

kbbreview

May 2009 · Issue No 296

www.kbbreview.com



Pg 20
Saving Smallbone
Exclusive: We talk to
new boss Leo Caplan



Pg 34
Dishy appliances
Big advances for
dishwashers



Pg 46
Head-to head
The rise and rise
of showerheads

The dying swan

Recession claims biggest victim so far as Shires goes into administration

The UK arm of Ireland-based bathroom manufacturer Qualceram Shires has been put into administration in what is probably the most high-profile casualty of the economic downturn so far.

The company appointed Ernst & Young as administrators last month but the process differs slightly between the UK and Ireland. The UK subsidiaries of Qualceram Shires plc - Qualceram Limited and Shires Limited - are in administration. In Ireland the plc has sought the protection of the courts by appointing an Examiner, which gives the management 90 days to come up with a plan to turn around the company.

This news was expected following a statement from the company at the end of March which confirmed it was exploring examinership or receivership in a list of options that aimed to get the ailing firm out of trouble.

However, negotiations with bankers and landlords on debt management and the extraction from sales and leaseback agreements ultimately broke down.

The company has been struggling for some time after it was hit hard by the drop in the construction and retail markets both in the UK and Ireland.

In its last trading report at the end of Febru-



ary, the company said turnover in the period from November 2008 to January 2009 was 35% behind the same period 12 months earlier.

"[The] trading performance is being adversely affected by the unprecedented slowdown in the property market and the deepening economic

downturn in Ireland and the UK," the company said in that report. "Ongoing negative consumer sentiment and the lack of availability of mortgage finance continues to impact unfavourably on the group's markets and financial performance."

The Shires group of companies was acquired by Qualceram in 2000 and it trades under the brand names Qualceram, Shires, Selecta, Trent, and Visions.

It is believed that the company had been looking for individual buyers for these brands for some time, including its ceramic kitchen sink specialist Shaws of Darwen.

However, since the administration announcement, Shaws has already been bought out by its management team lead by md David Dare. Dare said the move had saved over 70 jobs at the company's Lancashire base.

"It's business as usual," he said. "Providing the highest levels of customer service and quality of products to our customer remains our priority." **kbb**

**FINWOOD INTERIORS
BUYS CRABTREE**

For full details see page 4

Available Spring 2009
Ascona ASK 651 sink shown
with Zurich Chrome tap.



50 Year
Guarantee

Franke Ascona sinks
Silky smooth operator

Pushing the design boundaries without blowing the budget, the Ascona range of sinks have a stylish new profile with a linear designed recessed drainer. With patented Slimfix® fixing system, the Ascona offers convenience and affordable quality.

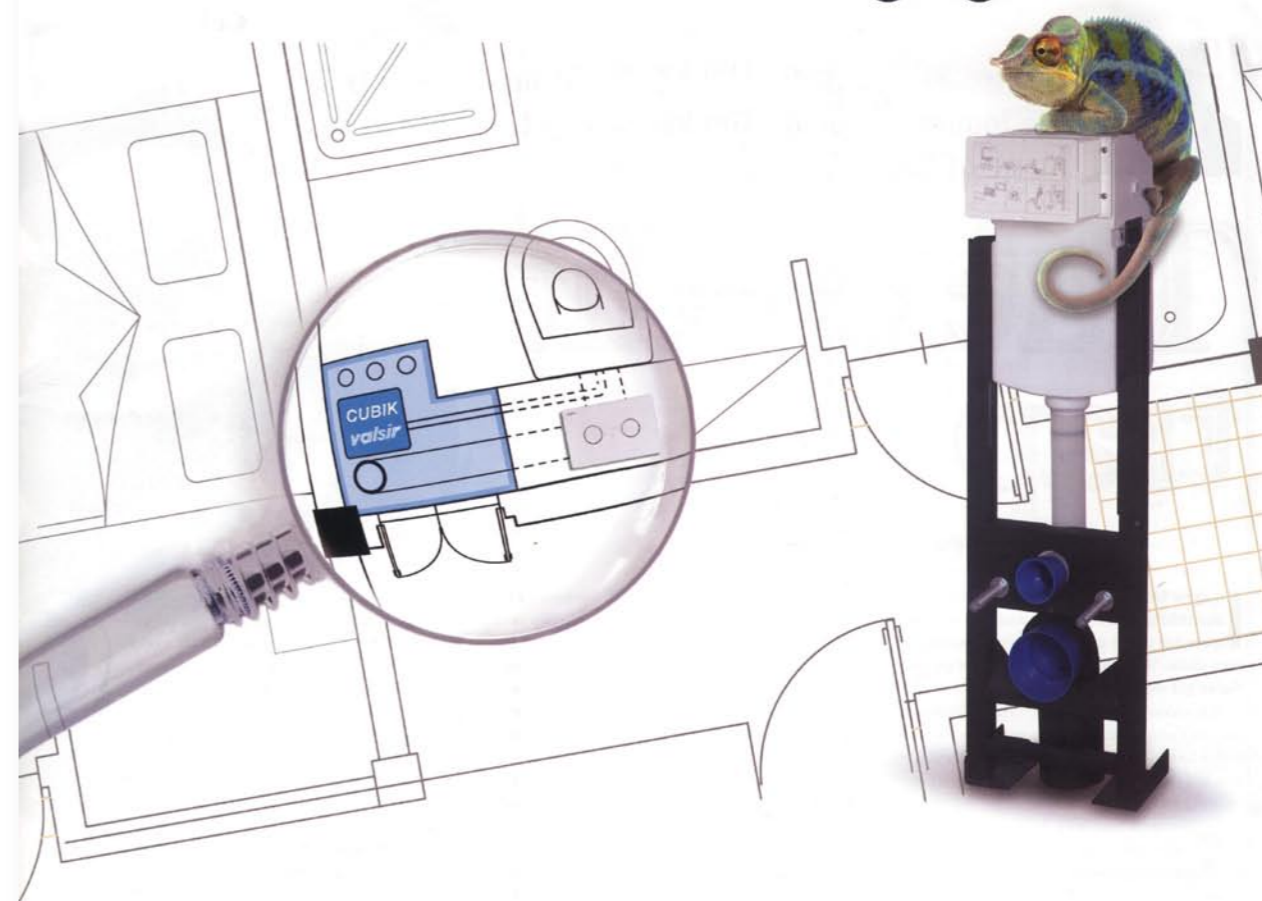
Franke UK Limited, West Park, MIOC, Styal Road, Manchester M22 5WB
Telephone 0161 436 6280 Telefax 0161 436 2180 Info.uk@franke.com www.franke.co.uk

FRANKE

READER ENQUIRY NUMBER 0038

to respond to any of these advertisements please go to www.enquire.to/kbbreview

Cubik cistern The art of camouflaging.



Valsir's new Cubik cistern is the most flexible solution for meeting all bathroom requirements.

Thanks to its reduced size and versatility Cubik makes use of the most limited spaces available while guaranteeing excellent functional characteristics. The front and top flush actuation, in combination with a wide range of plates with innovative designs, fits in perfectly with all bathrooms, in keeping with stylistic and aesthetical trends.

Valsir Cubik, the art of integrating perfectly in all environments.

Valsir compatible control plates and pneumatic actuators:



valsir[®]
QUALITY FOR PLUMBING

VALSIR S.p.A.

Località Merlaro, 2 - 25078 Vestone (Brescia) Italy
Tel. +39 0365 877011 - Fax +39 0365 870820

Info: valsir@valsir.it - www.valsir.it

READER ENQUIRY NUMBER 0436

to respond to any of these advertisements please go to www.enquire.to/kbbreview

