

# Window Cleaning magazine

October 2013



## **New Wagtail Orbit**

*Wagtail gets into the WFP market*

## **New AquaTap**

*Latest water saving device*

## **High rise with Empire**

*Read the interview, watch the film*

## **Darron's Story**

*How his life changed after window cleaning accident*

## **Window cleaning in the Redneck Riviera**

*WCM catches up with Jeff Temperley*



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## Window Cleaning Magazine

# Editorial



Welcome to the autumn edition of Window Cleaning Magazine. As you will see from the photo above this issues editorial is being written, not by its editor Lee but by me, Stuart Webster. Contrary to internet rumour and speculation it isn't because Lee is still reeling from the week he spent with Perry Tait, it's simply that Lee thought the editorial would be a good place for the new WCM Deputy Editor to introduce himself.

So, hi I'm Stuart!

I've been window cleaning for close on 30 years and grabbed the opportunity to get involved with the Magazine. We need good reliable information to help with our chosen industry and WCM fills that need.

Lee and I first spoke when we were discussing the FWC and how it needs to improve and move forward. (That issue, by the way, is still a burning issue that we will return to in the near future) It became evident that we would work well together and therefore have been looking at how our individual skills can best help our community.

While we differ in personality, (I'm generally quieter and less social!) we have the same interest in helping fellow window cleaners in any way we can. As for what I can personally contribute, only time will tell. I'm an ordinary window cleaner with no 'media' qualifications. I cleaned windows today, yesterday and will be 'on the glass' tomorrow. I do enjoy writing and public speaking and usually spend the time I'm window cleaning thinking about what I will say or write. That's the great thing about window cleaning, the time it gives me to develop ideas in my head. You can go into auto pilot with work and enjoy the freedom to think.

So I'm ordinary, just like the next window cleaner you will see.

What's great about this issue of WCM is that it focuses on ordinary people. Take Gerald for example, a man of larger than average proportions who has the motivation not only to lose weight but to start up his own window cleaning business as well. Then we have a single mother, juggling the responsibilities that raising a family single handed brings while proving that anyone can grasp success if they want it badly enough. Both of these individuals are inspirational in their own individual way. Just ordinary people like you and I.

We also have a great interview with Darron Mothersby that will no doubt touch the heart of even the hardest of souls. Darron is positive and determined despite what some would see as a hopeless situation. You'll just love listening to him.

So enjoy the magazine and please, if you have a back-story to tell let us know!

Stuart





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# Window Cleaning Magazine

Editor: Lee Burbidge  
Deputy editor: Stuart Webster  
Graphic design: Mike Henderson  
Photography: Andrew Nutting  
Production: Studio Arts  
Front cover: Lee Burbidge

#### Contributors:

Willie Erken  
Peter Fogwill  
Marc Stow  
Gerald Ash  
Tracey Mclver

Matthew Robinson  
Chris 'Wagga' Dawber  
Darron Mothersby  
Jeff Temperley  
Joshua Latimer  
Victoria Elliott

Sean Burke  
Art  
Jo Taylor  
Victoria Giebe  
Chris Oakes  
Jorge A

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All correspondence to: "Window Cleaning Magazine" c/o High Shine Ltd, 72 Boston Road, Gorse Hill Ind Est, Leicester, LE4 1HB

Tel: 0870 750 1970 Fax: 0870 750 1971

Email: [admin@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](mailto:admin@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk) Web: [www.windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](http://www.windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk)

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# Window Cleaning magazine

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## Join us on facebook

*We would like to invite all our readers to get more involved with the topics and issues featured in the Window Cleaning Magazine.*

Have your say on whether you think traditional or water fed pole window cleaning is the best method to use, and why.

Tell us about the equipment you use, what you use it for and why you chose it.

Discuss relevant issues such as expanding your business, where to get good deals, trade events, your opinions on the state of the industry and any other subject that you would like to discuss with like minded individuals in our window cleaning community.



## Window Cleaning magazine

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  - Educational videos
- and much, much more...







## Inc. Magazine Unveils Its Annual Exclusive List of America's Fastest-Growing Private Companies

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (August 22, 2013) – Inc. magazine ranked Fish Window Cleaning® number 4455 on its seventh annual Inc. 500|5000, an exclusive ranking of the nation's fastest-growing private companies. This is the fourth year Fish Window Cleaning® has made the Inc. 5000, which this year ranks the company 53rd among all privately held companies from the state of Missouri on the list. FISH posts a three-year 52% growth rate.

Commenting on this latest recognition for FISH, Michael Merrick, Fish Window Cleaning® Founder and CEO, said, "We are honored to once again be included in the Inc. 5000. We've grown substantially since FISH opened for business in 1978. I am proud of our staff at every level, and I'm proud of our outstanding franchisees for the work they do daily to provide excellent service and help us continue to grow."

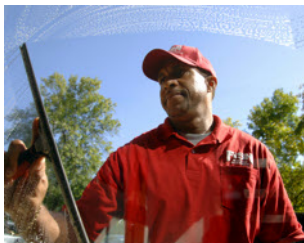
The list represents the most comprehensive look at the most important segment of the economy—America's independent entrepreneurs. Fish Window Cleaning® joins LivingSocial, Edible Arrangements, CDW and Lifelock, among other prominent brands featured on this year's list. Complete results of the Inc. 5000, including company profiles and an interactive database that can be sorted by industry, region, and other criteria, you can find it at [www.inc.com/5000](http://www.inc.com/5000). The companies on this year's list report having created over 520,000 jobs in the past three years, and aggregate revenue among the honorees reached \$241 billion.

"Not all the companies in the Inc. 500 | 5000 are in glamorous industries, but in their fields they are as famous as household name companies simply by virtue of being great at what they do. They are the hidden champions of job growth and innovation, the real muscle of the American economy," said Inc. Editor Eric Schurenberg.

The 2013 Inc. 500|5000 is ranked according to percentage revenue growth when comparing 2009 to 2012. To qualify, companies must have been founded and generating revenue by March 31, 2009. They had to be U.S.-based, privately held, for profit, and independent—not subsidiaries or divisions of other companies—as of December 31, 2012. (Since then, a number of companies on the list have gone public or been acquired.) The minimum revenue required for 2009 is \$100,000; the minimum for 2012 is \$2 million. As always, Inc. reserves the right to decline applicants for subjective reasons. Companies on the Inc. 500 are featured in Inc.'s September issue. They represent the top tier of the Inc. 5000, which can be found at [www.inc.com/500](http://www.inc.com/500).

### About Fish Window Cleaning®

Fish Window Cleaning® was founded in St. Louis in 1978 and is now the largest window cleaning franchise in the country with over 250 nationwide locations. FISH consistently ranks in Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500 and has saved veterans over \$41,000 in fees as a member of VetFran. Fish Window Cleaning® also produces America's premium foaming glass cleaner, Fish Foam.



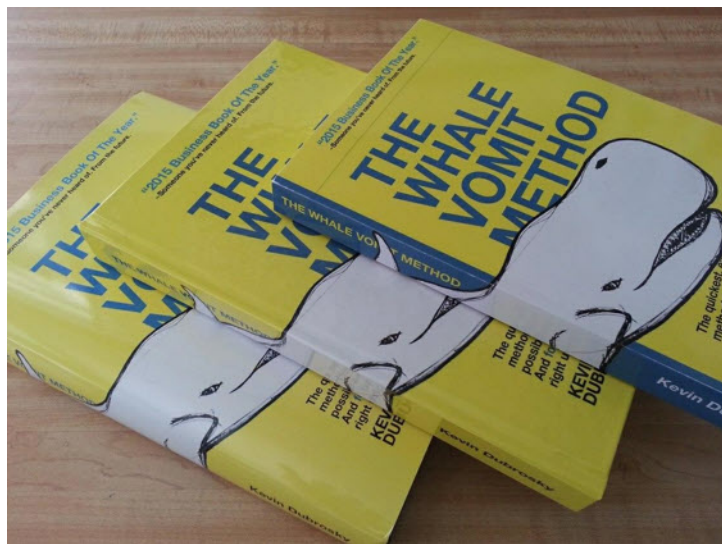
FISH provides service to more than 200,000 commercial and residential customers nationwide. Free estimates and customized service plans tailored to each customer's needs and budget are just a few offered benefits.



## Do you want a copy of Kevin Dubrosky's new book?

### Kevin Dubrosky's 'The Whale Vomit Method' book competition.

Can you write a 500-600 word marketing article for WCM. The only criterion is that it is about marketing, it is your own work and is between 500-600 words.



You can think inside or outside the box. Send your finished article to [lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](mailto:lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk)

The winning entry will receive a paperback copy of Kevin's book. The winner's piece will be published in the January 2014 issue of Window Cleaning Magazine.

Deadline for submissions is 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013. Editors decision is final and any submissions may be published in WCM

If you just can't wait you can order Kevin's book by clicking on the picture of his book or visit the website for more information at [whalevomitmethod.com](http://whalevomitmethod.com)



## Window cleaner has no memory of a 40ft fall

(c) The Edinburgh Evening News

A WINDOW cleaner who plunged 40ft to the pavement at a city centre site after his safety ropes failed says he has no memory of the horrifying ordeal. Martin Greig, 25, from Penicuik, had been cleaning the windows of the Semple Street Exchange 1 building at around 4pm last Friday when the ropes designed to secure him to the building gave way.





He incredibly survived the fall, but is still recovering in intensive care at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

Mr Greig has been told by doctors he was lucky to have escaped the fall with only two broken wrists, two badly sprained ankles and two broken bones in his lower back.

The worker, who lives with fiancée Wendy and seven-month-old daughter Millie, said: "Only time will tell if I'll be able to go back to work. I've been told I've got months of physiotherapy ahead of me and even if I do get completely back to normal, this has really hit home. I have a daughter to think about.

"I don't remember what happened and hearing about it was really shocking.

"The ropes we had had been in use for a long time and I think they were due to be replaced soon, but I had no reason to think they would fail."

The Health and Safety Executive is investigating the incident.

Colleague Jack Robertson, 20, who had been working with Mr Greig at Perth-based subcontractor Smith Services Ltd for three months, said he was sure his friend had not survived the fall.

The Penicuik man said: "We were on our last drop of the day and we were sitting at the fourth floor when Martin's main line suddenly snapped. He fell a few feet before the back-up caught him for a second, then it failed too.

"It was all over in a split second, but I remember he was falling so fast the water in his bucket was coming up out of the top. Then there was this awful thud as he hit the ground. It was horrible – nothing I would ever want to see again."

Mr Robertson immediately pulled himself up one floor to the roof before racing down to his friend's side.

"When I got to the bottom the security guard had already called an ambulance and they were there within minutes," he said. "Martin wasn't conscious. I was sure he was dead.

"When you work with ropes at height, you know it's a risky job, but you never think something like this will happen."

Mr Greig started his career nearly two years ago after his brother, Steve, recommended the trade to him. He had recently qualified as a level two rope access technician. Workers can earn as much as £70,000 a year in the trade.

Mother Aileen Greig, 57, who works as a lab technician, called for answers about the fall that nearly cost her son his life.

A spokesman for site manager Robertson Facilities Management said: "We are working with the relevant authorities to determine the exact cause of the incident as soon as we can. We are also providing full support to the subcontractor, his family and colleagues, and wish him a full and speedy recovery."



## WCR moves to new premises

**Window Cleaning Resources (WCR) have outstripped their 1,300 square feet premises because of experiencing a 50% growth in business over the past year. WCR appears to be going from strength to strength.**

**Sept 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 they moved into a new HQ that consists of 96,000 square feet of warehouse space and an additional 2,000 square feet office space.**

**The new HQ is in Sparta only 7 minutes from their last place in Vernon NJ.**

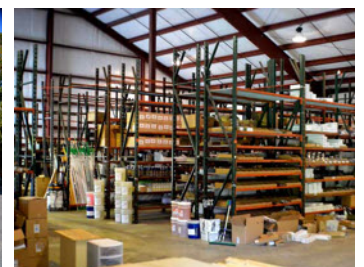
**The new place is being fitted out with new offices, conference rooms, graphic design and film studios.**

**Alex Lambrinides of WCR goes on to tell WCM that the new site will house all their projects including WCRA, PWRA and the Window Cleaning Business Owner Magazine (WCBO)**

**Alex: The new site is awesome, it's so big you can skateboard around it.**

**WCM: What does this mean to WCR customers?**

**Alex: Less back orders and less drop ships and better deals for our customers.**







# Will the Orbit send your Water Fed Pole into Orbit?

**WCM interview's Willie Erken of Wagtail**

**The new Wagtail Orbit is here, promising to change the way you think about your water fed pole. WCM interviews Willie Erken of Wagtail to find out all about it. Look out for our coming videos on this product and future magazine review.**

**WCM: It has been a long wait for Wagtail to dip its toes into the water fed pole market. What took you so long?**

**WE:** *Exporting from Australia is expensive and to manufacture poles here and export internationally is prohibitive. I have been continuing to improve and revolutionise Wagtail's Squeegees, which are the core products of my business. Adapting to the water fed pole market has been at the back of my mind for some time and now the evolution is realised.*

**WCM: Why is Wagtail getting into the water fed pole market?**

**WE:** *Wagtail Squeegees are superior for pole work irrespective of height. It is a natural extension to introduce water to our already adaptable squeegee. There is a great need to examine the water fed pole market and its deficiencies. One glaring example is there are only rigid brushes and most of them weigh too much.*

**WCM: So the Orbit is here, released for the first time and on sale from October 1st 2013. The Orbit is a tool that fixes to the end of your water fed pole. How does it stay fixed?**

**WE:** *It really is the only tool that can still fit onto traditional window cleaning poles as well as most WFP angle arms with a simple mortis taper.*

**WCM: No brush comes with the Orbit, why?**

**WE:** *The Wagtail Brush will be unique but at this stage like all other Wagtail projects it is in design stage. The current Orbit collar expands and contracts to fit onto most brushes.*

**WCM: What brush heads will fit into the tool?**

**WE:** *The **Reach-iT** Brush was used by us in the design phase and the fit is just right, however, the other brushes also fit but a longer and thinner nut and bolt is required.*

**WCM: What made you come up with the idea?**

**WE:** *The breakthrough came when I invented the collet that transforms the Wagtail Handle into a very strong and direct response (to turning) for our squeegees and applicators. Obsessed with the power of the collet I envisaged other uses.*

**WCM: Who did the field work on the prototype and what did you learn from the data gathered?**

**WE:** *A very good friend and patient guy from Manchester England now in Sydney drops in every week to test Wagtail innovations. He is very sensitive to squeegee drag and weight even though he is built like a rock. The Orbit was first tested only one month ago but since then he has used*

## “.. MANUFACTURING IS NEVER A SMOOTH RIDE.”

*it on several occasions. We learnt that the amount of objects that prevent straight up and down movements is at almost every building site. Trees, cars, awnings and even abseiling require side-to-side movements.*

**WCM:** What is unique about the Orbit compared to Gardiner's Swivel?

**WE:** *I never look at what my competitors are doing and until last week I was unaware of the Gardiner's Swivel. The Wagtail pivot is far superior to ALL floor tools for control so I am guessing the same applies to swiveling brushes.*

**WCM:** Will you be bringing out a Wagtail brush head?

**WE:** *That depends on how well my new invention in another arena is taken and how long it takes us to infiltrate that market. Very tempted in making this our new project.*

**WCM:** Has manufacture of the tool been a smooth ride?

**WE:** *This is the first tool that I have not personally organised the manufacturing and quality. There were numerous problems but luckily my Australian Design Award winning designer took care of everything. Manufacturing is never a smooth ride but I am exceedingly impressed with the quality of this tool.*

**WCM:** Is there a small learning curve with using the Orbit on a water fed pole as opposed to using a Wagtail squeegee on a pole?

**WE:** *I have given the Orbit to my wife, daughter, friends and I can honestly say this tool is very easy to master.*



**WCM:** I think this product is fantastic. WCM are going to do a review on this product. If you can sum up in one word, what word would you use to describe the Orbit?

**WE:** *Can I have two words (laughs) Steering Brush or Steering Device take your pick.*

**WCM:** What else new is coming soon from Wagtail?

*Slipstream Squeegee, Applicator, Scrubber, Water Fed, and most importantly an almost constant glide that prevents squeegee drag. Until you use this tool you were unaware of this problem.*

**WCM:** Thank you to Willie Erken, owner of Wagtail all the way from Oz.





# AquaTap 10



*We interview Peter Fogwill about his new water saving device*

**WCM** is committed to bringing its readers the latest innovations on the market from the industries 'big thinkers'. Peter Fogwill is no exception. We chat to Peter about his latest time saving invention for window cleaners.

