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A warm welcome to the following NEW MEMBERS

Corporate
658 - INDEPENDENT SOLUTIONS
657 - DACC EUROPE LIMITED
654 - CIS SERVICES LIMITED
653 - FUTURISTIC COMMUNICATIONS
652 - PARCOMM LIMITED

Personal
655 - Mr. Paul Machin
Honorary
656 - Mr. Peter Lythgoe

FIA welcomes new Council Members

During the Annual General Meeting of the **FIA** on 4th December 2008, Peter Lythgoe officially stood down from the **FIA** Council and was replaced by Ken Jones of EDS (North Wales) Limited as Installation Director. Two new Council members were also appointed, Martyn Cook of CTTS Limited and Simon Comben of TCM Communications (UK) Limited.

Ken is responsible for the Approved Installers Scheme (seen page 5) and Simon Comben hopes to stimulate the relationship between the **FIA** and the armed services via his role as MoD liaison (again, see page 5).



Ken Jones



Martyn Cook



Simon Comben

FIA fights the recession

Despite the gloomy economic forecasts and the governments official announcement of recession, the **FIA** has some reasons to be cheerful.

Membership levels are still at the same level as they were in August 2008 and although some members are finding life quite difficult, others are reporting record order books. One member suggested that "it depends which market sector you have traditionally operated in - large corporate business is certainly taking a hit, whereas public services such as education are continuing stronger than ever".

It also helps if **FIA** members work together and it is particular pleasing to see the initiative launched by Mills (overleaf) by which they offer discounts to **FIA** members.

We hope that such offers will be replicated by other **FIA** members - "member-to-member business is at the heart of a trade association and the **FIA** Council welcomes this scheme and hopes it will be of benefit to all", said Paul Bateson, **FIA** Chairman.

FIBREOPTIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

The FIA is a Company Limited by Guarantee

Management Council

Paul Bateson - Chairman
(Optical Test and Calibration Ltd.)
Lee Funnell - Vice Chairman
(The Siemon Company)
John Marson - Commercial Director
(Twistnet Communications Ltd.)
Mike Gilmore - Technical Director and Treasurer
*(The Cabling Partnership
e-Ready Building Limited)*

Industry Sector Directors

Paul Bateson - Test & Measurement
John Colton - Training
(Lucid Optical Services Ltd.)
Lee Funnell - Qualifications
Ken Jones - Installation
(EDS Systems (North Wales) Ltd.)
Phil Whitehead - Cross-media promotion
(ACCL)
Simon Comben - MoD Liaison
(TCM Communications (UK) Ltd.)
Martyn Cook - *(CTTS Ltd.)*

FIA-online.co.uk - new members access details

Visit the site and familiarise yourselves with its content - to access member-only pages you will need both your FIA membership number and the membership password as issued in January 2009. If you do not know these then contact your FIA Principal Contact - failing that contact the **FIA** Secretariat.

FIA web-site - MEMBERS ONLY

Every Newsletter contains the banner in yellow above - encouraging access to the site and also reminding members to obtain and record the relevant information necessary to access the "MEMBERS ONLY" side of the web-site.

It is pleasing to note that since November the number of hits in the member areas have increased by 40%, as have the visits to the FIA web-site as a whole. However, a number of changes are currently being introduced which means that all members need to keep a close eye on the content of the "MEMBERS ONLY" side of the web-site.

Firstly, all the **Technical Support Documents** are being updated in Q1, 2009. Some have already been updated and others are imminent. However, it is an unfortunate fact that many members do not access these documents until after a problem has arisen for which they need a technical solution rather than before - **the TSDs are free, download them and use them.**

Another service that is unparalleled in the UK, and possibly the world, is the Standards Forum. The Forum offers **FIA** Members the opportunity to comment on standards in development by the fibre optics and cabling committees in ISO/IEC, IEC, CENELEC and BSI. These standards cover a wide range of optical fibre products such as optical fibres, cables, connectors and system components together with the design, installation and commissioning standards for cabling.

Finally, the Risk Avoidance Strategy documents which until now have been hidden as part of the Approved Installers Scheme are going to be made available to all members (and selected other organisations) via the "MEMBERS ONLY" side of the web-site. These documents are currently being updated to reflect the content of the new BS EN 50174-1, 50174-2 and BS 6701 standards. We will advise all **FIA** members once this is completed.

