

## The first fifteen years

Litecast Limited was launched in 1998 by four men with a vision: John Leroux, Kevin Hall, Mike Collison and George Pickard. This year the company is marking 15 years of supplying beam and block flooring with the opening of its new concrete batching plant. This event marks not just a decade and a half of entrepreneurial success but also the commitment and dedication of the team and, more importantly perhaps, its confidence and optimism in the future.

Litecast pre-stressed concrete floor beams are wet cast in precision made steel moulds thus ensuring a smooth profile for ease of handling and dimensional accuracy of the product. The company is one of the leading suppliers in the UK; part of this success can be attributed to its central location at Nuneaton in Warwickshire, ideally positioned to supply the whole of the United Kingdom.

The new batching plant was manufactured by Steelfields of Gillingham, a company renowned for the quality and durability of its products, with many plants still in operation after 40 years of continuous use.

The fully automated plant has an aggregate storage capacity of 450 tonnes and a cement storage capacity of 100 tonnes. It is presently supplying concrete to three sites with a capability to double the output if required.

The plant represents a huge commitment in time and funds; the purchase of the site through to installation and commissioning involved 18 months of careful planning and an investment exceeding £1.2 million.

Speaking at the opening, George Pickard said: "Our involvement from day one has been total, with the four of us giving up well paid jobs in order to pursue our dream – a decision some might consider reckless in the light of family responsibilities."

John Leroux also recalls the early years: "When I look back to our humble beginnings, one mould in a field and a leaking portacabin, then contrast that with our status today, it is clear that focussing on the customer and providing a total service have been key factors in our success."

For Mike Collison, it is "the blend of skills that the four of us brought to the venture. Having gained experience at home and overseas, we cut our teeth as the management team at Earthspan and later at Tarmac, developing a strong bond and team ethic. This, coupled with our range of high quality lightweight floor solutions, has put Litecast on a strong footing."

For Kevin Hall, it is a question of the management style, which differs from anywhere he has worked before. "For starters we wouldn't expect anyone to do a job we hadn't done ourselves. We have a good pool of employees here in Nuneaton. Many of the lads have been with us for over ten years with father, sons and brothers working together in the business, bringing experience and youth together – it's like an extended family willing to go the extra mile when required."

The Litecast range includes not just the traditional beam and block but also Litecast XT and Robust Upper Floors. Litecast XT uses floor beams with polystyrene panels in between to comply with code level 3, 4, 5 or 6 of the Building Regulations Approved Document L, while Robust Upper Floors involve floor beams with tray tiles in between (sometimes called beam and pot) to meet Robust Details E-FC-6, E-FC-7 and Building Regulations Approved Document E – a system that has proved to be an alternative to hollowcore flooring.

All Litecast systems offer a free estimate, a complete CAD design service with technical advice and a coordinated delivery.

As a member of both The British Precast Concrete Federation and the Precast Flooring Federation, Litecast actively promotes the development of the beam and block industry.

*Commented Martin Clarke, OBE, chief executive of British Precast, "Litecast's team have shown that with a lot of hard work and dedication during a difficult recession it is possible to gain market share. Material manufacturers have had a hard time of things generally but Litecast has bucked the trend and finds itself a major player in the market and I wish them well for the next phase of the company's development and growth."*

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