**WCM:** Hi Peter, I hear you have a brand new product coming on the market very soon, what is it and what does it do?

**Peter:** Hi Lee, the name of my new product is called the AquaTap. It is very simple and easy for people to remember, Aqua for water used in the first part of my business name and tap, as that is exactly what it is like. It works on the same principle as a tap, 1/4 turn to start the water, 1/4 turn to stop the water, and like a tap you may want anything in between. The genius part is although the AquaTap is on the top of the pole just below the brush head; you turn the bottom of the pole to operate it. It fits on any pole, with any brush.

**WCM:** Awesome, a new water saving device for water fed poles. You already have a water saving product on the market, how does your new product compare?

**Peter:** I first brought out the AutoBrush back in 2004 and it was the first ever device to be operated on the top of a pole. I was fighting the battle myself for a good few years trying to convince people that the best way to stop and start the water was on top of the pole.

The problem with the AutoBrush was that the work involved me putting the necessary extras on to every brush and the costs of the switches themselves made it impossible to go through sales outlets.

At the time I was busy selling water fed pole system's to earn a living and I was quite glad when someone else caught on to the fact it was best to have something on top of the pole, it took the pressure off me for a bit. That led to a lower demand for the AutoBrush at the time, which allowed me to get on with other profitable things. I still had time to make the AutoBrush for my customers. The other product that came into the market is quite a good product, but it did have its disadvantages.

**WCM:** The other product you mentioned has gained popularity, it also goes on the top of the pole, does your new product overcome any problems associated with that, or your AutoBrush?

**Peter:** Well yes quite a few but without giving disadvantages away of another product, I will tell you all the advantages of the AquaTap.

The AquaTap doesn't rely on having to nudge any part of it or the pole against anything, just a simple twist of the pole stops, start, reduces or increases water flow.

The AquaTap fits on any pole, and can be used with any brush. It fits between the pole and the angle joint, or gooseneck. It has external connections so it doesn't matter

## “... THE AQUATAP FITS ON ANY POLE”

where your feed pipe comes out from to the brush it goes into one connection on the AquaTap. A piece of pipe goes from the other connection to the brush. This means no adapters are necessary, and fits onto any pole in about the same time it takes to fit an angle joint, it really is just plug and play. It doesn't rely on any special hose and works equally well with hot water as well as cold.

With the AquaTap you can turn the flow down as well as off and on. Sometimes you may come across something that needs an extra scrub but you still want some water there to help lubricate, you just simply turn the flow down to the required amount and when your ready turn it back up to rinse. Some people like to scrub all the time with less flow, and then rinse on full for a few seconds. This can easily be achieved with the AquaTap.

The weight of the Aquatap is much less than anything else on the market, weighing in at around 70 grams you won't even know its there. A standard angle joint is 70 grams, and we all know how heavy they feel.

The cost is another significant factor; it really will be a big money saver paying for itself in no time.

### **WCM: Will the AquaTap be reliable?**

**Peter:** Absolutely, with its simple design it really is very reliable with only one moving part. With the AutoBrush there were cost implications for me if any switches needed replacing, although it never happened that often. Anything with complicated mechanics is going to cause more problems than something with very little mechanics. The simplicity not only makes it very reliable it also helps considerably when keeping the AquaTap very light.

### **WCM: Any safety aspects we should know about? Is there anything that makes your product safer to use than other products on the market?**

**Peter:** Yes there is. You never have to take your hand off the pole, or your eye off the top of the pole. Everything you do is operated more or less without having to do anything.

Years ago when I first started selling water fed system's I had a remote control fitted to every trolley and although it was a better way to control water than anything else on the market at that time, you still had to do something.

You had to take a hand off the pole whilst working. Apart from it being more dangerous it was annoying to have to do that. With the AquaTap both hands can stay on the pole at all times and a simple twist is all you need. It only takes a second for a gust of wind to take the pole out of your hand, especially if it is 40 foot in the air.

Another thing that's not proven but could be a major safety factor is having the water off near power lines. If you have

a device that truly is just as easy to have the water off moving from window to window you are more likely to use it. Water is highly conductive and even if you have a non-conductive pole like fiberglass the electricity is likely to pass down the water to the operator. If the water is off moving from window to window you are eliminating this problem.

### **WCM: So I take it you can have the pole hose internally fed or on the outside?**

**Peter:** Yes, it makes no difference, inside or outside. This way if you use the hose on the outside for ease of adding and taking away sections you can still do that. If you are a hose on the inside person then yes no problem there either.

### **WCM: You said earlier that you could use any hose, tell us a bit more.**

**Peter:** Any hose at all. We will have two sizes of connections, a small hose tail, and a larger hose tail, the hose you use to supply your brush will fit one or the other connection.

### **WCM: What about hot water, anything we need to know?**

**Peter:** Obviously with any connections from feed hose to pole hose, or pole hose to the brush usually needs something to secure the connections due to softening of the hose, and it goes with the AquaTap.

### **WCM: Where will the product be available?**

**Peter:** I am talking with major water fed pole suppliers at the moment and the interest in it is immense. It's early days yet but I am sure this time I will have a product that will be used as standard on every water fed pole sold, the way angle joints or goosenecks are used just now. With widespread use the price can be negligible, and really no reason not to have one.

### **WCM: I take it you have protection?**

**Peter:** Yes as always I have a Patent applied for. I have messed about with Patents for a good number of years and know I will get a relatively good deal of protection.

### **WCM: Thanks so much for sharing Peter.**

# AquaTap





# To collect or not to collect, that is the question.

# 12

I remember the night I decided I wasn't doing this any longer, it was a dark, windy autumn evening, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 to be precise. I was knocking on door after door with little success. It wasn't as if no one was home. In some cases I could see the 'old dears' in their kitchen and yet, still, they refused to answer the door.

This was the third time that week that I had been out collecting money. Two hours Monday, two and a half on Wednesday and then tonight another hour and a half. I had young children at home, I had other things I could be doing rather than pounding on doors only to be ignored.

Something had to give, something had to change. Six hours collecting money I had already earned was something I wasn't prepared to do any longer.

On returning home I complained, fruitlessly as it turned out, to my wife about the lack of open doors and open wallets. "It is trick or treat night you know" she said "Some people don't like opening their doors to strange men"

I took the comment as it was intended, as a judgement on how a rather round, balding man may have appeared through the frosted glass of the terraced rows in Darley Dale. Yes, possibly a bit strange.

I got on the internet and looked at the then fledgling window cleaning forum that had already helped me to move forward with my business.

"Never collected for years, just inform them to send a cheque. I leave an envelope and stamp and they post payment no problem" Came the best reply.

"Did you lose any customers?" I typed back a little worried. "A few didn't like it but that became there problem. They got dumped and I replaced them with two new ones" The typical response of 'dump and replace' became something of a mantra for that particular forum.

I wrote to all my customers and informed them that I was no longer collecting at night and that payment must be posted. Most were fine with this arrangement. The one or two who were not were 'let go' never to be cleaned by me again.

As time went by other forms of payment were becoming more popular, internet banking was a hit with my customers. I gave them my details and they paid online. I checked my account and marked them as paid. It was a completely painless process.

I then started to offer standing orders to customers; they would remain in control of the process and yet pay a regular monthly payment that would hit my bank the same day every month. For some I did have to play with the amounts as



not all my customers are cleaned every month. In general it works very well and has simplified the business no end. As most customers are out at work, that simply get an 'invoice' to say that the windows have been cleaned and I can move swiftly on to the next house.

One of the main issues to regular payments such as monthly standing orders and direct debits is the fact that circumstances and round planning can lead to 'infrequent' cleaning.

For example your round may be 4, 6, 8 or more weeks. You then, like I did, have to play with the amount charged per month to tally with overall yearly charge. Many are put off setting up a standing order or direct debit for this reason. There is now a solution; GoCardless offer a direct debit to suit the irregular collections that some window cleaners need. I spoke to Matthew Robinson one of the co-founders of Go Cardless:

**What is the GoCardless story so far, how did you get to where you are now?**

*GoCardless was founded in Jan 2011 by myself and my co-founders, Tom Blomfield and Hiroki Takeuchi. We wanted to break out of our jobs as financial consultants in the city, so we started a business together. We soon realised that taking payments is a nightmare for small businesses like ours. We set out to make it easy for anyone to take payments using Direct Debit.*

**How does the system work?**

*Businesses can take and manage Direct Debit payments online through us. That means that they can request their customers set up a Direct Debit to them by email, in an invoice or on their website, and subsequently bill them automatically through GoCardless. The great thing about it is that once a Direct Debit is set up, the customer doesn't need to lift a finger.*

## “.. A REAL GAME CHANGER”

**Why do you feel GoCardless is the way forward for bill collection?**

*There are two problems with traditional Direct Debit providers: they rely on manual, paper-based processes, and they make it very difficult for small businesses to take Direct Debits. GoCardless exists to change that. We've built an online payment system that saves businesses time, and makes it much simpler to use. The technology we use also enables us to serve any business, no matter how small. That's a real game-changer for many.*

**What type of trades are using GoCardless?**

*GoCardless is used by a huge variety of industries. Anyone from national train companies such as Greater Anglia to small service businesses, such as cleaners and nannies, are already benefitting from it.*

**The 1% fee seems very competitive, this must be the cheapest collection option on the market yes?**

*For most businesses, yes it is. We also offer scale pricing to larger businesses.*

**What support do you offer for users of GoCardless?**

*We believe that great customer support should be the standard. Our dedicated customer support team provide a brilliant service, by email, phone and live chat, to both businesses and their customers. I frequently get emails from customers telling me about a great support experience, and I genuinely believe it's one of the greatest strengths of our business.*

**How important has the 'infrequent' Direct Debit addition been for businesses?**

*It's very important. Direct Debit is extremely powerful because it gives businesses complete control over when and how much they are paid. We see businesses using this in all manner of ways, and providing innovative and new services as a result.*

**How does the Direct Debit guarantee work within GoCardless' system?**

*The Direct Debit Guarantee applies to all Direct Debits, no matter who they are set up through. If a customer is concerned that a payment was taken from them in error, they can either come to us or their bank to arrange a refund under the Guarantee. In these instances, we always work to understand and resolve the issue. It's important to us that both the end customer, and merchant are protected.*

**I would suggest that the infrequent request for money will really help the window cleaning industry as we don't always call on exactly a one month frequency, can you cope with the flood of window cleaners that will now sign up?**

*Absolutely!*

**Thank you Matthew.**

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Hanging from a building by two ropes is not exactly every window cleaners dream job. To rope repel efficiently and safely takes training and balls of steel. It is a definite skill. This year I had the opportunity to do just that with a company called Empire Highrise USA of Missouri.

Although my training on the day was limited I was under the close supervision of the owner of Empire, Jorge and his head guy Kenny at all times.

The biggest thing for me was going over the edge. You see, talking about rope repelling compared to actually taking that first crawl over the edge are two very different things. Think back to the day you first jumped from the top diving board or took that first bungee jump. Your heart is pounding with anticipation and adrenaline just before you commit. BOOM! It's all done and you have achieved that goal.

Rope repelling for real would be no bungee jump for me. If I hurled towards the ground after crawling over the wall there would be no bouncing back up. I would be toast!

Jorge of Empire, KC kindly put me up at his house with his beautiful family during my two day stay. The idea was to learn a little bit about high rise window cleaning and document it on film for WCM fans and readers.

Here's how it went down.

**Lee:** Jorge thank you so much for having me and inviting me into your home and business with the WCM TV cameras.

**So Jorge, give me a little background. Did you high rise from the off start when you got into window cleaning?**

**Jorge:** *When I got into window cleaning I was trained in commercial, it took a while before I could be trained in high rise.*

**Lee:** In all seriousness, training and supervision is real important when you are starting out on rope repelling. How did you learn?

**Jorge:** *Once it was time for me to learn high rise I was trained by a supervisor for two weeks. It was a one story building.*

**Lee:** Can you remember your first scramble over the wall into the Bosons chair?

**Jorge:** *(Laughs) Of course, I was hanging off the building where I was being trained. A one story building. I was very nervous stepping into the chair. I froze half way in the chair and had to crawl back on to the roof. After taking a couple minutes to work myself to it I was able to successfully drop.*

**Lee:** How do you think I did on my initial training prior to my first official drop?

**Jorge:** *You did real good. You learn quick.*

**Lee:** Footwear is important? What about a helmet? I know I did not wear one in the film. In fact most of the time I had a Go Pro camera strapped to it (laughs)





face once you went over. I'm glad I could be there in person for that moment..... Footwear is important because you use your feet to hold on to the structure, to reach and stand but you sure don't want to wear any heavy shoes/boots that may damage or break glass nor do you want to wear any nice pair you may have. The facade of the building will wear them out very quickly.

**Lee: What is the first thing you think about when you turn up to a job?**

**Jorge:** I think about safety. How is the roof? What does it look like? Is there a parapet wall? Anchors? How can we successfully service this property in the most efficient and safe way?

**Lee: Tell us about the figure eight and what does it do?**

**Jorge:** The figure eight is a device used for rock climbing. We use it for rescuing ourselves or someone else. It can only be used for repelling. It is your best friend; you never want to be in a chair without one.

**Lee: Have you ever had to self-rescue yourself?**

**Jorge:** I was repelling from one floor to another when about 8 wasps stung me on my legs. I didn't know it but there was a huge nest below me. I panicked and started shaking to get them off when I felt this tight pull. I looked up and I had let go of my rope grab. Now I'm hanging, still getting stung and not able to move since I wasn't able to reach my rope grab. I had to lock my rope and kill all the wasps. My legs were burning. The guy next to me (about 8 feet) was just sitting there laughing at me. (Laughs). I couldn't hold it against him; I would have laughed at him if it had happened to him. I had to tie a couple knots with my safety, stand up in a climbing motion and reach for my rope grab. Then back to work!

**Lee: What's the scariest job you have done?**

**Jorge:** Oh man...there is this job we have had for a couple of years now where the roof sticks out of the building about 10 feet. We have to drop and do a rope transfer on the tenth floor. It's some scary stuff. I'll have to show you some pictures; maybe you can include them in the magazine.

**Lee: So what's the deal with Empire? You help other window cleaning companies in the US as well, right?**

**Jorge:** Yes, our goal through Empire Highrise U.S.A. is to empower window cleaning companies across the United States who do not offer high rise to not turn down any business that may come to them and or go out and try to gain business of those buildings they have always wanted to clean. We are insured to 44 stories nationwide. Empire can



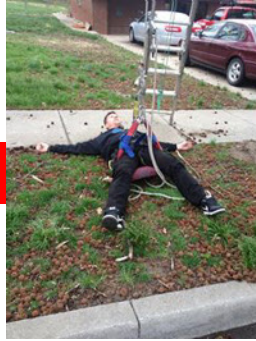
work along with them to successfully clean any building they may have in their city. Not only can they now offer high rise in their city and make money every time we come out but they can make money year round, here is an example...

Mole Window Cleaning in Savannah, GA. gets a lead from a 20-story hotel that needs all windows cleaned every six months but the property needs all entrances, lobby and restaurant cleaned every 2 weeks. Mole window cleaning company can profit every two weeks from that maintenance clean and can also make a profit every 6 months when we come out and do all high rise work. They make money both ways. It's a win-win.

**Lee: Is there a lot of money to be made in high rise?**

**Jorge:** I believe so.





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# 16

**Lee:** Do you need to tie up squeegees and strip washers on high buildings? Have you ever dropped anything?

**Jorge:** Yes, it is very important especially in high traffic areas. We do have barricades set up at all times in order for the public not to come in contact with our ropes on the ground. We block off an area large enough to be safe if in fact anything does drop. I've dropped a few squeegees and wands in my time (smiles very big)

**Lee:** Describe your perfect day up on the side of a building? Bet the office views are great?

**Jorge:** A perfect day for us in the high rise industry is a partly cloudy day with no wind. Mild temperatures where we can wear shorts but not too hot. I think we have the best views in the world outside of skydiving. We are high, safe and able to enjoy the views/weather. I love my job.

**Lee:** Have you ever used water fed poles during high rise work?

**Jorge:** We have played with the thought but not yet. Perry Tait (who is like a brother to me) from Future of Cleaning and I are working together in order to try cleaning some buildings. I see it being very beneficial depending on the way the building is shaped and what type of windows the building has.

**Lee:** What squeegee do you reach for?

**Jorge:** I honestly use any squeegee I can get my hands on. I really have no preference.

**Lee:** What water fed pole and system would you reach for?

**Jorge:** We use a RHG R-5 for our water fed system. It is a heavy-duty machine. Our favorite pole is the Reach-iT PRO. We have yet to find a pole that will work as good as Reach-iT. Not only is the pole the best in my opinion but also the warranty is unmatched.



**Lee:** Explain why tie back locations are important and what to look for?

**Jorge:** Tie backs are the most important thing in our line of work. We have to make sure that these are OSHA accepted, not to mention they will be the things to hold on to all of our weight when on a drop. There is no playing around when looking for the proper tie backs. Your life depends on them. You want to look for anything that can hold 5,000 pounds or more. Anchor points, steel beams, etc.

