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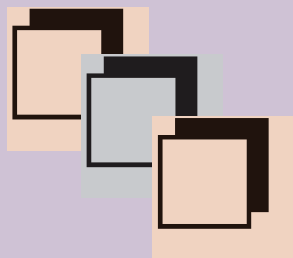
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Comment

That wasn't a bad summer, as summers go. Heading into autumn we can start thinking about next year. There are a couple of quite important things happening in 2019.

First of all it is a FIT Show year. Already press releases from the organisers are hitting the desk (well, these days they just arrive, silently into the email box but that doesn't sound so dramatic) and registration for tickets started in July.

This show should be interesting. The second year at the NEC and it is already, almost, a sell out. One of the great things about this exhibition is the range of interests. It is not just about PVC products; aluminium is a big item in the industry right now and the show reflects that. One new introduction to the event that I, for one, am particularly looking forward to (as much as I ever look forward to exhibitions, but that is a whole other article and I promised this month I would stay positive!) is the introduction of a glass section.

When I joined the industry, in 1983, glass was a big driver. The embryonic replacement window industry hadn't really got going and was mainly aluminium. It was couple of years before PVC-U got going and, once it did, it really took hold. My magazine, *Flat Glass International*, was owned by the company that had launched the Glassex exhibition the year before. The company, by the way, was called Eagle Exhibition Consultants, the man that started it had wanted to call it EEC Exhibitions, looking forward to a bright new, and expanding, future with our new trading partners. He wasn't allowed to use 'EEC' (any more than you could call a company 'British Exhibitions' for instance). Is it just me or is there now something ironic there?

As far as the exhibition was concerned, the clue was in the name. The glass trade was dominant. A few years later and it was all about PVC windows. Not to knock the hand that fed us but in later years we frequently heard the jibe: "There's no glass at Glassex." And there wasn't.

So I am pleased to see glass making a comeback at FIT in the 'show-within-a-show', *Visit Glass*. According to the organiser the industry is keen to support the section which will feature processing machinery as well as consumables and the material itself.

The real point is that the organisers are introducing new points of interest rather than just relying on what has gone before. A big part of the reason why Glassex failed in the end was that the organisers – EMAP – were always trying to live on past glories, couldn't seem to get their corporate head around the industry that they purported to serve and so failed to develop Glassex in line with a rapidly changing market. With that attitude no event – or magazine for that matter – could possibly survive.

On the aluminium front it is worth noting that the Council for Aluminium in Building (CAB) will be back with its 'Pavilion'. CAB has used the concept at a number of exhibitions, including the FIT Show and it has proved a great focal point for this sector. According to CAB it looks like being well supported again.

I think I said there were a couple of things happening in 2019. I don't, for the moment, quite recall the other one. I feel that I should. At the back of my mind there is something about the economy being wrecked and all of our lives being changed forever.

John Roper