and Hard Metals Training Group in the co-ordination of courses that will attract funding support.

Our own training facility will be open to all, providing an opportunity for those that aspire to become FTMRC members to further develop their skills to the required standard in order to apply.

The FTMRC is already in discussion with an established craft skills training and educational facility to develop an expansion project incorporating the various requirements for traditional roofing modules as well as modern prefabricated sections, based on the general parameters portrayed in the FTMRC Guide to Good Practice.

The Guide to Good Practice is seen as an essential reference document that can be referred to by installers, architects and designers and used to supplement the manufacturers' own recommendations for their products by providing general design and installation guidelines.

The initial publication of the FTMRC Guide to Good Practice has been based upon the Central Association of the German Roofing Trade's publication on roof and wall sealing techniques, translated, edited and developed by the FTMRC steering group to provide a general guide to good practice covering all traditional hard metals.

The Guide is a first attempt to introduce synergy in this sector of UK construction and it will doubtless be further developed in successive editions to provide a more comprehensive guide on which standard design details and installation techniques can be based.

The Guide will also form the basis upon which FTMRC members and applicants will be vetted as part of the regular internal policing of the Federation's own quality standards. This will then provide an open reference to the expected levels to be attained in order to achieve membership as well as showing architects and specifiers the standards to which our membership is required to work.

The FTMRC intends to be the conduit through which the vagaries in design detail and variety in manufacture of all the different metals can be brought together to provide an agreed general working practice, used to regulate standards and to which installers can be trained, in order to make optimum use of the products at their disposal for the ultimate benefit of the client.