**Lee:** Is it bad practice to do a drop without a partner?

**Jorge:** Yes, it is the worst thing you can do other than not tying back to proper tie backs. If you are in a situation where you need rescued the first 30 minutes are very critical. If there is no one around to help release tension to your body or rescue you it could be fatal.

**Lee:** What does it mean to be inspected by OSHA and what does it mean if they give a company a 'ticket'?

**Jorge:** OSHA stands for Occupational Safety and Health Administration, their main concern when inspecting our workplace is to make sure we are following their safety rules as to proper tie backs, equipment and overall safety in the workplace. To get a ticket/fine you have to be either not using the proper equipment, risking lives and not using proper tie backs to mention a few.

**Lee:** How long does one drop take like the 6 story building in the 'High Rise with Empire' film?

**Jorge:** Those are pretty easy drops, it would take us about 10-15 minutes to clean the glass. With setup I would say 20-30. There is a 43 story building I know that takes 4-6 hrs a drop depending on your speed just for the glass.

**Lee:** Would you have me in your crew again?

**Jorge:** Yes, you are welcome here anytime brother. I want to thank you for coming out to our part of the world to experience your first drop with us. It has been a very nice experience to our crew and my family. You always have a home in Kansas City.

I got heaps of respect for Jorge and his family and I am looking forward to seeing them in the future. Kenneth (in the film) is a man who knows what he is doing. I thank him for showing us all what High Rise is all about and for keeping me safe during the filming.

For those that wanted to see what we did you can watch the High Rise With Empire film by clicking [here](#). Or click on the video link above.

# Britain's Unlikeliest Window Cleaner

Gerald Ash recently hit the National newspapers, radio stations and TV interviews with his story of sheer determination from getting off Government income support to starting a window cleaning business. In the national news his weight has been the main interest. At 35 stone he has to be the heaviest newbie window cleaner in the UK. This has overshadowed his charity work that has become linked in with his newfound trade. WCM catches up with Gerald and asks what is all the fuss about?

**WCM:** Gerald why do the newspapers term you as the unlikeliest of window cleaners?

**Gerald:** *Window cleaning is synonymous with ladders so when someone my size and weight talks of starting out in the industry it proved a noteworthy story, unfortunately, overshadowing the charity aspect.*

**WCM:** You used to weigh 50 stone? What do you weigh now?

**Gerald:** *I presently weigh thirty-five stone (220kg) but I have been down to thirty in between these weights. My weight fluctuates depending on my activity levels.*

**WCM:** How long have you been unemployed?

**Gerald:** *In 1998 I lost my P.S.V due to ill health (weight related). The following year I became a Carer for my wife of thirteen years. Early 2012 the marriage ended and I found myself in a job market that had no resemblance to the one I had left in the late nineties.*

**WCM:** How difficult was it to find work?

**Gerald:** *In some of 2012 I had serious health issues but I still attempted to find a job but with long periods of unemployment my CV was not attractive to employers.*

**WCM:** Is your weight a real issue? Have you experienced a form of fat 'ism' in your life by others?

**Gerald:** *It is a fact of life that you are pre-judged on your appearance. Being the size I am, people presume I am lazy and unable to work, even walk plus the belief that if you are fat you are not intelligent. I actually have 'A' levels and an above average IQ.*

**WCM:** What gave you the idea of window cleaning?

**Gerald:** *It started out as an idea to clear gutters. I invented a vacuum to clear gutters from the ground with a camera to view inside the gutters. A few days later I discovered I was twenty years too late. Window cleaning was a natural evolution from this because of the low initial investment levels possible.*

**WCM:** Do you window clean on ladders?

**Gerald:** *Ladders are rated with a dynamic weight limit of 150kg, if I were to become suicidal I would consider using them but at present, call me a coward, I avoid them.*

**WCM:** What squeegee equipment do you use and why?

**Gerald:** *Because I had never used any kind of squeegee I went for the Wagtail because I have limited flexibility in my left wrist, stop smirking at the back, plus the Wagtail's versatility on a pole.*

**WCM:** How do you get customers?

**Gerald:** *Charities advertise my service on their websites and newsletters in return for a commission of 20% but the return from this is slow so I door knock. At this time my best return is twelve new customers in an hour but I average between two and three an hour.*



## “LADDERS? IF I WERE TO BECOME SUICIDAL”

**WCM:** Your window cleaning business is part for charity, right? Tell us about that.

**Gerald:** *I was not sat at home thinking how do I help a charity but how do I promote my business? It has changed somewhat since, as I want to do some good in this world. The benefits are for the Charity and I think that customers are more likely to say 'yes' but to what degree I cannot say. I also feel it should enhance customer loyalty.*

**WCM:** Do you think your making a difference?

**Gerald:** *To my own life obviously a massive difference. To the world I hope to build a business that can employ those who are in a similar position as myself through life circumstances. I do think the Charity involvement gives me that positive 'buzz'.*

**WCM:** What work did you previously do before becoming unemployed?

**Gerald:** *I am a shoe repairer/shoe maker by trade and so that has given me a head start because I am skilled with my hands. In window cleaning I have picked things up quickly except for fanning the squeegee, that is difficult but I'm getting there.*

**WCM:** You say that you spent 3 months training to be a window cleaner, what did you do?

**Gerald:** *Please understand that I did not have any money so I could not enroll on a training course. I watched numerous YouTube videos and practiced after watching the demos. After time I found that I could do a good job but not very quickly. I went for quality only at the beginning and speed has slowly increased. The first house I did, five bed, took me four hours!! The customer thought he was getting fantastic value for money.*

**WCM:** You spent your last money on window cleaning equipment. What did you buy first?

**Gerald:** *The first thing I bought was a Wagtail One Pass, which I now know for me, was not the right choice but it was great to practice with. The main items were a 6" and 10" flipper, 4" Unger scraper, bucket, rubber, fixi clamp with brush and sponge and an angle adaptor from Wagtail.*

**WCM:** What do you think of pure water window cleaning?

**Gerald:** *An excellent system and it takes less manual dexterity to use than a Wagtail on a pole but for me there is a place for both. The water is a cost probably comparable to detergent and rubbers; however, I have picked up some customers who will not have wfp because of the excess water that can be left. This is down to the operator but I see their point. The Window Cleaning Warehouse and Facelift*

*have given me some equipment (Backpack & Phoenix 22ft) plus they are thinking of supplying an RO to help me because of the charity angle, to which I appreciate greatly. Thanks Mike & Steve. I will use it as much as I can on upper floors but don't see the point downstairs but maybe that will change.*

**WCM:** How are you going to teach yourself pure water window cleaning?

**Gerald:** *Well I am sure that nice man at High Shine could help me plus all the videos on YouTube and then there is also Waterfedpoletraining.com but I am a little less confident than with the squeegee and pole due to numerous problems that can crop up but I'll get there as there's always someone to help.*

**WCM:** What do you think of customer service? How important do you think this is?

**Gerald:** *Customer service is everything, keep your customers happy and you keep your customers. Every job that I do, I tell the customer to tell me if they are not happy and I will do my very best to rectify it. I tell them I've just started out and that there may well be mistakes. They respect that and indeed help me to achieve the results we both want.*

**WCM:** Do you work alone? What if you need to reach higher than your static pole or 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows?

**Gerald:** *I now have a friend working with me because I realised quite quickly you cannot avoid using ladders completely and if you did you would probably loose work. The wfp that was recently given to me will do up to three floors but any higher is not possible at this time.*



**WCM:** What is your current squeegee technique?

**Gerald:** *With the pole and Wagtail, I cut in at the top then sevens or similar. Downstairs I'm afraid it's horizontal pulls across as fanning still eludes me.*

**WCM:** Is most of your window cleaning round residential?

**Gerald:** *I only have one commercial at present and to be honest to start out I will stick to residential until I can afford to go for it in a big way.*

**WCM:** Why have you not got more commercial window cleaning work?

**Gerald:** *Commercial is daunting for equipment and me to be honest, insurance has to be better plus I don't feel that I have enough experience at present.*

**WCM:** Have you had any run in's with other window cleaners in your local area?

**Gerald:** *Not yet but I dare say it will happen. If it does I'll have to deal with it. Because of my size most people don't take me on but I would let the Police deal with any trouble resulting from rivalry.*

**WCM:** What do you think of leaded windows on residential properties?

**Gerald:** *Without a ladder a nightmare but I explain to the customer's and so far I have had no problems. The wfp should help me here.*

**WCM:** How much have you learned from WCM's homegrown 'Wagga' aka Chris Dawber?

**Gerald:** *To be honest just about everything. His videos were a revelation to me because at that time I had been trying to find a way of window cleaning without ladders and nothing I had seen until then had impressed me. Let me tell you his method works, if I had not found them I doubt I would have started the business.*

**WCM:** What do you think about health safety in the window cleaning industry?

**Gerald:** *We all scoff at health and safety and yes sometimes it can be a little ridiculous but when it comes to ladders and heights, you ignore literally at your peril. One extra minute in making sure it is safe with a ladder safety device could save you a short stay in hospital or a long stay in heaven.*

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## WC Trucks revisited PICTURE SPECIAL

Back in April 2012 issue of WCM we received AWESOME pics belonging to Art of Connecticut, US of his amazing window cleaning truck. We were so blown away by Art's wrap around graphics that we even featured Art himself on the front cover.

Art contacted WCM again recently and blew us out of the water once again. So we decided to do a WC Trucks revisited picture special!

ART: "Hope all is well with you and that you are both healthy and busy."

I bought a new truck because my Tacoma was just too small for the amount of gear I have. Although I enjoyed the Tacoma, the Tundra is more enjoyable to drive and much nicer to work from.

Take care and thanks for all your efforts".



# 21

## Gallery



WCM are on the hunt for the best looking or even damn right interesting or unusual window cleaning trucks.

Send in pictures of your window cleaning trucks to:

[lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](mailto:lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk)





# Window cleaning in the Redneck Riviera

## The Jeff Temperley story continues.

Back in an October issue 2012 we featured the story of Jeff Temperley the British window cleaner that sold his window cleaning business in the UK to set up a window cleaning business in Florida USA. Jeff has now passed the immigration process, which was a lengthy and sometimes confusing procedure not forgetting the strain on his family who were waiting back home in the UK during the 'setting up' process and visits to the states.



It is well known that the US and UK window cleaning cultures differ in that the UK window cleaners have customers on automatic repeat business usually on monthly clean cycles all year round whilst the US have accounts that are serviced once per year with the Spring and Summer the busiest time.

In the US a clean can run into many hundreds of dollars where everything is carried out as a deep clean, including screens, tracks etc.

In the UK, depending on the size of the property £10.00 to £50.00 can be achieved every single month. This means that the UK window cleaner spends less time on the windows as they are maintained regularly. The client will always have clean windows and frames all year round.

Can the Brit style of window cleaning work in the US?

US window cleaners like John Lee of John Lee Window Cleaning in Maryville, TN, USA doesn't think so. Despite having gained regular monthly accounts, John does not think that the UK style can be replicated exactly. I asked John, "Let us say an average size house takes 20 minutes to do with a water fed pole, frames and all. You could then, may be charge for all exterior cleaning something like \$16.00 to \$20.00 (as an example) on a monthly cycle. That could be \$240.00 per year guaranteed where you just turn up and clean, no more calling ahead to schedule jobs in. Could that work?"

"Here is where the problem comes in," John says, "The average house takes 1 to 2 hours to clean the outside. Most of the homes we do are 3 to 4 thousand square feet in size.

Plus, if they have screens or storm windows you will have to add more time to remove them. We could not even start our vehicles for \$16.00 dollars.

That is why a lot of window cleaners do not do route work, because it pays so little. Residential is more profitable because a select group of people will pay more money to have their windows cleaned once or twice per year."

John went on to say, "The biggest challenge in the US is to educate the customers. They have been brain washed to think you only clean windows in the spring and the fall. Where this came from I don't know, but it is deeply ingrained.

We have no problem getting storefronts to agree to a bi-weekly or monthly service but homeowners just have a hard time thinking this way.

We cannot clean homes as low as the UK prices because of the differences I have mentioned, but we can offer a lower price if they go with a monthly service. I offer this service to all my customers and I have four that have it done monthly. One is from England and one is from Australia.

In Britain I have been following this amazing guy with huge ideas for the US market. He has sold his window cleaning business in the UK, said good-bye to his family and has boarded a plane to start the beginnings of a new life in Florida.

Jeff Temperley is the name that you will need to remember, because this British guy is landing on US soil to attempt to set up a Brit style business. And he is not stopping with just that. Jeff plans to set up a Brit style window cleaning supplies company too, filling a gap he feels he has seen in the US market.

Earlier this year I visited Jeff in Florida, taking my WCM TV cameras to film the window cleaning life he now has out there. I got the chance to speak with his crew that underpinned his business whilst he waded through the paperwork that would eventually lead to his residence. You can watch the film by clicking [this link](#) or the video icon button on top of page 23.

I need to thank Jeff for cleaning the windows of a local hotel. Instead of collecting the money he exchanged his services for four 'free' nights in the hotel just for me during my stay. Awesome! Thanks Jeff!

Going back to the interview we did in WCM, we re-interview Jeff to see if it had all gone to plan and whether or not John Lee's comments (in the same interview Oct-12) had any bearing on his plans and understanding of the US window cleaning market.

**WCM: Jeff, great to speak with you again. So, your in and all set up in Florida. Was the process tough?**

**Jeff:** *It was very, very involving all the time that I was in the USA setting things up. I was studying the immigration rules and regs every night. I read all kinds of horror stories and didn't want to screw up so I read everything I could.*

**WCM: Would you go through the immigration procedure again?**

**Jeff:** *I'll have to in 5 year's time when I do my renewal, although to be honest my first experience was very good and the preparation I did was very thorough. I expected the whole process to take at least 6mths, but actually when I put my paperwork in I had my visa in 21 days!!! The folder I submitted was nearly 6 inch's deep. I think it helped that I had tags pointing to all the info the officer would be looking for to make his life easier. All in all I saved £4,500 by not using a lawyer!*



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# 23

## "I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM MY FAMILY FOR 82 DAYS"

**WCM:** Was it tough on you and your family emotionally?

**Jeff:** Yes, right now I've been away from my family for 82 days and I have another 80 sleeps to go (as my daughter would put it) before I go home for Christmas then I will have to leave them again early January to April. After that they move out.

**WCM:** Tell us about the guys that helped you, Tom and Dave Brady? How did you meet them and how have they helped?

**Jeff:** Tom has put me up since the beginning. I have the company set up from his house and I've stolen half his garage space! When I am not around he takes care of the bills for me.

Dave his brother has worked on site with me on various jobs and is getting pretty good now. He works full time and helps me out on his off days.

**WCM:** You designed your own water fed pole system with the likes of Pure Freedom here in the UK. How has it preformed in the US market? Talk us through your van set up.

**Jeff:** Its very good, I have it set up with a small 75-gallon header tank rather than a big one as in the USA. You just hook up and make pure water while on site; the system keeps up and exceeds my usage on jobs so that I always leave with a full tank after a job is completed. Because its so flexible I can use it on my trailer rig or even put it on a tow bar luggage rack which for the guys using trucks would free up room.

**WCM:** How is your new business in Florida growing?

**Jeff:** It is headed in the right direction, but like most business owners I'm not happy unless I almost cant cope! Now summer is over I'm hoping to see it kick up a couple of gears.

**WCM:** Was it difficult selling your old UK window cleaning business?

**Jeff:** In a word, 'NO'. I had it up for sale for three weeks. There were a few silly offers and some wanting me to break the window cleaning up. In the end I had a phone call from a guy called Noddy. I told him what selling the business was all about, he stuck a deposit in my bank inside two days and I saw him a month later to finish the deal. I still work with him a little now and again and supply him with my static water system from my house in the UK.

**WCM:** John Lee mentioned in our last interview that the Brit style window cleaning does not work in the US. What did you find out?

**Jeff:** That John was right (laughs). I do have a monthly accounts and I am managing to talk a few into a 12 weekly service but here in Florida no one seems to prioritise windows

that much, this makes constant marketing essential as repeat business is such a long way off.

**WCM:** There is still some Brit mentality in you tho as you prefer to clean the windows (if you can) without appointment. It goes without saying that inside windows would have to be by appointment only but for outside only jobs, how do you tackle screens?

**Jeff:** I can remove them 99% of the time from the outside. I use some wide stainless steel levers (Titan) that I picked up at an Autozone Store. The trick I use to cut down on ladder trips is this. I extend my wfp up next to the window climb up, remove screen and hang on a clamp attached to the ladder. Then I just release the brush and Aqua-dapter from the pole, pull some hose through and I then just use it as a hand brush.

**WCM:** So how much can you make per hour in Florida?

**Jeff:** Where I am working, \$50-\$75 is average, however I have made a lot more and it all depends on the location and how many jobs I have on.

**WCM:** What is the competition like in the area you work in?

**Jeff:** There are a few but they are still not converted to wfp and more than our fair share of 'bucket bobs'. I have just had one more company start up in the area. I have my eye on them as they seem well funded but there is still enough to go round.

