



Group effort

Pooling expertise in surfaces and soft furnishings is proving efficient for the Scottish consortium Rail Interiors Solutions and its customers

The global rail interiors market is benefiting from the skills and experience at the heart of Rail Interiors Solutions. The Scottish consortium of suppliers is focused on assisting customers such as Bombardier, First Great Western, Eurostar and Alstom to create top-quality, modern and comfortable carriages.

The group comprises five firms – Andrew Muirhead & Son, Forbo Flooring, Novograt, Replin Fabrics and Transcal – each bringing its own area of expertise to the table. Each completed project pushes the reputation of Scotland's textiles industries higher and further – demonstrating that both new-build and refurbishment operations can be taken on and fulfilled from Scotland.

One project illustrating the group's collective strengths involved the interior refurbishment of 27 Meridian 222 trains for UK operator East Midlands Trains. Standard-class seating fabrics were supplied by Replin Fabrics, while leather for first-class seats was provided by Andrew Muirhead & Son. Working at East Midlands Trains' depot in

Derby, UK, seating specialist Transcal completed its contribution in no more than eight working days per train – well inside the challenging deadline all parties had agreed on. With seating areas transformed, focus switched to interior surfaces, the specialism of Novograt. The firm provided a solution that can be used for walls, tabletops and bulkheads, and is designed for durability, ease of installation and fire safety. Meanwhile, hardwearing vestibule matting and linoleums were supplied by Forbo Flooring.

All the solutions used aim to help the carriages withstand their heavy use so they stay fresh – benefiting the operator by reducing maintenance and enhancing the passenger experience. For example, Replin's fabrics include a patented anti-staining treatment, while Novograt's surface solutions are formulated to resist graffiti. The £6m project was completed in February 2012.

"Working together as a group is driving efficiency," says Steve Harvey, sales director at Transcal. "We meet regularly and have face-



◇ CARBON FOOTPRINT

High on the group’s agenda is a dedication to minimise its carbon footprint. During installation it bases staff at the customer’s site whenever possible, reducing the number of journeys taken and therefore their impact on the environment. As well as reduced costs, another spin-off is that less time spent travelling between sites means more time spent on them.

Andrew Muirhead & Son, which is part of the Scottish Leather Group, has taken its environmental commitment a step further by designing and building its own thermal energy plant. The plant converts the company’s waste into energy used to operate its tannery.



to-face discussions about projects we’re involved in, and new business we want to target. There’s strength in numbers. As a group we have more than 300 years of experience in supplying quality solutions to the transport industry, as well as a combined turnover that goes a long way to satisfying the procurement managers and bid teams we work with.”

Rail Interiors Solutions also says the collective nature of the group enables it to offer reduced costs, smoother project management, greater flexibility and a single point of contact.

Expo plans

The consortium is now busy seeking new contacts, customers and projects. Collective experience lifts the group into an arena where international business is a realistic prospect. Central to this ambition is attendance at Railway and Mass Transit Interiors Technology and Design Expo 2013, held in Cologne, Germany, on 12-14 November.

MAIN: One of the trains refurbished for East Midlands Trains
ABOVE LEFT: All the work was completed at the client’s site in Derby
ABOVE RIGHT: All textiles and surfaces were replaced

The event provides an opportunity for the group to target global specifiers, designers and buyers working on new-build and refurbishment projects. It’s a long-established showcase for the train interiors sector, and it’s exactly where Rail Interiors Solutions needs to be to continue demonstrating Scottish innovation.

“Major opportunities – both in the UK and internationally – are presenting themselves,” says Archie Browning, sales director at Andrew Muirhead & Son. “That’s why we’re attending Railway and Mass Transit Interiors Technology and Design Expo for the second time. The event is crucial for all the specialists that make up Rail Interiors Solutions. We’ll be there delivering the message that in Scotland we really do have a world-class one-stop solution for interior projects.”

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