FIA member discounts available



FIA Corporate Member, Mills Limited of Greenford, has announced a scheme that should benefit itself and **FIA** members. Mills Ltd now offers special discounted prices across its entire product range for members of the **FIA**.

This covers all the fibre optic essentials like patch cords and pigtailed, connectors and adaptors, patch panels break out boxes, test sets and termination kits. The Mills fibre range is extensive and includes singlemode and multimode patch cords and pigtailed, pre-terminated with SC, ST, MTRJ and LC style connectors. Available in lengths from 1m to 10m they are manufactured with a robust 3mm dia. outer sheath. Available in yellow, orange or grey, the cables are colour coded to the industry standard. Mills can also supply a complete range of fibre connectors and adaptors in all the popular styles, together with populated and unpopulated patch panels, wall cabinets and break out boxes. There is also a complete range of termination kits, accessories and consumables including microscopes, cleaning products and wipes, epoxy adhesive, syringes and a curing oven. Cable preparation products include Kevlar scissors, cable strippers, cable shear and crimp tools. Laser goggles and glasses protect the user from eye damage due to laser light and provide perfect vision.

Also available to members of the FIA is the complete Mills range of fusion splicers from Corning and Fujikura, together with cleavers from Fujikura and Fitel. Testing and trouble shooting products include basic items like the Noyes live fibre identifier and the EXFO visual fault locator, while for link certification there are professional testers from Owl, EXFO and NOYES.

However, the offering of discounts to **FIA** members is not limited to fibre optic products. It also includes a complete catalogue of cable management and specialist tooling products for the communications industry. This includes copper products and tooling for the professional installer, cabinets and enclosures, structured cabling products, voice products, co-axial and audio visual, power distribution, trunking, cable fixing items and test equipment.

Products are available from stock and are featured in the latest Mills catalogue which offers the professional installer a comprehensive source of supplies, equipment and tooling backed up by next day delivery and a nationwide network of product collection points. It is the essential guide for all professional installers.

For your free copy of the latest Mills catalogue, email: sales@millsLtd.com, call 020 8833 2626, fax 020 8833 2600 or visit www.millsLtd.com.



The FIA stand at TELECOMS 08

FIA at TELECOMS 09

The **FIA** has confirmed that it will attend the TELECOMS 09 exhibition at Olympia at the end of September.

It has also been announced that the Telecommunication Infrastructure Advisory Board, of which the FIA is a co-host will be helping to organise the associated Telecoms 09 Conference which runs over the two days of the exhibition.

The other TIA-B co-hosts, ECA-ITEC and CMA, are equally keen to support the Conference in association with Network Cabling News and feel that they can attract major speakers to cover a wide range of topics during the course of the exhibition. The objective is to make the Telecoms 09 Conference as much a reason for attending the exhibition as is the already established and recognised benefit of networking amongst fellow professionals.



**Are you an FIA member?
Have you got any NEWS?**

This Newsletter is provided as a means of maintaining communication between and with our Members.
It can, therefore, promote the activities of Members to other Members.
Articles, product information, news items etc. are always welcome.
Please send the information via email (jpg illustrations) to Jane Morrison via jane@fiasec.demon.co.uk

FIA goes "green"

On the 19th November 2008, the EU launched their voluntary Code of Conduct for "Energy Efficient Data Centres". Details can be downloaded from the FIA home page at www.fia-online.co.uk or on the TIA-B web-site at www.fia-online.co.uk/TIA-B/project-green.htm.

The Code of Conduct provides industry with a set of best practices by which data centres can be made more energy efficient. These cover the obvious areas of improving IT equipment performance and utilisation together with approaches to reducing the energy associated with environmental controls. However, the physical infrastructure is not forgotten and the reduced cabling volumes associated with optical fibre provides opportunities to optimise cooling air flow rates.

The Code of Conduct is not only open to operators of data centres but also welcomes endorsement by organisations such as the **FIA** and the **TIA-B** who supply products and services to the data centre industry.

The **FIA** will be applying for "endorser" status later this month and hope to run seminars and distribute literature as it becomes available.