**WCM:** Why go for high end residential properties?

**Jeff:** The customer is more interested in a good job and good service, the money is not such an issue when the owner is in a \$3 million house.

**WCM:** You window cleaned a hotel in exchange for free nights for me for which I am grateful. Do you do many commercial buildings? What's your commercial to residential %?

**Jeff:** I would say 20% of my work is commercial. Being a beach destination there is not a huge amount of commercial available.

**WCM:** Any plans to build on your route work?

**Jeff:** Yes I'm using Street Bidder to target more of the top end accounts I want. My biggest project at the moment is going for Government contracts. I have just finished getting the company structure completed and registered with the right places. One or two big jobs I can rely on for income will enable me to start building the company much





CLICK TO WATCH

# 24

## "I JUST COMPLETED A \$12 MILLION DOLLAR HOUSE"

**WCM:** What is the last window cleaning equipment that you purchased in the UK?

**Jeff:** Just ordered another SLX35 and some hot pipe for the pole feeds, it's so hot in Florida I have had the pipe splitting and swelling and I'm nearly out of spares!

**WCM:** What is the last window cleaning equipment that you purchased in the US?

**Jeff:** I have had a few orders from WCR. The latest order was scraper blades and some roof snot for my soft washing rig.

**WCM:** Your family is not over yet to live. Are there plans for them to pop over to Florida and say 'Hi'?

**Jeff:** No, not until April. Our plan is to have a two-week holiday in Disney April 3<sup>rd</sup> then they just want to go back on the plane. After that we will drive up to the house I will have by then. The kids will love it!

**WCM:** What are your plans for an office or depot?

**Jeff:** Right now it's not needed, I do have my eye on a property near the beach which if I can get it, there will have plenty of room for an office and yard along with a 3min walk to the beach!

**WCM:** Do you now provide any other service in the US that you did not anticipate when you first started out?

**Jeff:** Yes, I'm just getting into soft washing & roof washing I'm going to be putting out a campaign very shortly to push it. I just completed a \$12m house last week!

**WCM:** Has it gone as well as you expected? Were there any surprises for you when you actually got working in the States?

**Jeff:** I've only really been pushing for the last 2 months and it has been in the quiet time here in the USA so I can't complain. I hope that the next few months will really kick off, I can only wait and see!

**WCM:** Has the marketing been harder than you first thought?

**Jeff:** Just expensive, the only way to get to people's doors is direct mail or eddm.

I have been trying different methods to see the results and it has been disappointing so far. I've had good results with Street Bidder but not had enough time to build up the records yet.

**WCM:** Have you managed to get much down time?

**Jeff:** A few days here and there and a couple of fishing trips. We have a supplemental Red Snapper season in October so I will be getting out most weekends, weather permitting.

**WCM:** Are you still boxing?

**Jeff:** I retired a while back hence the belly! Although I'm now coaching for a youth program at Ultimate Boxing in Panama City and doing a bit myself to get rid of the weight.

This month we took three kids to the National Championships in Houston. I only had three weeks with them but I had two lads get to the finals! Including beating last year's champion in one of the lead up fights, we also got an unopposed champion. We have a pro cruiserweight in the gym too who wants me to get my pro trainers license. That keeps my evenings busy!

Boxing stays in your system and I will always be involved one way or the other.

I'd like to think that in 40yrs time I would be the old boy on a stool in the gym still watching and helping out.



## **“Discover The Guaranteed 3-Step Secret To Achieve Instant Cleaning Business Growth”**

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## Brodex new pole hits the market

**WCM:** Brodex have a new range of poles out, could you give me a brief summary of the Brodex story so far?

**BMS:** Brodex have been manufacturing poles for over 12 years and we have developed them over the years using different material and shaping the design in accordance to what the marketplace demanded. We presently have 3 types of pole material being used across our range.

We have a range of aluminium poles extending from 5' to 36'. These are the workhorse of the industry and we have presently sold over 10,000 poles into the UK. We also make telescopic poles from a carbon / fibreglass mix etherised known as a composite Hybrid. These poles whilst more expensive provide better rigidity and lighter weight and so are becoming a favourite choice amongst the more discerning window cleaner. This range is called the Hydra Hybrid and extends from 18' to 42'. We also make a full carbon telescopic pole and also a modular model, both reaching the dizzy heights of 60' plus and we are constantly striving to improve the characteristics and quality at these extreme lengths.

**WCM:** The new range of poles, what is your key selling point?

**BMS:** Up to this date, we haven't created a pole that we could position between the carbon and the aluminium so



we were a little limited in our offerings. The Hybrid has been made to a very exacting standard and has a particularly impressive surface finish allowing cleaning and maintenance to be as simple as possible. It is also very hard wearing and should last longer than some of the other composites already in the market place. Our existing hydra range of clamps have been used to build the pole and their wide range of adjustment will again extend the life and usability of the pole. We have opted for a slightly thicker wall and sacrificed a little bit of lightness to ensure that the strength and rigidity of the pole is maximised. It is compatible with all of our clamps and brush attachments.

**WCM:** Over the past 5 years pole design and the quantity of suppliers has continued to develop and grow, where do you feel Brodex stands now and where do you want to be positioned in the next 5 years?

**BMS:** We are still market leaders alongside one other company in the UK and whilst our sales have felt the effect of increased competition, we continue to innovate and provide constant and never ending improvement through the poles and pure water equipment we provide. The van mounted systems are undoubtedly the jewel in our crown



and we can confidently say we are unrivalled when it comes to quality and value for money. We intend to grow our business through international distributors and new market places whilst doing everything we can to improve quality and innovation, here in the UK. We intend to dramatically improve our online presence as we feel this is the way forward for the UK window cleaner.

**WCM:** Can you give any clues to future development of the Brodex pole range, what's in the pipeline?

**BMS:** We have a brand new range of pole clamps coming to market within the next 6 months which will enable us to use different sizes of pole section dramatically changing the design and flexibility of the poles whilst remaining extremely competitive. We are currently developing a budget range of DIY build kits which will address the growing number of enquiries we get where window cleaning contractors wish to enter the marketplace on a tight budget and are keen to build their own systems.

**WCM:** The fitted systems do look great. How important do you feel the crash test is for the fitted systems?

**BMS:** Independent testing of a manufacturer's goods is really the only true way of trusting the quality or claims of the manufacturer. The testing showed that we make a safe product and it was proven for all to see. I think that sometime in the future this will be an insurance requirement. Would you own a car that had not been tested in this way?

**WCM:** What's your bestselling size fitted system and what would you expect to pay for it (no price on the website)?

**BMS:** The E500 and E650 van mounted machines are the best sellers and range from £1600- £3000 fully fitted.

**WCM:** Going back to the poles, will you be keeping the full range of poles, carbon, aluminium and now composite, or will some be withdrawn?

**BMS:** Yes we will keep them all, but we will be launching a brand new alloy pole range with the new clamping range in the next few months.

**WCM:** Most window cleaners like to get their hands on the equipment before they buy, so where can we see them in action?

**BMS:** We will do a demo for interested buyers at their premises or sites. Also we can send them to other customers in their area that already have the products and can give a candid review.

**WCM:** Would you recommend buying a van and getting a system to fit or choose the system and get a van to fit? Why?

**BMS:** Look at the needs of your business first. What do you want to achieve? i.e. do you want 2 men working all day? if so then a larger system, or do you just want 1 man for 5 hours a day i.e. the smaller ones. Then buy a van to suit, but be mindful of the growth over the next 2 years.

**WCM:** What sort of on-going maintenance cost would you typically expect from the E500 and E650 systems?

**BMS:** If they are used 5 days a week then budget for £300 per annum. If you DIY the services then £200 is reasonable.

**WCM:** Is there a way customers can give feedback and suggestions on the products?

**BMS:** The website allows questions and contact feedback - which we welcome massively.

**WCM:** Finally, if I smile really nicely, can I have a new fitted 500L DI system for free? (I'd expect a van as well)

**BMS:** Sorry no, but if anyone buys from us and says they saw us in your mag they will get 15% discount off retail for the first month the mag is out! Does that feel better for you?

**Special offer**

# 15% off

**Any purchase from Brodex during October**

PLEASE QUOTE PROMO CODE  
**'KING BURBIDGE'**  
TO QUALIFY FOR THIS DISCOUNT





# Victoria Giebe

## A single mum achieves success in business

**WCM:** Hello Victoria. What is your business name and where do you run your window cleaning business?

**VG:** The business name is Streak Window Cleaning and I'm the Owner and Operator. My business is run out of San Diego County.

**WCM:** How did you get into window cleaning?

**VG:** I started window cleaning back in 1993 (husband and wife team) at the time. After my divorce in 1999 I proceeded to go on my own.

**WCM:** I hope it was not the stress of work. If you were to compare the business as part of a husband and wife set up to just yourself as you are now, what stands out the most in differences?

**VG:** Actually it wasn't the stress of the work it was other issues. Some couples can work together perfectly fine, which we did. Being on my own actually made me feel more independent and of course the work and scheduling came along with being on my own work, but I am a "go getter" so to speak.

**WCM:** Why is it different?

**VG:** Well its different because it was on me to get out there and get the work with flyers, advertising and I had to be a mom. It was not easy but anything is possible if you really

want something bad enough out there. Window cleaning is all I knew and I didn't know how I was going to do it but my struggles put me where I am today.

**WCM:** You were starting a business up with a toddler. Was it difficult to juggle the window cleaning business and the mom stuff?

**VG:** I had a one year old son at the time and window cleaning was all I knew how to do so during the first year in business I had to get the business off the ground somehow, with little to no income.

I had to make a plan and I knew that I was going to have to get out there on foot and get the clients.

I use to put my son in a stroller and go house to house. I didn't have the money to advertise in the beginning and so I made homemade flyers and mailed them. The cost of stamping for bulk mailing took a lot of my money; I mailed flyers to janitorial services, blind companies, all the cleaning services I could find.

**WCM:** Your sheer determination is awesome! It finally paid off, right?

**VG:** During the first few years of cleaning windows with a little housecleaning, my big break came with one flyer. I sent it to a janitorial company here in San Diego.

This lead to subcontracted work from this company, this brought me in a steady income.

## "... I DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO BUY A \$20,000 BUSINESS"

**WCM:** Another opportunity came up for you didn't it?

**VG:** One day I was window cleaning a dental office and the owner of the business I subcontracted for called me and said he has a guy that subs work that is selling his window cleaning business. I was very interested in this opportunity, but in the back of my mind I knew I didn't have the money to buy a 22,000-dollar business. In the end I managed to get a loan for half and made payments to the window cleaner selling the business. The business included a truck, racks, ladders and equipment and 200 accounts.

**WCM:** What did you look for when you studied the business for sale?

**VG:** I was very skeptical of the business because I really wasn't sure how many accounts the window cleaner had. I wasn't going to pay him until I knew for sure what he had. We worked together on and off first year, got to know his customers, I also needed to see his revenue yearly, and for the price I got it for I made that money back easily within 3 to 4 months.

**WCM:** Do you still have this work today?

**VG:** Yes. I still do these accounts to this day and I have built over the years a good reputation and a good clientele.

**WCM:** What does your job include currently?

**VG:** My Job includes making calls, scheduling and doing bids/proposals and I do the work. The industry is very competitive these days.

**WCM:** How did you learn to produce bids? What advise could you give newbies?

**VG:** Bidding really isn't that hard, you just have to know how many windows, when windows were last cleaned, and if it's new construction. I do a lot of my bids on (residential) over the phone (unless new construction) because I know the areas real well in San Diego. You have to look at commercial in the same way as residential. For the newbies I suggest you look at the job. I have bid jobs that when I started working on them I felt I underbid. So really look at the job before you give your price. I do a lot of negotiating to get the job also. Be reasonable but don't be out on a limb and get stuck on a job that you really should have bid more for.

**WCM:** Do you have staff? How did you find your first interview?

**VG:** I am the staff now, but back in the day when I had someone work for me I would say that making calls is not hard work at all, my kids can do it. I had a friend of mine do my calls while I was working and I made calls at night when I got home.



So there really was no interviewing for this position, I now do all the calls, less headache with the economy right now I choose to do it.

**WCM:** Do you have crews? How do you organise your workload?

**VG:** I don't have crews, I do have someone that does some of the workload if I cant, I do all the residential myself, usually.

**WCM:** Do you use water fed poles? What equipment do you use most and why?

**VG:** I don't use water fed poles. In the past when I would sub out commercial the guy used water fed but I do windows the old fashioned way with ladders.

**WCM:** What do you think is needed in place for your business to succeed with big bids?

**VG:** An example is the IWCA program that teaches window cleaners the safety of basic window cleaning equipment and chemicals and /or the use of more complicated equipment, including high rise access equipment. You will also gain an understanding on how to assess a job site for hazards and what can be done to



## "... MOST COMMERCIAL BIDDING DOES REQUIRE CERTIFICATION"

overcome hazards. This certified training program is a necessity for window cleaners who are serious about their business.

The IWCA training program is not a requirement, but it would be good to participate in some sort of safety methods of window cleaning for bigger commercial bidding. Ultimately we as window cleaners want to be as safe as we can with any job, big or small.

Most commercial bidding does require some kind of certification depending on how big the job is and Liability insurance. Too many window cleaners are losing their lives everyday due to little mistakes that cost them, that could have been prevented with a little safety course. **REALISTICALLY** I think it should be a requirement for newbies. So, over all success is following the basic guidelines for your business and be professional and have the requirements for the big jobs will get you further.

**WCM: More and more woman are becoming business owners in the window cleaning industry. Why do you think this is?**

**VG:** I have noticed a lot of women that are doing the work or being a boss / owner.

I feel that men have the advantage with the strength and agility with ladders and women are more pristine with detail generally speaking. I can say I do both. There is a lot of work out there for everyone man or woman. If you provide excellent service you will not be replaced.

**WCM: What do you have to say about competition?**

**VG:** Window cleaning goes hand in hand with maid services and throughout the years I have noticed a lot of maid services taking over window cleaning and adding them to there cleaning services and because of that, the price is lower than your average professional window cleaner price. There is a lot of window cleaners out there now, the fact being that a lot of college students, can do it, easy money part time or full time.

Back in the early 90's there was only a handful of window cleaners in my area in Vista, CA, now they are everywhere. Nobody thought, "oh well window cleaning?? You can make money doing that? Yeah right". Well you can make a lot of money doing window cleaning! **BUT YOU HAVE TO PUT THE FOOT WORK IN, ITS NOT GONNA COME TO YOU, IN TIME IT WILL WITH WORD OF MOUTH etc.**

What I see out there now is a lot of maintenance companies adding the service also. I feel the more services you have to offer the more clientele you will get. I did carpet cleaning back in the day, but that is a



huge competitive service and I got out of it because my window cleaning schedule took over.

Adding pressure washing and gutter cleaning to my business is an added plus, but as I say there is a lot of work for everyone out there. Competition we all have to deal with when you have a business, but being good at what you do and as I say **BE NEAT, ON TIME AND DO AN EXCELLENT JOB**. You cant compete with that..

**WCM: Have you found it easy to build your business?**

**VG:** It can takes years to get a good business like this off the ground and for me it didn't come over night. It has been over 20 years and I still have to work hard. My motto is **"BE NEAT AND CLEAN, BE ONTIME, AND ALWAYS HAVE A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND BE READY TO WORK"**. I have developed a great foundation with my customers over the years they are not only my boss/client they are my family. Without my customers I wouldn't be where I am today.

**WCM: What is the hardest part of the job?**

**VG:** The hardest part of the job is to keep your reputation clean and most of all keep your customers happy. Hard work and drive got me to where I am today.



No Streak Window Cleaning  
Eco Clean System

# Pump up the Volume

by Ian Sheppard

This article is based on my observations and discussions with people involved daily in window cleaning and as such I am not setting out to provide definitive answers, but simply trying to get people thinking about how they work and why.

What works for one person may not work for another. This article is about water volume as delivered to the glass, and how much water is needed? Is a fast flow always best? Or should we look at lower flow but greater volume?

Everything that we do as a supplier is based around water delivery to the window, and as such I have been fortunate to gain many insights during the last two years. I would like to share some of these and look forward to continuing to gain and pass on my knowledge and experiences.

I will touch on some of the following points during the article.

- Jets (Pencil-Fan-size-number)
- Hydrophobic Glass/Hydrophilic Glass
- Water Management/Pumped Systems
- Fast water
- Volume to suit the job
- What role does a pump regulator play?
- UK/EU/US technique

Firstly let's touch on the different techniques used across the UK – EU and the US. WFP use in the UK and to an extent in the EU has developed around the need to manage water. Pure water is produced away from the work site using static RO/DI systems. A water tank or barrels of pure water are then transported to site.

