

In brief

■ Congratulations to Ray Livingstone of **White Rose Interiors** in York, who has won the **Roman** Bathroom Hamper competition featured in our May issue. He correctly answered that Hadrian's Wall is located in Northumbria. Livingstone scoops a hamper of Roman bathing goodies.

■ Appliance manufacturer **Hotpoint** has come top in a poll, which rated the UK's most trusted brands, for the 11th consecutive year. In a *Reader's Digest* Survey of 1,000 people, almost 1 in 4 consumers chose Hotpoint as their most trusted large kitchen appliance brand. It received 23% of the large kitchen appliance category vote, 5% more than the second-placed brand.

■ UK design and interiors show, **Decorex International** takes place at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea in London from September 25-28. Around 250 exhibitors will be showcasing kitchens, furniture, lighting and floorcovering alongside a range of bespoke services. The inspiration for this year's event is Sanctuary and international designer Nicky Haslam will be interpreting the theme at the entrance of the show.

■ Scottish retailer **Kitchens International** has invested £75,000 in a refurbishment of its Broxburn showroom, near Edinburgh, to attract contract and retail customers. The 1,600sq ft showroom features Leicht, Callerton and Hoffermer kitchen displays, with working appliances. Over 100 customers attended the opening, which also featured TV chef Nick Nairn providing cookery demonstrations.

■ **Imperial Bathrooms** has published a 266-page Design Guide, featuring its luxury sanitaryware, hand-crafted solid wood furniture and classical basin stands. It includes the company's latest launch of Simply Black sanitaryware. The Design Guide is also available in a pdf format at www.imperial-bathrooms.co.uk

High street retailing troubles

Homeform Group enters administration

Around 1,300 jobs are under threat as owner of Moben Kitchens and Dolphin Bathrooms, the Homeform Group is preparing to appoint an administrator.

The company is aiming to sell off the Moben and Dolphin brands to save its Sharps Bedrooms and Kitchen Direct businesses.

A statement read: "The Board of Homeform Group Limited have today filed with the Court a Notice of Intention to appoint an administrator. This process can

take up to ten working days. At present, the Homeform Group remains under the control of its directors.

"The Directors are close to securing a deal that will safeguard the future of the Sharps (Bedrooms) and Kitchen Direct businesses and have mandated advisers to see a sale of the Moben and Dolphin brands."

Manchester-based Homeform Group boasts 160 showrooms nationwide and in addition to its 1,300 full-time staff, 1,500 self-

employed fitters and designers also work with all four brands.

The company was acquired by private investment firm Sun Capital Partners, in 2007, for an undisclosed sum.

Sun Capital has invested in more than 145 companies across the world, with combined sales in excess of £17 billion.

These include UK jeans company Lee Cooper and lingerie brands, such as Playtex and Wonderbra.

Worktop blow

Lechner pulls out of UK market

German worktop manufacturer Lechner has closed its UK showroom, following the decision to pull out of the UK.

The company, which employed eight people in the UK and rented part of Blanco's showroom in Hertfordshire, cited lack of orders as the reason for its withdrawal from the market.

Office manager of Lechner in the UK, Farhoud Ganji commented: "The orders were better than last year but we did not have as many orders, as they wanted. They have decided to pull out of the whole market."

Lechner UK had more than 500 accounts and although outstanding orders were being processed, its worktops are no longer available in the UK.

Showroom manager of KSL Sudbury, Richard Hibbert commented: "All but two of our displays have Lechner worktops. It's the fact we spent £6,000 on the displays and it's a waste of money."

He continued: "We're really



unhappy. We've been with the company through its six years of progression into the UK market. We put a lot on. We sold a lot and it has stuck two fingers up at us."

Rachel Astely, owner of a kitchen showroom, was also disappointed that Lechner was pulling out of the UK. She wrote on twitter: "I have a

kitchen showroom and committed ourselves 100% to Lechner in our new refurbishment launching in 2 weeks – not good."

The bespoke worktop company had also fitted out the Blanco UK showroom, as well as the Teka and Kuppersbusch showroom at its UK headquarters.