

Contact: Steve James

*"dinna stay under
leaking roofs"*



**JOHN JAMES
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Roof Coatings. An Honest Opinion.

In 1996 Steve (James) was given the opportunity along with his associate at the time Cameron Waldron from Australia whom I met through working with Roofline Products. He worked nationally with the I.W.A Insurance Guarantee Company from whom I received my two national awards for customer care and excellence 1996 – 1997 and 1997 – 1998. We had many business meetings about PVC fascia and soffit systems and went to building exhibitions in Glasgow and Birmingham together. Always looking for new ideas at one of these exhibitions in Birmingham we came across a roof coating display from Australia which basically restored existing roof tiles with various colours back to their former glory. After a chat with the guys from the display Cameron, being Australian, living in Northampton we sourced the product and approached one of the main distributors of roof coatings in Australia. After numerous meetings by phone and e-mail we were offered some distributions and application rights from the whole of the UK and Ireland with possibility of parts of Europe.

The coatings were water based and came in any colour. It had Teflon in it's mix which made the finished roof wash down very easily in normal rain preventing the growth of moss and lichen. The only thing that worried us was that it hadn't been tried and tested in our climate and only had a commonwealth C.S.I.R.O approval and not B.S.S. (British Safety Standard) kite mark. We decided to be the "guinea pigs" for roof coatings in the UK following the application guidelines of power wash, anti-fungal wash, one coat primer and two colour top coat by the book. I started using the product on roofs in my area, I even coated John James senior's roof (see photos), some friends, family and existing customers.





Broughty Ferry



Inverness



Aberdeen

In between that myself and Cameron visited Roofing and Roofline companies up and down the UK with a view to training them up on application and supplying the product throughout the UK. My job being to train and educate companies and applicators on roof coatings. The first obstacle to confront me was our climate in summer was the fact that it rained a lot and the product was water based so if it rained whilst applying the product washed off and had to be redone wasting materials. Rain showers in summer were ok because the coating dried quickly in the warm sunshine so it was manageable, also spillage and overspray was easily cleaned up whilst still wet due to it being water based. Wind was a factor as well due to the fact that it carried the overspray in whatever direction the wind was blowing. So neighbours, cars, windows and washing lines had to be considered. In general the roofing coatings worked fine in the summer and the finished job looked great. Winter however was a different story as water based products take hours to dry in low temperatures, sometimes taking most of the day for one coat to dry. So if you applied one coat on a dry morning and it rained in the afternoon, the coating washed away which was sole destroying especially if you have travelled all the way up north or down south. To promote the product anyway due to winter conditions we decided it was a seasonal thing in the UK. For the next few years I coated roofs up and down the country and in my own area, in summer only. The coating came with a ten year guarantee against moss growth, fading colour and flaking.

Steve in Skye:



In 2002 I was kindly invited to visit the Roof coating Company in Australia which took me to Brisbane, Sydney, Cambria & Melbourne working on roofs and training on new products. I visited the plant where coatings were produced in Melbourne and in all had the best treatment, even taken to the Gran Prix. The whole trip was excellent and knowledgeable and I couldn't thank my hosts enough for their hospitality to this day.



Roof-coating outlet / Sidney



Production factory in Melbourne



Steve spraying a roof in Cambria



Colour scheme for roof-coatings

Unfortunately "in my opinion" due to our climate and faults in the product in our climate we mutually parted company from our Australian friends and stopped using the product.

Reasoning being I questioned the 10 year guarantee based on applications I had done even on John James senior's house.

1. Moss and lichen returned after four to five years mostly on the interlocking part of concrete tiles where the roof coating is not applied and lichen appears on the surface and in some cases moss



Newly coated



Now



John James Senior's roof now

2. Depending on the age and condition of the roof tiles determines if the coatings can be applied to your roof as on older very porous tiles the coating begins to peel off as we thought but actually had part of the tile still attached. Tiles in this condition need to be renewed.



Peeling roof coating as described above.



(before)



The tiles had to be renewed (after)

3. Due to the above after five to six years sometimes less coated roofs become dull and unsightly and look tacky and that's with the proper applications.
4. Nowadays the misuse of roof coatings is widely used throughout the UK by rogue companies that arrive in your area knocking on doors praying on the old and not so wise people in all walks of life who are then conned out of thousands of pounds. We end up having to put right their wrongs when they leave the area after a couple of months, never to be seen again. This also goes for PVC fascias and soffits too

They offer to paint your roof which will look great at first but one of the most important things I was taught was the prep work which consists of replacing all loose and broken tiles, re-cementing all ridge tiles and verges, applying one coat of primer and two top coats.

In most cases power washing is carried out, no broken tiles are replaced, the cement pointing which has been removed by power washing isn't re-done so ridge tiles are loose and ready to be blown off during the first high wind. Because the product is water based it is watered down and only one coat is applied which unfortunately looks like a properly done roof on the day but six months down the line starts to go patchy and unsightly and you will have wasted your money.



Bad roof-coating as described above.

The lesson here is not to entertain people who come to your door with unfamiliarly marked vans with the addresses and phone numbers changed on the side to suit the area that they work in.

Our advice is to stick to local companies with logos like “Trusted Trader” reason being if any problems they are on your doorstep all year around and have a reputation to keep.

Our conclusions:

- Roof coatings if applied properly depending on condition of roof tiles do work and seals porous tiles but probably only lasts four to five years and not as ten year guarantee
- Does not prevent moss and lichen from re-growth not as ten year guarantee states
- We recommend for the short term only depending on the tile condition all prep work done and cleaned of moss and treated with Aglon (see moss removal). This will prolong moss re-growth but will not prevent it. It will leave it natural coloured although faded in keeping with surrounding houses.
- Do not use copper strips on old concrete tiled roofs. This does not work due to porous tiles and only works on non-porous surfaces such as slate and ceramic rosemary tiles.

Roof coating is big in Australia as double glazing is in the UK but suited to their climate and unfortunately not to ours. This is a very good product if you live in Australia.

I parted with the said company and Cameron on the best of terms and still hold them in high regard which is why I have not mentioned the company name.

Hope this helps educate people on roof coatings.

By Steve James, Proprietor of John James Roofing Services

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