Water management carries through the whole ethos of the cleaner where the tendency is to use 2mm jets and brushes with a void - this contains the water within the brush head, the jets help to pressurise the system by creating a restriction at the brush head. Restricting the water with the use of jets reduces the amount of water drawn from the system.

The US cleaner has fewer concerns over water management allowing use of a stand alone on demand RO/DI trolley system which connects into an external water supply at the customer's site. Pressure is now created by the mains water source and the amount of flow becomes dependent on the RO membrane.

In turn, the tendency is for a larger jet or fan jet. In some cases, up to 5mm and the larger jet creates a completely different water pattern when delivered to the glass rather than a smaller jet. We would see a cascade effect with a wider stream of water running down the glass. They are also more likely to use a full flock bristle brush with up to four water jets or fan jets spreading the water wider.

In a nutshell, the US cleaner is delivering water with lower pressure and flow but the same and occasionally a greater volume of water to the glass than their UK counterpart. This higher volume of water delivered to the glass can mean fewer passes of the brush are required to get a good clean. Volume of water then can be more beneficial than running the pump at maximum with high pressured fast water.

What impact then do the jets have in regard to water volume? There is always debate on the forums regard to Pencil and Fan jets. Like many things with WFP there is no absolute right way - only the right tool for the job at hand. This may mean that the ability and flexibility to alter the jets size and type job to job will be very useful.

**Hydrophobic and hydrophilic** glass reacts differently to each other. Water will bead up on hydrophobic glass but naturally sheet on Hydrophilic glass. Fast water from a Pencil jet will generate a very different water pattern to a fan under high pressure and this affect will become more noticeable. The pencil jet can be useful to those who need to conserve water as the restriction allows for less water to be used because it is under pressure. However this fast water hitting the glass hard is bouncing the water around the glass in all directions. This may lead to spotting as the water runs off the glass so quickly that the glass is rinsed only where the jet hits the glass. For those that rinse with the brush off the glass, this fast moving water hitting the window as a jet can create spotting, as dirt is pulled from the area surrounding the window by splashing. A brush with a internal void allows the water to be contained within the brush head reducing the risk of splash back up the window and pulling dirt off the surrounding brick work.

The picture on page 33 shows differing rinse fields of different sized jets on Hydrophilic glass. The picture on the left shows a very narrow rinse field meaning more passes are required to get a good rinse. The picture on the right however shows a larger ID jet with a wider rinse field. The effect of a wider jet and greater water volume means less passes are required.

A fan jet will allow for water moving more slowly and give a wider cascading effect down the glass and in some cases this cascade effect is useful, in particular with Hydrophobic glass, where a pencil jet will see beading of the water droplet and a narrow field of rinse, as seen in this video example of Hydrophobic Glass vs. Hydrophilic Glass .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SORg3AQ8nw>

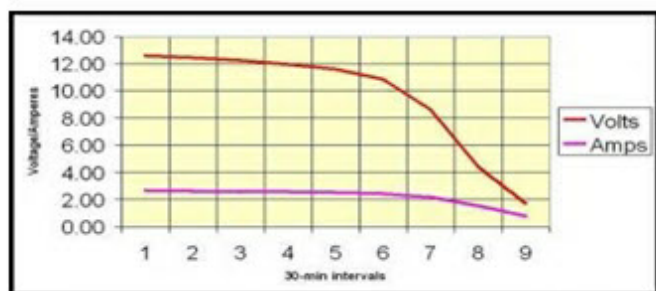
When rinsing **hydrophobic** glass, a slower flow rate with greater volume is likely to see better results and less spotting as the glass cannot fail to be rinsed due to the sheer volume of water. On **hydrophilic** glass water will naturally sheet, making the rinse easier as the water will naturally want to spread out over the glass.



There is an argument then when rinsing hydrophobic glass that greater water volume but travelling slower is advantageous. So this begs the question, what role can a pump regulator play and does the same volume of water need to be delivered to the glass for both the clean and rinse cycle? I'm aware of users who want as much flow and volume as possible at all times, and in effect I am proposing just that, delivering a higher volume at lower pressure. Equally there are those who prefer a lower flow when washing then increasing it for rinsing. The ability to vary the volume delivered can provide a great deal of flexibility.

There are occasions when water mains pressure is not sufficient to generate the required flow with an on demand system. Fitting a pump before the RO is one solution to this, and another advocated is to use DI only as less pressure is lost than through the RO membrane. Once a pump is fitted do we need it to run flat out to generate good volume? We have seen that using pencil jets while running the pump hard will. 1) Mean fast moving water hitting the glass hard and 2) high pressure is created in the system. So what is the effect on the pump and system of this fast moving water? An average 100PSI pump generating 5.2 litres (1.4 US gallons ) a minute is going to draw 6 – 8 amps an hour so in theory a pristine 75AH battery will run your pump for 10 hours? Actually the answer is NO - as the pump draws current from the battery the load increases and the faster the voltage will fall so in reality the time to completely exhaust the battery is less. How much less depends on a number of factors. Not least that the faster the pump is running the less efficient the motor becomes as it heats up. The high pressure created also puts strain on the hose line – connectors and pump motor. Over a prolonged period this set up is likely to reduce life of the battery, pump and other components of your system, with increasing downtime and repair costs.

The chart below clearly shows the rapid drop off in volts as load increases. It is worth noting that with no controller the pump can be drawing 7 to 8 amps an hour reducing the working time per charge.



Considering increasing volume yet at the same time slowing the water down will have the opposite effect of reducing the strain on your system meaning less downtime equals more time working together with increased earnings. Higher volume could mean less time spent per window as less time is spent per window it becomes possible to use the same tank of water to do the same work. How then do we best reduce the water speed, increase water volume and manage the battery? This is where a means to control the water speed is of use. There are a number of ways to achieve this: Manual taps, Pump head recirculation and an electronic controller. Some choose to work with a pump running flat out with the system operating at maximum pressure. My views on this are well stated and as such there is no need to repeat them here. It works for those who choose to work this way but it would not work for all.

My question here is simply, is this the most efficient way of working? Do you need the water flowing fast at all times? In this case there is 4 – 5 litres (1 to 1.3 US gallons) a minute hitting the glass.

While this volume of water can be useful in particular with Hydrophobic glass, is it necessary? When we begin to see that the volume is the key not how fast the pump is working. It is beneficial to the whole system to reduce the pressure, either by means of changing the jets or slowing the pump with an electronic control.

As we establish that the ability to alter water volume delivered to the glass is important, we also need to look at the means to achieve this. There will always be situations where a pump is required even with on demand systems as the water mains may have low pressure. It is about having the tools available when you need them.

An electronic pump controller as mentioned in my article in WCM last year does far more than just adjust pump speed. It will also monitor system pressure, display battery voltage and stop the pump when water stops flowing plus help manage water resources. It is not necessary to run a pump at its maximum to achieve high volumes of water as we have seen there are a number of ways to do that.

If we work on the principle that the pump does not need to be working at maximum why not regulate the pump speed and reduce the current used and thus extend the life of a battery? Slowing the pump will also reduce the pressure in the hose line and connectors - less pressure, less failures reducing down time and costly repairs. A controller allows effective variation of water flow meaning you can adjust the water delivered to the window using a lower volume for a clean and increasing it for the rinse cycle.

I am sure some will say running the pump flat out means you work faster but my question is this, if it takes 19 seconds to clean a window how can having fast water change this? There are physical limitations as to how fast an operator can work.

## “... THERE ARE PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS TO HOW FAST YOU CAN WORK”

There is an argument here that higher water volume may help you work more effectively as the increased water volume and less splashing is likely thus reducing the risk of spotting and may require less passes of the brush.

You can use manual taps or even pump head re-circulation but for me personally, if used in isolation without a pump control, the pump is working at maximum at all times generating maximum pressure in your system as discussed above. The more I understand the cleaning process, the clearer the need to deliver the correct volume of water to the glass becomes, the more I question why run a pump at its maximum all the time. The differing techniques show there is more than one way to achieve high quality results while working efficiently and maximising earnings per job.

Working with high volume will not suit everyone nor indeed should it be used on every job. Managing water can be critical, particularly if you are using a back pack or have a limited supply. However in some cases slowing the pump but increasing the water volume may give you better results while still managing the water as it allows efficient working practice. There is a case for combining tools to give you the versatility to tackle all jobs and still be able to adjust water volume to suit. There are some good quality manual taps on the market - Aqua-dapter and AquaTap to name two. Combine these with different jets and a pump regulator for the best of all worlds. The taps can help give you ease of stopping/starting the water. The control will simply see a dead end and stop the pump. A controller gives the benefit of managing the pump battery, system pressure and water

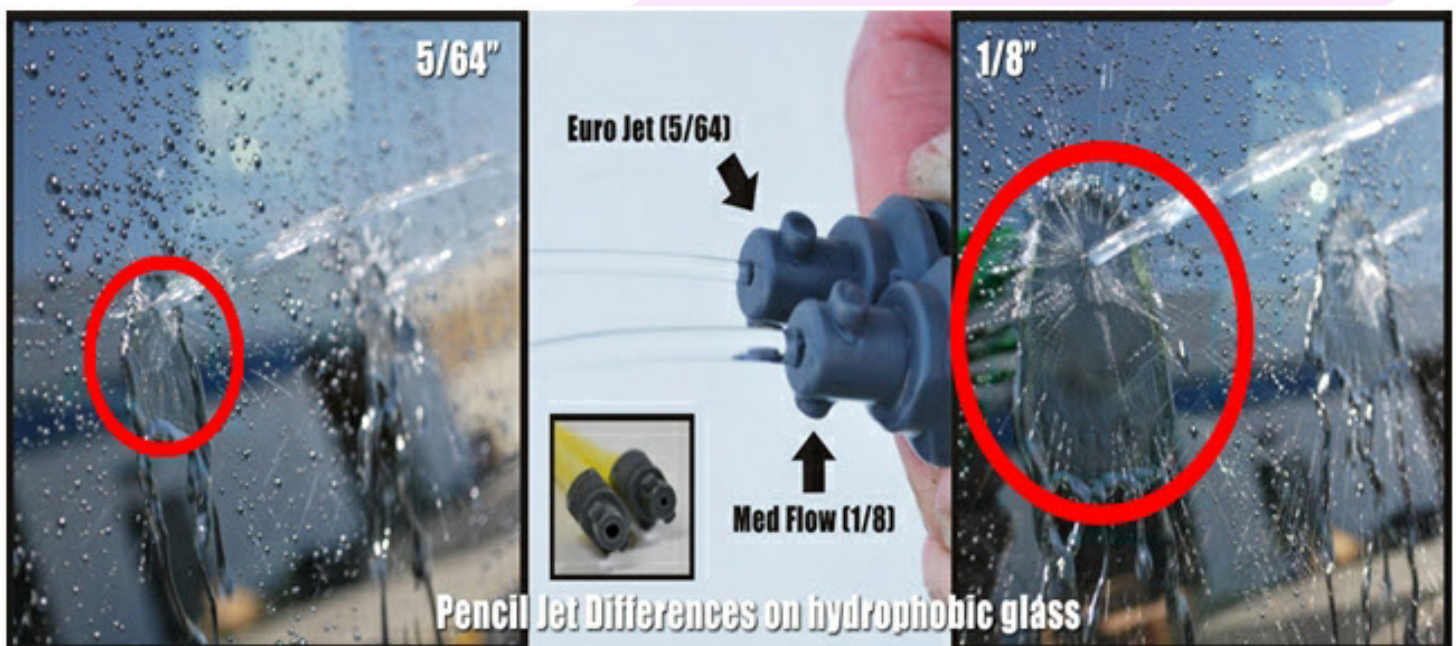
supply and stopping the pump well before the pressure switch is activated thus protecting the whole system while giving maximum versatility.

Increasing the volume of water to the glass will increase the amount of water used marginally however it is far less than some may imagine. The increase can be as little as 0.2 of a gallon (less than a litre) a minute. However this is balanced by the fact that you will be able to rinse using less passes. In reality then water use is not going to change. Plus because we slowed the pump to a point where it only works as hard as required, a slower pump means less water is drawn from the tank.

In summary, water volume delivered to the window and the ability to alter this volume is going to give you a versatile system to suit a wide range of jobs and challenges. This can be done even where water management is important. Windows cleaners worldwide are able to share best practice and offer insights allowing all to examine if they are working as efficiently as possible.

I do not pretend to be a great authority but I do believe in sharing knowledge and getting people asking questions. I hope you have found this interesting and perhaps have you thinking about your own working methods. When it comes down to it there is no absolute right way - only the right way to suit a particular job.

As discussed even this will vary person to person. What is critical to business success is having the right tool at the right time, however you choose to work - have fun out there.





# Street Bidder

# 34

## Leafleting is dead!

**Is it?** Some might agree. It has certainly changed with the introduction of technology such as Street Bidder.

So what is Street Bidder and how is it going to change the way you do leafleting or direct mail campaigns for your window cleaning business?

Josh Latimer of Linden, MI USA designed Street Bidder. The system is already available in the US and is soon to be released in Canada. The UK should see its version probably in a year's time.

I am personally stoked and excited at the potential that Street Bidder could bring to my window cleaning business. So what is it and what does it do? How can it benefit your window cleaning business?

Well let us have a chat with Josh about that....

**WCM: What are the three fundamental elements to Street Bidder? What is it?**

**Josh:** I would say the three core elements are the ability to capture, store, and track everything inside of one app. Street Bidder makes it easy to capture new files. (A file has three main components: 1) A picture 2) An address 3) An approximated price.)

You can gather these elements in about 5 seconds once you're proficient with the app. Storage is everything! Once you create a new file you have it FOREVER safe and sound on our cloud. Any time you want to do a mailing, you simply pull a list of selected files and click send.

Street Bidder tracking allows small businesses to keep an eye on their mailings and track results. How many people called? How many hired? Our app makes it easy to set goals and then work towards them using our postcards.

**WCM: What is unique about Capture New Street Bidder?**

**Josh:** It has never been done before! Never before has there been a lightning fast way to capture AND store information like this. Imagine having 10,000 files of the nicest homes in your hometown. Imagine what that could do for your business? Not only is it a simple way to send mailers but the type of mailers being sent are INSANE. People always notice a picture of their own house.

**WCM: How will this apply to the UK market as opposed to the US with frequency of clean cultures being different?**

**Josh:** I suppose the return on investment will probably be much higher for users in the UK because of the frequency of cleanings. Every single new customer that a small business can gain is critical to that year's bottom line.





*Street Bidder gives you a "never been done before" method of gaining new customers who may have never noticed your company before.*

**WCM:** How long do you keep the data files for?

**Josh:** Forever! As long as you're a Street Bidder subscriber the data is stored. However, we do not require long-term commitments. So if a user decides this is not for them, they can downgrade their account anytime and walk away.

*Potentially we will be storing some users data for decades because it is so valuable to them. Why would someone not want all of those files at their fingertips? It is a powerful weapon to a small business trying to grow.*

**WCM:** Tell us about the free version.

**Josh:** The FREE version is designed for people to have a test drive. It is so users can get in there and understand what the app can do for them. Anyone is welcome to stay a free user as long as they like, however, if you plan on sending at least 200 cards a month then upgrading your account will actually be less expensive.

**WCM:** Tell us how important it is to target your market and how Street Bidder ties into that?

**Josh:** One of the problems with direct mail here in the USA is that when a small company does a mailing, many of the leaflets end up being delivered to vacant homes or unkempt homes etc.... this wastes a lot of money. Street Bidder allows you to literally send only cards to the EXACT people you want! It takes only seconds and costs pennies.

**WCM:** Tell us how you can re-canvass any given area at will?

**Josh:** This is the best part about our app. Our Map Overlay feature (<http://www.flyersaredead.com/mapoverlay>) allows you to "pinch-zoom" into the area you would like to re-canvass and draw a circle around the homes you would like to send to with your finger. Next, the app automatically pulls a list of those homes so you can send a postcard just to those homes only. It's awesome.

**WCM:** Are you a window cleaner? How did you come up with this idea?

**Josh:** I have a window cleaning business in Linden, Michigan USA ([www.birdsbeware.com](http://www.birdsbeware.com)) with 13 full time staff. I started and grew this business using unique and "out of the box" marketing methods. Street Bidder was an idea I wanted for my own personal business and after beginning development on it I realized how many other people could use such a product.



**WCM:** How did you test it? How long did you test it for? What teething problems did you first have getting it to work?

**Josh:** Oh boy! Let me tell you first of all that this was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. I worked harder on Street Bidder the last 11 months than I did on my window cleaning business in 6 years. Technology is cool but developing an app is extremely difficult. Glitches, bugs, issues, frustrations....I have had them all (laughs) I tested it along the way with my own business and then later brought in BETA testers from many states all across our country. Through their feedback we have produced our final app build. We will always be improving and updating but we are now ready for the real users!