Check out your details in the **FIA** Members e-Guide

The latest (August 2008) version of the Members e-Guide takes pride of place on the default page of the FIA web-site. It contains details of all members, their products and services and any approval they have. We take this opportunity to thank CNET, GCL, Lynx, OTC, QA Developments, Paragon DS, Integral Network Solutions and The Cabling Partnership for advertising in the current issue.

We urge all members to take a look to make sure we have the latest information regarding their company. Have you changed address, telephone, fax numbers or have a new web site? If so please advise us as soon as possible.

BSI and FIA
BIP 0007:2004

Telecommunication cabling and equipment installations: A guide to requirements and responsibilities

Don't forget – the FIA sponsored the BIP in support of BS 6701:2004 - it's a free download to members.

New ideas from outside the FIA

Since the second world war there have been many significant fibre optic milestones. In the early 1950s the first fibre optic prototypes started to appear and in the late 1980s the first transatlantic fibre cable was successfully launched. As long ago as 2001 an EC report predicted that fibre optic networks would dominate the European broadband market by 2010, and it certainly looks as though a large proportion of UK domestic properties will have a fibre optic connection within the next five years.

The demand for bandwidth hungry applications such as internet TV, VoIP, and smart homes is driving the growth of fibre optic networks. For established properties the fibre optic cable – Fibre To The Home (FTTH) - may be routed through the existing sewer network, for example the H2O Networks Focus initiative, water or gas pipes. All of these options should be quicker and more cost-effective than creating fresh fibre optic networks.

New build, however, offers the opportunity to design optimised fibre optic networks installed at the same time as the water, gas and electricity infrastructure on site. In this scenario, fibre optics can truly be called the fourth utility.

When gas, electricity and water were first privatised, much of the initial emphasis was on modernising ageing infrastructure which had been starved of investment under public ownership. Over time the focus of the regulators – Ofwat and Ofgem – has switched to creating industry structures which embrace competition, particularly in new connections.

Gas was the first utility to truly open up to competition in connections. Under the gas model, independent gas transporters built the gas infrastructure on new developments generating an income stream from the gas shipper which used the pipework to deliver gas to the property owner. Over time, electricity and water have started to develop similar business models although it has often been a long and arduous process. Today there are organisations which design, build and own gas, water and electricity networks on the same development, although the physical work is undertaken by accredited contractors belonging to one of the registration schemes run by Lloyds.

The companies adopting gas, water and electricity infrastructure on developments are replicating this business model when it comes to fibre networks. It is of paramount importance to the successful integration of any fibre optic access network on a new development that it is built in accordance with the guidelines and specifications of the company operating the urban network into whose access node the new network will connect. Central to achieving this is the ability to source the correct products, in sufficient quantities, at a competitive price, delivered to site at the right time.

Jayson Whitaker is Managing Director of Utility Power Systems Ltd (UPS), a company which supplies cabling, joints and ancillaries for electricity infrastructure projects and which is now entering the nascent fibre optics market. "In many ways we act as a traditional distributor. We buy cable in bulk and cut it to length; we buy in a variety of components and repackage in kit form; we carry the cost and risk of stockholding on behalf of the contractor or asset adopter. What sets us apart is our detailed knowledge of the electricity market, the different specifications and working practices of the Regional Electricity Companies now referred to in the industry as District Network Operators."

Whitaker is aware that there are both similarities and huge differences between electricity and fibre optic networks, "The electricity industry has used polyethylene and uPVC ducting for many years. With fibre optic networks I've been developing a supply chain for items such as microducts and multi-ducts, fibre optic cabling, connectors, jointing chambers and distribution frames. As a company we already have the logistics skills, but we've had to buy in the product and FTTH construction knowledge to ensure we are able to offer the same level of service in fibre optics as we provide for our electricity customers."

With the physical fibre optic network expected to have a lifetime of at least twenty-five years, and the majority of the cost for an FTTH network absorbed by the planning and installation of the routing layer (ducting), the selection of high quality and correctly specified product is vital.

