



The National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham was the location for two recent major events in the construction calendar - Solid Wood Solutions and the Fabric First Event. Held over two days, the back-to-back conferences and exhibitions were truly an international affair with high profile speakers presenting inspirational case studies from across the globe.

Pioneering European manufacturers including; Wiehag, MM Holz, Mathis, Hess Timber and Wehmeyer, presented informative case studies at Solid Wood Solutions, showcasing iconic buildings and structures from around the world, including the Ice Mall in Eilat, the French Patents Office in Paris, the Anaklia Pedestrian Bridge in Georgia and the Inzell Speed Skating Stadium, Germany.

From the UK, Rosi Fieldson from Simons Construction provided the delegates with insight into how the highly anticipated and much talked about M&S Cheshire Oaks project was delivered. Rosie Fieldson was followed by a great advocate of Cross Laminated Timber - structural engineer, Simon Smith of South & Wallwork. Smith sparked a lively debate with his challenging perspective on CLT.

European Partners of the X-LAM Alliance, Nick Milestone of B & K Structures and Helmut Spiehs of Binderholz, came together to outline how the supply chain has responded to the demand for more CLT technology in the UK.

'This is an important event for our industry,' commented Nick Milestone. 'The experience and expertise in the room on a global level was remarkable. Our X-LAM Alliance partner, Helmut Spiehs, travelled from Austria to attend and together we shared our experience on how integrating design, manufacturer and project management could provide efficient delivery of turn-key solutions.'

Held on the second day, the UKTFA joined forces once again with UKSIPS to deliver the Fabric First Event which attracted more than 180 delegates. The Fabric First approach is currently a 'key topic' with the impending 2013 Building Regulations set to include Fabric Energy Efficiency (FEE) performance standards - the choice of envelope is now even more vital to low carbon construction.

The Event attracted high profile speakers including Paul King, Chief Executive of the UKGBC, who presented his perspective on the role of government policy and regulation in driving delivery of low carbon homes and buildings in times of austerity. Rob Pannell shared the learnings of the Zero Carbon Hub in understanding the challenges, issues (mainly design versus as built performance) and opportunities involved in developing, building and marketing low and zero carbon homes.

Together with architect, Richard Partington, who offered revealing intelligence on understanding fabric design - the high profile speakers delivered a programme full of insight and information.

Simon Orrells, MD of Frame Wise, a sponsor of the events, attended both days and commented:

'We have experienced challenging times in the construction sector but these events had a real 'feel good factor.' With an impressive line-up of speakers from all over Europe together with experts and academics from the UK, the events were both informative and inspirational. And most importantly, we conducted some excellent business across the two days with the events offering some great networking opportunities.'

Darren Richards MD of organisers Radar Communications, the company also behind Timber Expo stated that 'The events were a great success with a lively dynamic atmosphere, it is clear that great calibre speakers make an event of this type, but without support of an excellent product exhibition we would be missing something. The events displayed how innovative the European and UK supply chain is and we definitely sense a change in the confidence for the better with many clients looking to re-start large building programmes.'