**WCM:** What is the expected return compared to straight direct mailing and leafleting?

**Josh:** Very hard to say. Depends on the quantity mailed, the company doing the mailing, the offer, the pricing, the way the calls are handled etc. (laughs) I can tell you this,



**"... THIS IS THE HARDEST THING I HAVE EVER DONE IN MY LIFE"**

*Street Bidder postcards are VERY noticeable. You will get calls.*

**WCM:** Does the system use a street view like you can on Google Earth?

**Josh:** It does not use "Street View" it has more of a top down view of the map. All of the users files are layer out as pins all over this map. To send postcards you simply circle the area your interested in with your finger and BAM! The app automatically pulls a list of all circled files and prepares a mailing immediately.

**WCM:** So your using Street Bidder and you have agreed a tariff. What is the cost for every postcard sent? How does it work?

**Josh:** With our subscription plan in the USA the total cost of our full colour, two sided, glossy postcards including postage is \$0.47. The cost in the UK may be higher or lower we are not sure at this point.

**WCM:** Explain some of the features.

**Josh:** No minimum mailings. No contracts. Fast. Effective. Epic. (laughs)

**WCM:** What is customer feed back on seeing their own home on a postcode through the mail?

**Josh:** Almost all good. People think it is really cool. There were a couple of people not very happy about it too. But the majority loved it. Our app has a built in feature called "Remove From List" that allows you to quickly remove any unhappy homeowners from future mailings. It also flag's the address so you don't accidentally capture it again in the future.

**WCM:** Can Street Bidder be used for commercial buildings?

**Josh:** Sure. Why not? I think it will work really well for

*small time commercial businesses like doctors offices, dentist offices, etc. People notice these cards.*

**WCM:** What other industries can this be used in?

**Josh:** Off the top of my head: Landscaping, Roofing, Home remodelling, handyman services, window installers, painters, and about 1,000 more!

**WCM:** What plans do you have to develop it further?

**Josh:** We have a TON of awesome feature upgrades on the board right now. It will be easy to know which ones to focus on first after getting our early adopters feedback.

**WCM:** How have you promoted this so far?

**Josh:** I have focused on launching this in a very focused and limited way. That way we can get quality feedback from users without being too overwhelmed at first. We have only promoted this so far with [WindowCleaningResource.com](http://WindowCleaningResource.com), a couple press releases, and word of mouth.

**WCM:** Why will the UK have to wait a year to see this?

**Josh:** If I lived in the UK then the USA would be waiting a year! (Laughs) Seriously though, I'm not sure it needs to be that long. We need to have a solid foundation laid before we start integrating with printers in other countries. As soon as we are ready to handle the volume we will release in the UK. Believe it or not it will not take all that much to bring it to you guys and it may be much sooner than you think.

**WCM:** The phone will be ringing off the hook by the sounds of it after using this system.

**Josh:** Street Bidder is a tool to make your phone ring. We don't want to overcomplicate the initial purpose of this app. We want to focus intently on making it easy to capture new files and send cards. We also want to offer amazing template varieties so users have a full arsenal of postcard designs to work with.

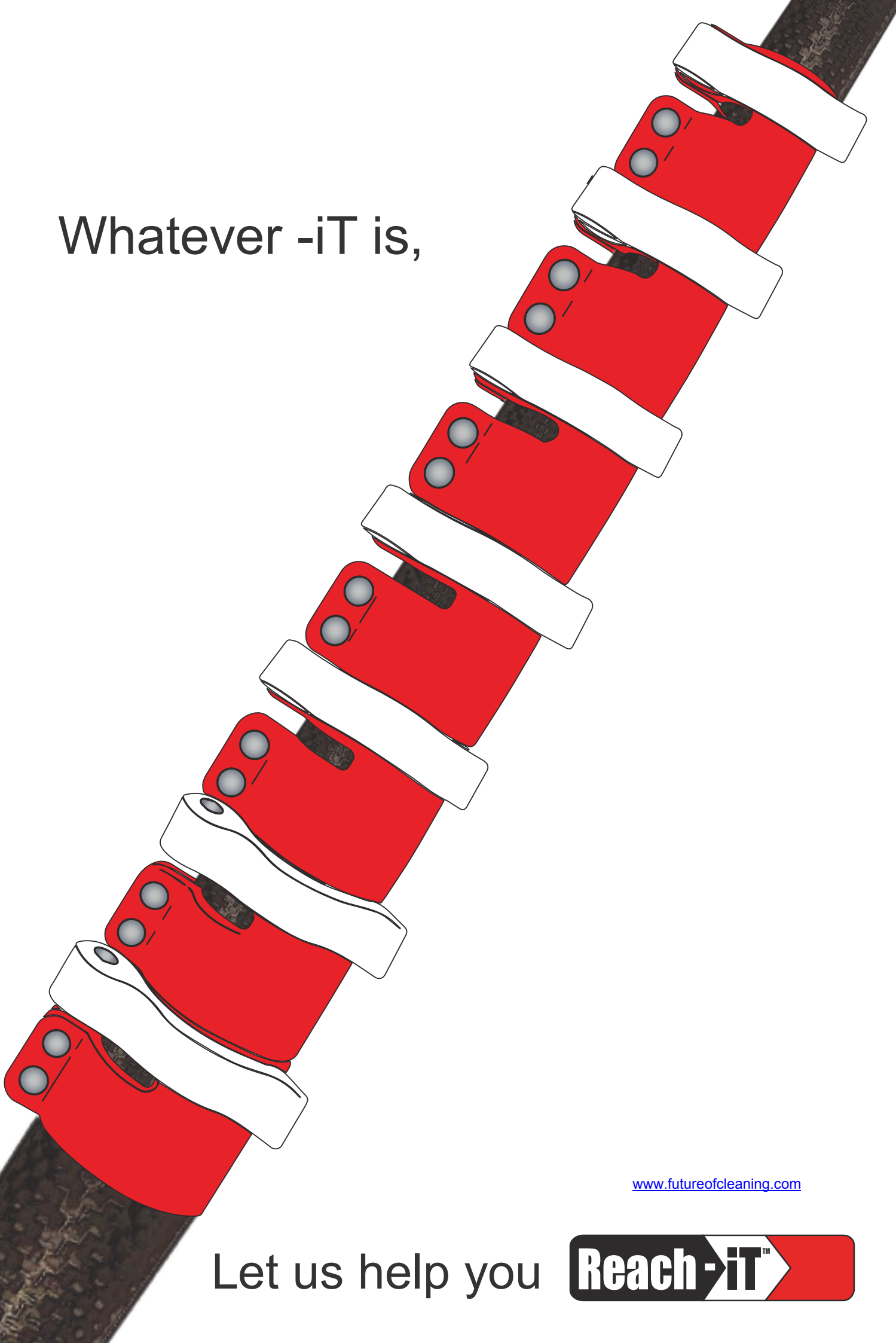


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Let us help you





# Window Cleaning Company of The Year



Manchester based Archer window cleaning services has won 'Window Cleaning Business of the Year for 2013', a new award handed out by the FWC at this years Cleaning Show.

Businesses were asked to nominate themselves for the award. Initially reluctant, Chris Oakes the owner of Archer Window Cleaning, was persuaded by the FWC to go ahead and nominate his business. With nothing to lose he filled in the forms and posted them off not expecting to hear any more. He was required to state when he started and how his business had progressed and thoughts for the future.

Chris started window cleaning at the age of 12. He initially started with his uncle and had his own round a few years later. When he was 17 he had to sell his round in order to purchase a pram for his newborn. His uncle gave him some timeless advice. "If you are filling a bathtub and the plug is not in you will never fill it up". What he was saying, in essence, was plug any holes in your finances and put some money away each week and you'll be able to buy your next round quite soon.

5 years ago he branched out into WFP window cleaning. He attended training courses and purchased a trailer system from Ionics, all for one £30 contract. The WFP

work came in thick and fast and he soon outgrew the trailer. A van was bought, then a larger van again. Soon he was needing extra vans on the road just to cater for the demand that was there for his services. His philosophy is simple, do a good job, take your time and don't take any risks. From that he has built up a very good reputation. He refuses to undercut or poach work, a common issue in the North West.

"I'm thinking about how to progress 24/7, always trying to find ways to move things forward getting better work" Richard told WCM when we called him. "When I quote a job I price it to clean it properly, you can't take a contract on at a low price just to get the job and then rush to complete it in the time you have allowed. Price comes first, get that right and you can go in and do a good job"

Archers are CHAS and Safe Contractor accredited and take H&S seriously.

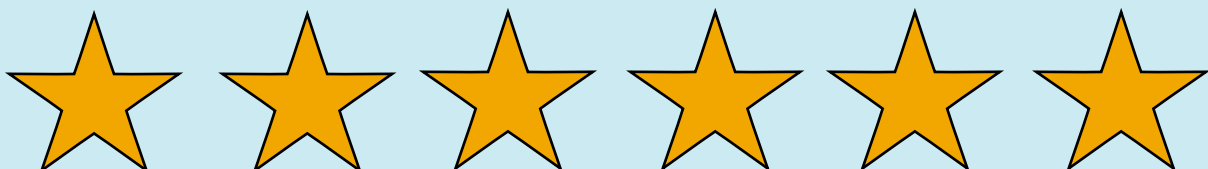
"What do you think about the FWC?" I ask Chris. His answer is interesting and will be included in our FWC special edition.

"Why Archer Window Cleaning?" I enquire



Chris has proven that you can build a successful business from nothing.

**Can your company be 'Window Cleaning Business of the Year 2014'?**







"The accountant asked me to come up with something as a business name, I only had a couple of days and couldn't think of anything. As I lived on Archer Avenue at the time I chose that. I think that the figure of the archer on the side of the van really stands out. They may forget the name but they remember the figure of the Archer" Chris replies, clearly pleased with his choice of name. I have to concur, I like it.

He keeps clear of the tag lines such as 'We aim to please' or 'We hit the target'. He's not a fan of such things. A new website is due, "All singing and all dancing" he tells me. They offer multiple services such as Jet washing and cladding cleaning. As many business are wanting a one-stop shop, if they want the service Archer's can provide it.





A photograph of two women sitting behind a counter in a shop. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a white patterned top. The woman on the right has short reddish hair, wears glasses, and a white patterned top. They are both smiling at the camera. Behind them are shelves stocked with various cleaning products and tools, including bags of powder, bottles of liquid, and brushes. A large red number '40' is overlaid in the top right corner of the image.

# 40

# The History of Corwood & Co

*By Victoria Elliott*

Corwood & Co was established in 1948 by Derrick Corwood. It was born into the industry as a small one man window cleaning service to local residents and since then has grown into a large independent maintenance service specialising in window cleaning and gutter cleaning.

In the late 50s' Derrick opened the window cleaning shop in Northwich which was available to local window cleaners, providing they were a member of the National Federation of Window Cleaners. This was a shrewd idea to protect to the integrity of the trade by which to be a member you would need to be fully insured through the Federation and part of a community of window cleaners who would not take work from each other without permission.

This started a whole new era in window cleaning and protected one another's businesses. Without being a member this would make things very difficult to buy trade equipment as this was long before the days of internet shopping! Derrick manufactured his own window cleaning pockets, janitorial overalls & window cleaners jackets of which were a unique design.

Today Corwood & Co is still heavily involved in the manufacturing of window cleaning equipment. They are believed to be one of, if not the only UK manufacturer in handmade rat tail mops.

Over the past few years the shop has evolved into a e-commerce success selling the best window cleaning equipment the trade has to offer with the honesty promise on each product. Corwood believe that if a

product is not the very best available, they will be honest and tell their customers and with a reason to suit. The majority of the products are tried and tested by Corwood's own operatives before they are sold to other window cleaners so that their judgement is based on experience.

Corwood & Co are all things window cleaning; today they employ a skilled team of operatives who work all over the North West of England, most of which have a minimum of 10 year's experience in the trade. They also offer an advice line, where window cleaners can speak to Corwood staff who are window cleaners alike not only having vast knowledge in window cleaning equipment, but actually in practice being window cleaners themselves. Corwood see this as an advantage against other retailers as a lot of window cleaning equipment providers cannot offer the level of expert advice in which they can, experience that can only be gained in cleaning windows over a 65 year period.

WCM interviewed Paul McCarthy the current MD of Corwood & Co.

**Preparation for winter, is hot water the answer?**

*People put them in the van, I think they don't need to do anything, but there are loads of steps you can do, draining the pump, draining the hose and making everything quick fit so you can quickly disconnect and take it indoors. If you do those things, half the time I don't think you need a heated system, which sounds daft as I'm selling them.*

## "I LIKE STRESS, I LIKE PUSHING MYSELF.."

*Were not like that here we won't sell you something you don't need.*

*We have vans going out all year and we've coped, you can start a bit later maybe starting doing the insides and go outside when it's warmed up a bit. Instead of not doing ANY work, work around what you've got. Cover stuff up, draining the water is really important.*

### How do your guys get around the issue of ice on the floor?

*We carry rock salt. We have pallets of the stuff outside, they just scoop some and put it on the ground. Another thing is we clean the doors the traditional way. Any entrance area, we blade them.*

*Hot water is great for first cleans, we do loads of schools and a lot of them you're lucky if you get to do them three times a year most are once a year, what with the budget cuts, hot water is great for cutting through the grease and dirt and bird muck. For monthly cleans, this weather, you don't need a hot water system. In some parts of the country they are handy what with the microclimates but for most cases, look to the future and plan ahead. The good thing with the portable heaters is they aren't a lot of money compared to the £2.5k you pay for the diesel ones. You have to drain the system if it's freezing outside, so many times we have people phone up and say the system has a split. First question "Did you drain it?"*

### How many vans do currently have going out, and how long have you been in window cleaning?

*We have vans out at the moment, let me think how long have I been window cleaning? I'm 21 now....*

### It's a shame this isn't video you look at least 23....

*No, I'm 40 now, best part of 20 years. I studied engineering at college and realised it wasn't for me. I started on my own on the big estate I lived on. I worked with Dougie Rainford*



*a bit and branched out on my own. Built up my own work and had a couple of lads working for me. Dougie sold up and went to Benedorm and I bought his round. Kept building up and building up. It was a bit of a niche. It was like the best kept secret, no one was doing it. Now well its getting ridiculous everyone's at it.*

### How has that affected your business?

*I like stress, I like pushing myself. If we don't get a contract I want to know why and I keep pushing for that contract. We persevere. It's not helping though for sure, at first it was guys that had just been made redundant, they bought a window round. Then you could buy window rounds for three times the monthly value. A lad phoned up the other day wanting to know if I was interested in his round. He wanted £40k for it and it brought in £3800 per month. Wanting 10x the value. Unbelievable, your having a laugh right. If it's that much of a gold mine why are you selling it anyway?*

### Do you think he'll get it? I might sell mine for 10x's the value and do something else for a bit.

*I doubt it. If people pay it they are either desperate or mad.*

### How did you get involved in Corwood & Co?

*I'd built up a big round and this place came up for sale, the owner Barry Corwood passed away. I'd built up some money so I bought it. Then a business in Crewe came up for sale. Paul Taylor had built up a decent round. He was Corwood's competition and there was lot of commercial, so I bought that as well. I think I've struck lucky in some ways.*

### And still growing, how about new starters?

*The business has gone from strength to strength, as regards to window cleaners coming in, some stay some go. It doesn't affect us very much with regard commercial what with Health & Safety, Risk Assessment and insurance. On top of that we are a good business with how we present ourselves. So new starters don't bother us that much.*



*Domestic is different, we have been affected. When you have even a long standing customer and someone comes along and offers to do it for half the price, you just can't compete with that. We are paying PAYE, VAT and we just can't compete on price.*

*Sometimes they come back. Maybe the new guy has turned up with his shirt off, then maybe breaks a pot or something like that. Then the customer might return.*

**In the Gold Rush the people who made the money were those who sold the shovels not the prospectors. Is that where the money is?**

*It's a difficult situation for me, I'm selling people the tools to take work of me so it's a bit tricky as we have the shop and clean. When Mr Corwood had the business initially he would only sell to those who were in the Federation, you had your membership and the code that said you wouldn't go for any other members work. Now it's completely different. It's every man for himself.*

**What would you say the percentage of sales is with WFP and traditional customers?**

*It varies from month to month but it's about 50/50 at the moment.*

**How has it changed over the years?**

*I bought the first system around here from OTT, now Ionics and I didn't know much about them at the time, ironically the system froze but that's another story. Now I could make them in my sleep. There's not much to them really when you break it down. A pump, battery and a bit of hose and that's about it. You can over complicate them I think. How they can be sold for the price I don't get it. A few filters and resin and you've about got it really.*



**What about PPB?**

*It's either pure or it's not.*

**For glass that has not been cleaned for years I believe it really is effective, but maintenance cleans I can't see the point. What do you think?**

*There's too much psycho-babble going about. If you have a guy with the top of the range system and a guy in a van that has a system he's put together himself. Would the customer know the difference with the finish? I doubt it.*

**Back to hot water, what do you think to the systems that tick over during a frost?**

*They seem to work really well but drain the battery something chronic, you have a working system but often can't start the van in the morning.*

**What do you think about the guys that put emersion heaters in the tank?**

*There are so many DIY things happening. Who am I to judge, if you had loads of money to throw at things we'd all have the best of everything. If you haven't got that money and the emersion heater works for you, fair play to you. As long as it's safe that's the important thing. Get it on its own loop, but you have to be very careful. Once guys find out it's OK to do that there will be every Tom Dick and Harry doing it. There are lots of really good DIY guys out there who know what they are doing but it's the ones who don't have a clue that need to worry, you know they see it and say "I can do that" then it's Red to Red, Green to Green and Blue to bits!!*

**Do your vans all have hot water?**

*No, a couple have it but we don't use it unless it is specifically asked for, or a job really calls for it, such as hospitals that get done once a year.*

**Do you have any other winter prep suggestions?**

*Some of our guys empty the hose fully. In the frost you may get the pump going and frost free but the hose can freeze very quickly empty it at night. While you're working have the system running and connect the hose back to the tank. Water freezes slower with moving water.*

**What is the benefit of still being out on the glass for you?**

*We know what works and what doesn't. Sometimes guys phone up wanting something and we have to tell them not to bother with it, it doesn't work in the real world. Because*

## "SERIOUSLY, YOU'RE ASKING ME HOW TO CLEAN WINDOWS?"

we are out in the field we know what works well and what doesn't. Some of the products out there are made by people who have never been window cleaners, they don't have a clue. There are products out there, there's just no need for them so we don't sell them. It's great when people come in and say "What do you think?" we can tell them because we use the equipment. When you are out there you pick up so many tips to make life easy. We know what works and what doesn't.