Whitaker can even see a silver lining in the current credit crunch: "The financial crisis has forced companies to take a critical look at their cost structures and procurement strategies. There is a greater understanding of the true cost of carrying stock. The purchase price is only the beginning. On top of that are storage and handling costs, insurance and stock management, losses through obsolescence and, of course, the financial charge. I estimate that you can add anywhere between 20% and 30% to the book value to get an idea of the true cost of inventory."



If you already receive **networking+** magazine you will have seen that the FIA produces a half-page editorial in each issue. In order to save space in this Newsletter we have arranged for all recipients of this e-mail to also receive a free-copy of **networking+**. So - you can keep in touch with the FIA and the other contributors to this broad-based, well balanced networking magazine. If you want to download the text of earlier **FIA** articles go to <http://www.fia-online.co.uk/earticles.htm>.

FIA Standards Forum

- documents available for download and comment NOW

The Standards Forum offers FIA Members the opportunity to comment on standards in development by the fibre optics and cabling committees in ISO/IEC, IEC, CENELEC and BSI. These standards cover a wide range of optical fibre products such as optical fibres, cables, connectors and system components together with the design, installation and commissioning standards for cabling.

To get involved - go to the members-only area of the FIA site area, go to Standards Forum and follow the instructions. Why not bookmark this page for easy access – it is always easier to influence standards in development than fix them later

How about sponsoring a Newsletter?

As we have had enquiries from members regarding long-term sponsorship of the Newsletter, the FIA Council agreed that details of the fee structure should be announced both here and on the FIA web-site. Details are shown on the right.

Only one sponsor is allowed per issue so if you are interested please contact Jane Morrison via jane@fiasec.demon.co.uk

Sponsorship rates for 2008/2009:

- Long-term sponsorship - limited to 3 issues per annum - £500 plus VAT
- Single issue - £200 plus VAT

Do you make use of the FIA White Papers?

FIA White Papers cover a range of topics within the world of fibre optic technology and are strongly promoted on the default page of the FIA web-site. They are available to all, members and non-members alike, and are continually expanded and kept-up-to date. Our Google Analytics tools indicate that the White Papers index page received plenty of hits but, in contradiction of this, the FIA Technical Directorate receives many queries from members that would be easily resolved by reading the published White Papers.

A new FIA service - 3rd Party White Paper Pages

The FIA Council have received requests to establish a series of web-pages for specific members to insert their own White Papers. This is going to be supported on a trial basis over the next twelve months. The FIA White Papers page will be modified to allow access to a series of 3rd Party pages allowing members to both sponsor their own pages and to list, on those pages, a limited number of their own White Papers. Each of these 3rd Party pages will include a disclaimer on each page to clearly differentiate them from the FIA White Papers. The fee for such a page is to be set at £250 plus VAT per annum for up to 5 White Papers. This covers the cost of page sponsorship and the management fee for uploading and maintenance of the White Papers and other information on the page. If you are interested please contact Jane Morrison via jane@fiasec.demon.co.uk.



MoD liaison

The election of Simon Comben of TCM Communications (UK) Limited offers the FIA an opportunity to extend both its influence in a traditionally complex market and the provision of useful services to its members. The majority of Simons background has been with the armed services and the Ministry of Defence. He hopes to encourage active membership of the FIA by specific groupings within the MoD and to create an information source to allow the FIA membership to deal with the MoD more effectively. Further information will be announced later this year.

Significant changes to the AIS



Following his appointment as Installation Director, Ken Jones has begun to set out his plans for the previously forecast changes to the FIA Approved Installers Scheme. Full details will be announced soon but Ken has taken this opportunity to state the primary objectives. Ken pointed out that “firstly, users and their consultants need to understand the key values of the AIS - which are based upon Risk Avoidance”. For this reason the Risk Avoidance Strategies which are currently only visible to approved installers need to be more widely advertised to our members customers and other trade associations. He then added “we also need to simplify the adoption of those strategies without undermining the value of Approved Installer status” and “we need to promote those installers that have attained AI status more effectively”.



Members will already notice the changes to the membership and installer listings on the web-site.