### What do you do with the hose, in or out?

We much prefer fixed hose in the van, there is no messing with the hose falling over. The only issue is security, I'd rather they be locked but on balance like the hose fixed preferably to the tank. We have one on the back and one on the side so they can be pulled both ways.

### What vans do you run.

Renault Traffic and VW Transporter on contract hire, swapping them every 2 years.

### Where is Corwoods going over the next year or so?

To the top! The shop is going really well, there are lots of shops shutting down and we have folk calling from all over the place. There's not much stuff we don't have. You can walk away with everything you need. We are cheaper on most products than many other suppliers.

As for the window cleaning, it's been going for 60 years, we have some customers that have been with corwood for 40 years, they keep coming back. We're honest, we've walked off some jobs because they have asked us to do things that are unsafe. We just don't do it and we will say so. We also have a policy of rectifying any issue within 24 hours.

Everyone has an off day and if one of our lads does a bad day we just go back and sort it. It happens.

As for the shop it's not been a core business but now it's getting to the point where it's getting there. We need to start to get more staff, its self sustained and generating good profit. We've been online just two years and it's going well. We are looking into producing our own pole in the future as well so we have fingers in many pies. If we could manufacture every product we would, I don't like middlemen.

### Will there always be a need for the traditional equipment or will it fade out?

There will always be a need. Insides and even lads on ladders, they will still do it. It is reducing though.

WFP or Traditional, you know, it's not a case of it's either one or the other. Sometimes it's quicker and safer to do it traditional. If it is, then do it traditional.

### What irritates you?

Customers who try to dry off the windows when they've been WFP cleaned. Just leave it, it will dry trust me!

Guys that don't know how to use traditional equipment, I don't understand it. They've only ever used the pole and they ask me "How do your guys clean the insides?"

What!

Seriously, you're asking me how to clean windows, and you've been doing it for years and you don't know how to use a squeegee?



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

## SPECIAL OFFER

To existing customers and readers of Window Cleaning Magazine

# "DEAL OF THE MONTH"

1 x Shurflo pump 8000-946-138 100 psi for..... £52.00!! (+ Delivery & VAT)

This offer can only be redeemed by telephoning 0160643351 and quoting 'SEPTOF752'

Offer is subject to stock! Can be bought in multiples! **Was £80 + Vat**







# Window Cleaning in the Redneck Riviera

*Brit window cleaning in the USA. Informative and  
very funny: **Watch this film here >>>***



Picture gallery







## Soapbox

# 45

If you wish to write in and share your knowledge or experience or you would like to respond to any letters here or to any article or subject discussed in this magazine, then feel free to send your copy and/or pictures to:

[info@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk)

Hi

*Am I allowed to remove a house martins nest that is attached to a window that I need to clean?*

*All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law: the Wildlife & Countryside Act of 1981. This makes it an offence, with certain exceptions, to deliberately take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.*

*It is also illegal to take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. You can remove nests if you need to do maintenance work or painting, but it is illegal to do this whilst the birds are building or using them.*

*When can this be done?*

*Because they usually have at least two lots of young, sometimes three if conditions are favourable, their nests contain either eggs or chicks from May until August. Even in September there may be a few nests still in use. If necessary, when the birds have left in September/October and it is clear that these nests are no longer in use, they can then be removed.*

*A friend had his van stolen and the payout is way lower than the 'real' value of the van, over £4k less! As the van was paid for via a loan he has the crazy situation of negative equity. His loan is for more than the payout! What can I do to ensure that I'm not out of pocket if I need to replace mine like for like?*

*Phil from Sheffield*

It's a good question Phil, often when we drive a new van off the forecourt it immediately depreciates. If it is stolen a year later there will be a gap between the payout and the replacement value. Even with an older van, the amount that the insurance company offer and the cheque you receive never equate to each other.

The answer is to buy 'Gap Insurance'. You may have been pressured into taking it out before you left the forecourt. It would be a better option to refuse that insurance and speak to a broker or search for 'Gap Insurance' on-line. You will find pages of companies that can help you bridge the gap and not leave you in the same situation as your friend.

For further information [click here](#)

Contributors please note -

Submissions to the SOAPBOX section of the magazine will soon be able to submit their letters via our submission form within the members area of the magazine which is currently being given a makeover.

Contributors who would like to submit articles can also do so via the members area or via the email address opposite.

Great ideas put forward from readers. Tell us what you think.

- Create an FWC section.
- From the forums section covering key points of interest.
- More information on Health & Safety.
- News on free business workshops.
- Twitter section "best quotes".





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**Coming Soon**  
to the Window Cleaning Supply Store



## Rapid pole wear - how to avoid it

By Wagga.

“ ... JOB DONE! ... ”

You get your nice new ultra light carbon fibre pole. It's a beauty and it makes so much difference to your work, you wonder why you didn't get one years ago. The only downside is that it cost you so much. Still, there's no doubt that it was worth it, after all you have to spend money to make money.

If you are anything like me, I get excited about getting new kit and can't wait to try it out. So there you are giving your new pole a good work out and for a while it's great but not long down the road it's worn out.

You will for a while be able to compensate for this wear by adjusting the clamps but gradually, it comes to the point where it will need new clamps. When you get the new clamps everything is fine again for a while but inevitably, you will have to buy a new pole.

There are times when I think that for the money, it really should last longer. Are there ways to make it last longer or is it just “penny pinching?” I've said it before that window cleaning is not so much about saving money, but more about making money. When you consider the cost of a carbon fibre pole however, it might not be penny pinching any more.

What, if anything can be done to make a carbon fibre pole, or any pole for that matter, last longer and is it worth bothering? Of course a lot depends on how much the pole is used and how.

Most of us have our poles set up in the same way. The hose goes right up the middle and comes out at the brush with various types of trigger to turn the water on and off or even have a remote device for this but either way, the hose goes right up the middle. So why might this be significant?

Consider this. Did you ever think about the pole hose dragging on the ground and picking up all that dirt, even in summer? I say summer because almost as much as winter, that hose will pick up dirt because it will constantly be wet and dragging on the floor. All that dirt and grit will be transferred into the pole and act like sand paper to all the moving parts and especially the clamps.

You could wash out the pole every day but this is impractical and it's not going to be effective enough anyway. Or you could have the hose on the outside of the pole. It's not going to be practical for all poles but mainly for the smaller ones that get a lot of use, say for domestic rounds.

The advantages of placing the hose on the outside for a start means that very little dirt ever gets inside your very expensive carbon fibre pole. The tap is permanently attached to the pole and is always just where you want it. You have NO trailing loop

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dragging along the ground getting snagged on anything and everything. Your connections are on the pole and not dragging on the ground so they also last indefinitely. The trailing loops are actually transferred to the top two or three sections of pole (I have not tried a 5 section pole with this method as yet) and in this way are out of the way.

So, the pole lasts longer because it will stay much cleaner. Some dirt will inevitably get onto it but nothing like the amount being stuffed up the back end like before.

If you are going to try this, I recommend that you source the same type of hose for your pole as I have. It's a silicon based hose which I got from a pet shop. It's flexible and very light and ideal for this modification. If you are working with a pressure higher than 80psi, I would not use it since it is possible to balloon.

The only downside I have encountered with this method is that it is possible for the loops to snag on conservatory finials or on uneven tiles sometimes but there are ways to avoid this most of the time.

Doing this has made my poles last longer without a doubt and now that I have got used to using this method, I can honestly say that I can't go back to the old method. If you want to give it a try, I have recorded a video on the subject so the idea can be explained in a much easier way.

So if you want to try this, have a look at the vid. You never know, it could save more than just a few pennies. Click here to view video: <http://goo.gl/pbdpn>



# spring pro Water fed pole pump controller



- Copes easily with demanding daily use ○
- Extends the life of resin cartridges ○
- Controls water flow accurately and dependably ○
- Dead-end detection saves battery power and extends life of pump ○
- Displays battery voltage ○
- Unit is sealed to IP64, stopping water ingress ○
- Easy to use and simple to install ○

A tried and tested design from pole-fed specialists, the eco flow has been developed by window cleaners in the field who know what they want from a window-cleaning product.

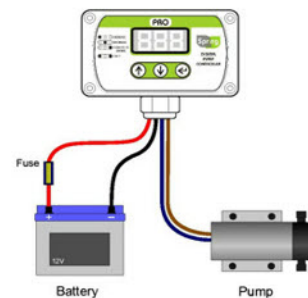
The use of a pump controller significantly reduces wear on the pump, especially when compared to a flow restrictor. Reducing pump speed reduces power used and mechanical wear.

Dead end detection detects when water flow is restricted (i.e. when the pole has been disconnected from the hose) and safely shuts down the pump, further reducing power and wear. Simply reconnect the pole and the pump will start up again.

Fine control of the flow rates means water use is kept to a minimum, allowing you to complete more jobs on the same tank, as well as being eco friendly. Less water uses less resin, which extends the life of your resin cartridges.

The three button interface is simple and intuitive to use.

The battery voltage is available at the touch of a button. Advanced features will shut down the unit when the battery is too low, preventing irreversible battery damage.



Electrical Specification	Value	Mechanical Specification	Value
Supply Voltage	7-18V	Enclosure material	ABS
Maximum drive current	10A	Water resistance	IP64
Typical drive current	2-3A	Dimensions (mm)	115x65x40
Working temperature	-5 to 40C	Voltmeter accuracy	+/- 200mV

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**Window Cleaning magazine**

P.S. WCM readers benefit from a discounted joining fee – use referral code

WCM25 when you apply for an account to save £25! (Normal price to join Payatrader is £99)

# Behind the picture



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This is a new feature where we find interesting window cleaning related pictures on the net and get the story behind that picture. This issue we feature Marc Stow from 'Wash N Go With Stow' ([www.marcstow.vpweb.co.uk](http://www.marcstow.vpweb.co.uk)) and his picture of him window cleaning a red British telephone box.

"Where misfortune meets opportunity", that's when it all started for me, 28 year old Window Cleaner Marc Stow.

Growing up in a small Essex village opportunities were few and far between, fast forward to adulthood I find myself on the borders of West Essex/East London after moving in with my now Wife, opportunities became a Pick 'n' Mix.

After a dabble in car mechanics and valeting at a small sports car dealer life decided to push me in a corner. With very little savings, an 11-month-old Son and a girlfriend in hospital there looked like there was no way out. After lengthy discussions it was decided the way out was up, up a ladder that was.

After 2 years of working for two totally different window cleaning firms it was soon apparent to me that this was something I could do for a very long time.

When it was time to go it alone I knew the idea of 'stack them high, sell them cheap' was something that didn't suit me. I wanted to offer more of a premium service. I had to find something that local window cleaners couldn't offer.... ME!

I decided to take more time to get to know my customers, meeting there needs and pricing accordingly. This in return has given me two things;

1) A secure customer base that isn't going to fold next time a 'beer money' window cleaner turns up.

2) Opens the door to 'value add'. This picture is all about this very thing, not only do I clean the phone box for the customer but also a 4 bed house every month, tend to the garden 2-3 times a month and pressure clean the decking and patio every year, teas and coffees are always available and Christmas doesn't go un-noticed. So what next?

After recently introducing water fed pole into my round a lot more focus will be on this, but with over 7 years under my belt I look forward to the next 7 years and the opportunities it will bring.

*A quick thanks to Lee Burbidge and the Window Cleaning Magazine for giving me the chance to share my story.*



**Seen an interesting picture online related to window cleaning?**

**Why not tell us about it and we'll try to feature it in a future issue of**

**Window Cleaning** magazine

Contact: [Lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk](mailto:Lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk)



# Darron's Story

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***How his life changed after window cleaning accident***

It's a warm late summer's day and I'm hanging around the car park desperately hunting the elusive vacant space. The Northern General in Sheffield is not the best place in the world to find somewhere to park on a busy Tuesday afternoon.

I see a visitor, keys in hand, unlock their car. I quickly but silently nudge my car toward the soon to be vacant spot. A few minutes later happily parked I'm making my way to Osbourne Ward, a specialist spinal unit to visit and interview Darron Mothersby. Once on Osbourne 3 I don the required gloves and disposable apron and patiently hover outside Darron's bay.

"Cardiology?" a nurse enquires.

"No just a visitor for Darron" I reply "Although if you're short staffed I'll give it a go".

The nurse chuckles "It's the shirt and tie that does it, we don't get that many unless they are visiting Darron".

I have the view that 'dressing up' when visiting not only give the patient dignity but also says to the staff, "This patient is a special person, treat him well" Inevitably it works!

Darron was just having physiotherapy so I lingered outside until I got the 'all-clear'. He looked tired, physio had left him a little spent. He went on to say that he took ill on Friday and had spent 3 days asleep. Today was his first day out of bed since then.

Within a matter of minutes he was his usual self, no doubt making the extra effort for my sake.

"I saw your blog, 'The Most Positive Man I Know' I'm not sure that describes me very well. Either that or you really need to get out more" Darron's self-effacing humour is delightful and his gentle dig quite heart warming.

Darron's first concern is how MY family are doing. He reminds me that he's yet to meet my daughter and we agree that when he is out we will all visit, including Jimmy our dog. We chat about his upcoming pacemaker change and other medical issues for a short while. Darron tells me that he's been feeling quite 'down' as his move back home is not going as quickly as he had hoped. He still needs adequate accommodation which is proving difficult to find. Added to that he still requires a respirator and if he returns home with one he will have to have a nurse living with them full time. I decide that the question "Are you prepared for Hull City to be relegated" is a little premature so get straight into the questions about his fund for the specialist chair he needs.

**How is the fund going for the chair?**

*Very well, it's up to nearly £10,000. The rep from the wheelchair company is due on 11th Sep to test out one of the head control chairs and basically to see what my needs are because these chairs are quite bespoke. All we*



*have been told is that these chairs start at £15,000 and depends on what you need.*

**So it's entirely possible you will need more than the £15,000 initial target?**

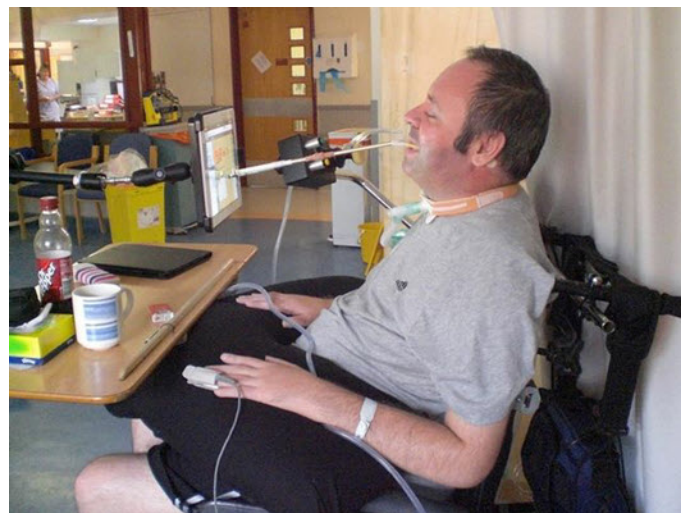
*Yes, we've been told by one of the guy's downstairs who deals with buying wheelchairs that it could be as much as £17-18,000. We just don't know exactly what I need. If we can reach £15,000 we will be really, really happy.*

**How are people helping to raise the money, I understand Jason Fanthorpe is running a half marathon?**

*There are about four Brothers\* including Jason and Lynn my sister-in-laws brother who are doing it. There is also a Brother who has Spina Bifida and is in a wheelchair who is doing it as well (Brendan O'Keefe). There is a park in Hull where the circuit is exactly 1 mile and they will be going around that 13 and a bit laps. They have had to postpone it as Brendan has been unwell, so they are just waiting for him to feel better. I'm not 100% sure what has been pledged but I think it's close to £1000 so that's great.*

(\*Brothers. Darron and his family are Jehovah's Witnesses and in this case the term Brothers is the non-gender specific name that is used for any fellow Witnesses. The full list of runners is Jason Fanthorpe, Chris Wormald, Matthew Dungworth, Brendan O'Keefe, Luke Holmes and Ben Thomas)

*A few have arranged garden parties which have raised quite a lot as well. It's been amazing how it has spread, it started with one thing here in Sheffield and it has spread exponentially like it has its own life. We were looking on the Facebook page the other day and there was a girl on*



*there who said they had spent some time on Osbourne 1 themselves and she was now spreading the word to her friends in Tennessee. So you just think where is this going to end?*

**That's a really positive use of the internet. You are working toward getting back home, how is that going?**

*They are putting together a team of social workers and discharge nurse that are in contact with the Hull side of things and they are starting to put together a package of what I will need. The problem is that things are in flux at the moment and my needs may change after I've had the MRI scan. They have even said if there is fluid on my spine and it is affecting certain areas, if they shunt the fluid around so other areas there may be a possibility of some movement. They don't know but things have happened in the past and I'm not getting my hopes up at all on that. I'd be happy if they can sort my breathing problems and my swallowing problems, I'm missing my curries and chocolate. I've been 'nil-by-mouth' for 10 weeks today. The thought of going home and not being able to go out and have a meal, it's such a social thing, that would mean so much to me to eat meals again and breath normally.*

**You have a different pacemaker fitted Thursday which will enable you to have an MRI scan.**

*Changing from a Timex to a Rolex. We'll then see what the result is and move forward. The doctors are at the point where they will try anything to try to get me sorted out.*

**What is your window cleaning history?**

*When I left school I did a course in Retail Education and did a few placements in shops. I did a YTS placement and was really good with retail. I had the gift of the gab, I had placements in clothe shops, record shops and a Hi-Fi shop.*







*The placements didn't seem to be going anywhere so during a lunch break I went into a local bakery and asked if they had any jobs going and they had. I did that for a few months then went to work in a clothes shop. The clothes shop was great because you could wear the clothes. As long as when you put them back they were clean you could get away with it. Not so good for the people buying them but great for us.*

*Then I got offered a window cleaning round. I mentioned it to my dad and he said not to buy it because I wouldn't last 2 weeks, I was too lazy he said. So to prove him wrong I bought it. And subsequently on the anniversary of buying it, every year, I reminded him how long two years had lasted. I've been doing it 27 years. I really liked doing a good job and chatting to the customers.*

**I can imagine you got on really well with your customers.**

*I never refused a cup of tea. It was better years ago when more people were in. What you find now is that many of the women of the house are working and the gates are locked and you have to jump over gates. It's not so bad when you're 19 but when you're in your 40's and the belly is starting to stick out it gets a bit trickier. I enjoyed window cleaning. It's not great when it's snowing and freezing but all in all I enjoyed it.*

**Can you tell us about how the accident happened?**

*It was a regular house with an extension, a flat roof and an attic window that was accessed from the top of the flat roof. Once every other month I cleaned the attic window by lifting my ladders onto the flat roof. With flat roofs you have to be careful not to damage them. I had a piece of wood to save damaging the roof. It had been fine for a couple of years then one day I went as normal but the ladder slipped and the momentum carried it across the gravel and it went over and off the extension. The crazy thing is when the ladder slipped at first I landed on my feet on the extension. I stood up and thought wow....*

*The problem was my feet were still between the rungs and the ladders kept going and pulled me backwards over for about the last 12 foot. I actually landed on my feet on the extension and when you think what could have happened if the ladder had stopped, you would think that was fortunate, but it didn't it kept going and pulled me with it and I hit the garage on the way down and as they say the rest is history.*

*It was a climb I'd done dozens and dozens of times with no problems and I couldn't see how this one could have been any different, but it was.*

**What keeps you positive?**

*My faith is the main thing but my family have been outstanding, absolutely outstanding. And what the congregation, my congregation and the congregation here have done has just blown me away. The thing about it is, it hasn't tailed off. If anything it's speeding up, I'm getting more cards, more visitors and people are doing more for my family. That has really spurred me on, not only how I have been helped but how my family have been helped has been outstanding.*

**You've never been short of visitors I hear.**

*About a week or so ago we had 13 people turn up at once, we had to work out a shift system 4 at a time. Some went down for a coffee and 4 at a time came in to see me. It was incredible. As soon as there are visitors here I love it I really enjoy it. They are very good here, it should be 2 to a bed but they don't mind. One day I had 7 hours of continuous visitors, one after another. I was exhausted afterwards but it really boosted me.*

*There have been well over 100 people from this area who have visited me who never knew me before the accident. It's been truly amazing.*

**Are your fellow patients jealous of all your visitors?**

*A few weeks ago someone did ask about all the visitors and asked if there was someone famous on the ward they had come to see. Infamous maybe but not famous. That has really helped, there has been a good network of support along with my faith.*

**I saw a picture of you using the i-pad, that's progress for you.**

*Yes that's great, it's like getting your hands back. What it means is that I can write emails and can say things that are a bit more private, rather than dictating it to someone else. I can reply to them personally, so that's been good for me. Things are progressing, if I can get the chair as well it will be really fantastic.*

**Thank you so much for the interview Darron**

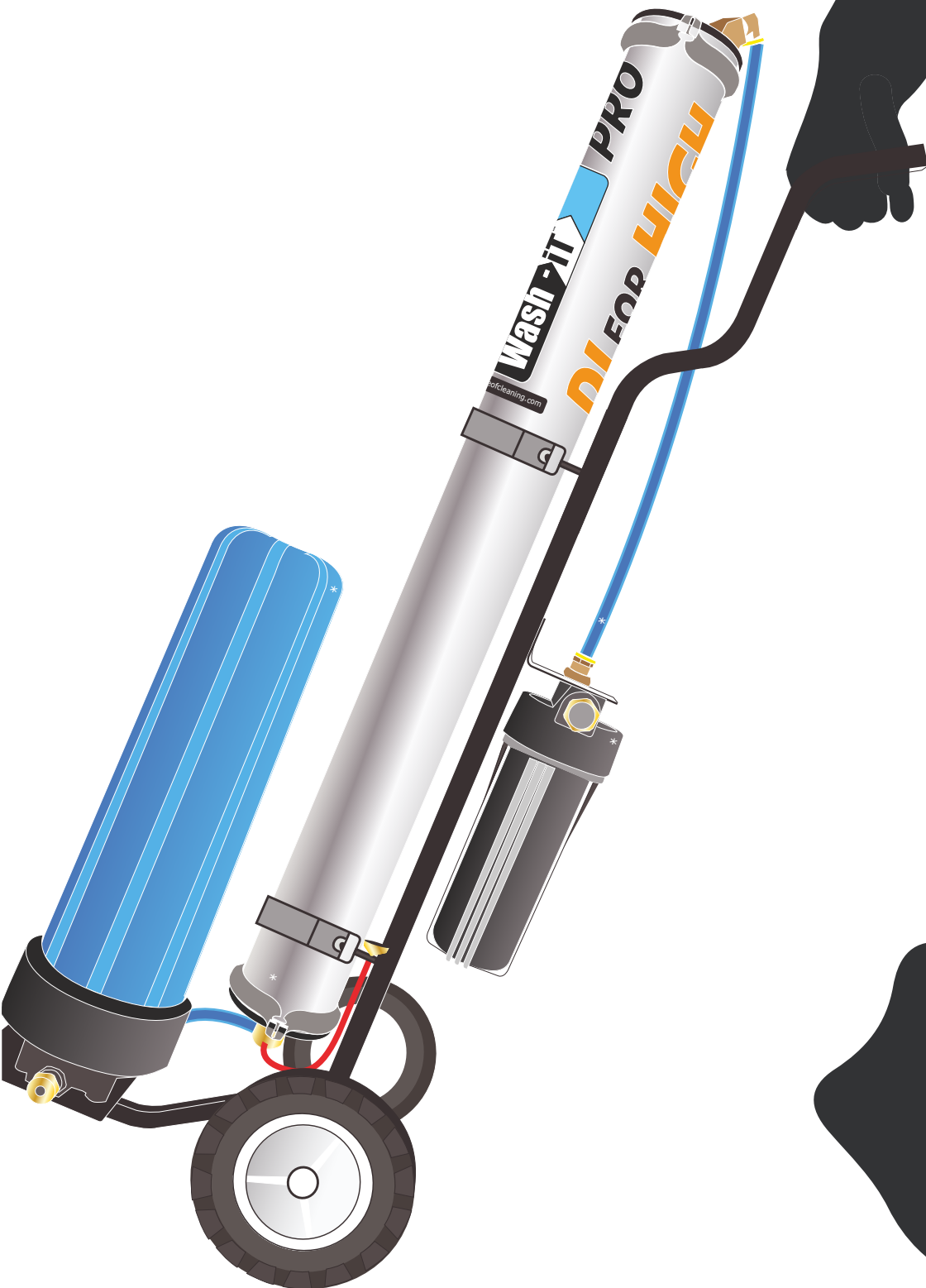
*Darron's fund is growing by the week. People are doing incredible things including sponsored male chest waxing! Ouch! We have to get photos of that!*

If you wish to help or send a message of support you can do so at Darron's Facebook page.  
[www.facebook.com/darronsfund](http://www.facebook.com/darronsfund)



**STOP PRESS!!!** As of 1st October 2013 Darrons Fund is now up to £13,000. A big thank you from Darron and his family for all the help and support they have received so far. Darron will need continued care, support and equipment. If you can help please do so.

Whatever -iT is,







**Have you ever kicked the door down to get an over due payment?**

**OK so that's a bit extreme.**

**What is the most persistent you have been in order to get payment out of a late payer?**

**Have you ever come to blows?**

**What is the most trouble you have had collecting payment from a bad payer?**

**This is a selection of comments on a forum page:**

**GORDON:** Now this was over ten years ago and much has changed but was owed £3.50 x 2 by neighbour.....anyway long story short I painted his front windows with red gloss paint (old tin in shed) and I mean all over, it was an upstairs flat and I did his white door too. Police arrived that night and gave me the option to remove the paint or be arrested.....spent four long rotten days removing the paint with his smiling mug watching me from inside. But police "made" him pay so I got my £7.00 in the end.....worth it? yep every blooming minute of scraping off that paint as bad as it was I was determined to get paid.

Do it again? NO NEVER, we are far more selective of who work for these days

**SCUD:** I had one that owed me £33, couldn't get it, so parked the van over the end of her drive every time I cleaned all the neighbours houses. She eventually, after about 8 months, came out with her cheque book and asked me how much she owed, I appeared confused and said, "I have sold it to a debt collector, I am surprised he hasn't been round yet". I bet she dreaded every knock on the door for months, was worth £33.

This is a selection of comments on our Facebook Page:

**Michael WH:** Oh don't get me started. In the end he ended up owing me for 6 cleans so I just went in his restaurant one night and ordered food and drink and said take it off what you owe me. Lol

**Karl R:** I put an order in for ownership of his house - something you can do in Spain! Paid up straight away.

**Terry MS:** We would never touch any client. Paid or not. If you think about it, not getting paid is primarily our problem. We created the situation which caused the problem. If we get a down payment, written agreement, and verify payment procedures before we do the job, it more then likely will not be a problem. In 17 years, we have five clients which paid

us nothing. Out of over 5,000 clients that's a pretty good %. I agree there are people who enter into a job, knowing they are not going to pay you. Again, get a written agreement (for the courts), down payment 20-30% for you and being adamant that the balance is due upon completion of the job.

**Richard H:** I took a customers keys off her window sill once a few years ago, knocked her door told her she had one hour to pay or I would let myself in to reimburse myself....only took her half hour to pay what she owed....funny that

**Geoff SC:** We all get non payers etc at some time be wise dont let payments build up.

Any signs off non paying weed out get rid they will cost you more trying to collect.

**Tom K:** Had to threaten someone with legal action once. Thankfully they paid. I don't have much commercial work, mostly domestic so don't get any large amounts owed. If I do get anybody who plays up then stop doing the windows and never do them again. Biggest loss I ever had was about £30 went to collect and house empty!! Grr

**Squeegeemasters:** Over 28 years I have had to sue some of them. The newspaper has printed my and their names. I have never lost. Most are shamed into paying what they owe plus court fees. Those that do go to court, the first question the judge asks them is "did they have their windows cleaned?" They answer yes, the judge tells them they owe monies as we did not clean for free. You could try any of the above suggestions, however it may be less stressful to do as Bob suggests and contact a collection agency.

**Claire M:** \$7,000 from a nursing home. Wrote them an email, their head of accounts wrote an email to the whole accounts payable team telling them we absolutely must be paid in 14 days every time! The power of the pen/keyboard!!

**WCM DOES NOT recommend the more extreme methods of getting reimbursed, we do however recommend speaking to a debt collection agency such as Thomas Higgings Partnership**

**WCM spoke to Tracey McIver a solicitor and partner at Thomas Higgings Partnership**

**WCM: Many small businesses write off small debts, some personally chase them up at a great cost to themselves, why is using a service like THP a better way to proceed?**

**Thomas Higgins Partnership:** *Using an independent third party sends a message to your debtor that you have escalated the process. A letter from a Solicitor has more weight – using THP is a cost effective solution as an LBA (letter before action) is only £2 plus vat. Where your members deal with B2B debt customers, they can consider claiming late payment compensation and interest for the delayed payment, under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 and subsequent regulations. Our LPD (late payment demand) to the defendant costs £5.00 plus VAT which includes the interest and compensation calculation. This firm has no set up fees, takes no commission and has no hidden charges, our costs and fees are available to view on our website [www.thomashiggins.com](http://www.thomashiggins.com)*

**WCM:** Is this for B2B or can it be used for home owners who refuse to pay up?

**THP:** *We predominately only deal with B2B but we can write to individual homeowners. When you are dealing with an individual as opposed to a business person, there are certain pre-action protocols that should be followed before legal action is taken.*

**WCM:** Why is that the case?

**THP:** *Pursing an individual is inevitably more difficult, enforcing against an individual's residential address also imposes limitations on the bailiff officer, which is why depending on the defendant's circumstances we may suggest other enforcement methods, such as a charge over land/property, attachment of earnings etc.*

**WCM:** How does the process work?

**THP:** *To instruct THP an account needs to be created, the quickest and easiest way to create an account is via our website [www.thomashiggins.com](http://www.thomashiggins.com). Once set up – client's log into their account and enter the debtor's details, the LBA/LPD will then be issued.*

**WCM:** LBA for £2+vat is very reasonable, how affective is it?

**THP:** *We have a success rate averaging 87%*

**WCM:** How does the process scale up if this does not work?

**THP:** *If payment is not made following the LBA/LPD, a decision has to be made as to whether or not court action is to be taken. Is there any grounds for a dispute, can this be resolved by negotiation? Your readers also need to consider the solvency of the debtor and the available assets in the event of non payment. Time spent on dealing with the matter and the risk of throwing good money after bad.*

**WCM:** What details do you need from a customer?

**THP:** *The debtor name (s), address, amount owed, invoice details, for an LPD additional details will be required including the invoice date, payment terms and details of goods/services supplied.*

**WCM:** How can a small business protect themselves initially?

**THP:** *Do your homework, check credit worthiness and gather as much information as you can i.e. are they a homeowner, employed, what assets do they have etc. Ensure you know who you are dealing with, is it an individual, a sole trader, a partnership or a limited company – have an account opening form and follow up references. If proceedings are necessary, getting the correct party at the outset is very important to avoid delay and wasted costs. A personal Guarantee should also be considered in certain circumstances when dealing with incorporated companies.*

**WCM:** What do you do with any data, do you sell the details at all?

**THP:** *No, any data we hold is for our sole use in respect of the collection of your debts.*

**WCM:** As you don't proceed with claims against non-business debts, what advice would you be able to give?

*As mentioned above, we do mainly deal with commercial debts although we can chase non-business debts but do recommend that the pre-action protocol on conduct is followed before we are appointed. It maybe that if the debt remains unpaid and a CCJ is obtained, rather than instructing the bailiff to attend other methods of enforcement are considered for example an attachment of earnings order/charging order.*

**WCM:** What is the best way to contact you?

**THP:** *Our website is [www.thomashiggins.com](http://www.thomashiggins.com) there is a "New Client" button, this brings up an application form should any of your members wish to register as a client. If you wish to become a client you can call us on: 0151 630 8006*

**WCM:** Thank you Tracey.







# Window Cleaning magazine

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