FIA member Electrastar has work “flooding in”

Hull based FIA member, Electrastar Ltd (www.electrastar.co.uk), are pleased to announce they have completed work on their 50th Water Treatment Works project since Hull and surrounding area were caught in heavy floods 18 months ago. Electrastar have been working with water authorities across the UK, upgrading their sites by installing new fibre optic infrastructures which is helping the water network become more efficient by reducing waste and having less impact on the environment which will keep the cost of water down to the general public in the years to come.

Electrastar have been providing services to Water Treatment Works sites ranging from carrying out small repairs on damaged cables to the installation and commissioning of entire networks. There is currently an ongoing upgrade programme and substantial investment throughout the UK. The tragic flooding in 2007 has created huge public interest in anything to do with the water infrastructure, particularly in Hull as it was one of the worst affected areas in the UK.

Electrastar's Managing Director, Rob Dixon said “This kind of nationwide investment is just what the country needs given the current economic climate. SME's are the lifeblood of the countries economy, accounting for around 58% of the countries employment and 52% of its turnover. The government is planning to bring forward its large infrastructure projects to assist businesses and these nationwide upgrade programmes eventually filter down to the SME's and also specialist companies like ours”.

“Water Treatment Works are normally large campus style sites with many buildings housing control rooms and machinery. All of the machinery, processes and systems need to communicate with each other and the main control room. This is all achieved by linking these with Fibre Optic cabling to enable all elements of the system to talk to each other, which is where Electrastar come in.”



Telecommunications damaged by lack of communication!

(this is a slightly amended version of the text provided to Networking+ in December 2008 by Mike Gilmore, Technical Director of the FIA)

A recent survey of contractual problems in telecommunications infrastructures uncovered a worrying level of disputes resulting from a lack of relevant information being provided to the installers. The sources of this failure were two-fold. Firstly, requirements that had been clearly defined and documented by customers had subsequently not been included, or had been incorrectly translated or modified, in the tender document produced by the customers consultants. The second area of concern pointed to a failure in sub-contracting chains to provide the correct tender documentation to those undertaking the work. Both of these factors are symptomatic of a more fundamental problem - a lack of direct communication between the end-user and the installer.

In the “good old” days, customers defined their own needs for the IT infrastructure and used the services of specialist consultants or the suppliers of IT equipment to identify potential installers. Installers were then generally free to discuss the small, but critical, details of the installation requirements directly with the customer - identifying incompatibilities and information shortfalls. This approach is still applied for many of the large/very large enterprise installations. However, the survey found that such installations were comparatively problem free. Instead, the difficult, and sometimes, irresolvable cases lay in the domain of the smaller installations covering everything from universities to hospitals where the infrastructure specification was handled by non-specialist consultants and the installation of telecommunications infrastructures lay at the bottom of a multi-disciplinary sub-contract chain.

Before going any further, it may be appropriate to describe what is meant by “difficult” cases. Typical situations include cabling systems that meet the required transmission requirements but are rendered non-functional, non-maintainable or irreparable due to non-agreed installation decisions. One major and common cause of non-functionality is where an installer, having no other information, defines cabinet lay-outs. This can result in lack of space for the required transmission equipment or a lack of cooling/ventilation being provided to it - which amounts to the same thing. However, it is dangerous to focus on one specific aspect because the fundamental problem of communication needs to be addressed.

Many years ago a senior infrastructure consultant advised an FIA gathering that, in his view, the role of a consultant was to act as a barrier between the end-user and the supplier. After the resounding chorus of “sharp intakes of breath” subsided, FIA members attempted to point out that, while no customer likes to be hounded by competing potential suppliers, the situation following contract award should be completely different. The consultant should enable direct communication between those paying for the installation and those performing it. Based on the evidence of the current survey, this approach has clearly not been adopted.

The applicable British Standards including BS 6701 and the BS EN 50174 series define the required contents of installation specifications and also mandate quality plans produced by the installer which explain how those specifications are to be met. The critical point is that both the installation specifications and the quality plan are required to be agreed between the customer (or their representatives) and the installer - before the installation commences. Two fundamental questions must be answered by all end-users - firstly, do the specifications produced on your behalf meet the requirements of the applicable standards and, secondly, do you wish to delegate acceptance of installers proposals to the sub-contracting chain. If the answer to either question is “No” then something needs to be done, and quickly, or your next installation will be added to the list ready for inclusion in the next survey.