



# *Kerr's Home Products Limited*



# OC Feature

NEWS



## Kerr's Home Products Limited

By Mike Fraser  
Q/KCNews Staff

In today's fast-paced construction industry, companies that possess the ability to successfully deliver quality workmanship and dependable

products often emerge as a proven leader in their respective fields of business.

Kerr's Home Products Limited is one such company.

Established over

two decades ago and currently owned and operated by partners Ian Kerr and Rob Duffy, the Peterborough-based company has come a long way since its humble beginnings.

Founded in 1983, Kerr's Home Products was originally a trim carpentry business which in a short period of time garnered an enviable reputation as a dependable installer

of trim for local home builders and general contractors. However, like many other installation businesses, the company decided to branch out into the

manufacturing and supply side of the coin, a decision which has proved to be beneficial for the multi-faceted High Street company. "We were well known amongst

## Kerr's Home Products Limited

builders for our trim work and it seemed like a good idea to eventually branch out into the supply side of things," explained Kerr, the company's president. "It wasn't something that I had always planned to do though. It basically just happened – a need existed and we were there to fill it."

More than 20 years later, Kerr's Home Products has become one of south-eastern Ontario's leading manufacturers, suppliers and installers of a wider range of quality interior home building products including trim, doors and related hardware, baseboard, moulding, and most recently, railing and mantels.

Following a long list of quality products, the company recently opted to expand its manufacturing capabilities to include decorative railing and fireplace mantels – two new products which have been met with enthusiasm by customers and complement its existing lines.

Always looking to introduce quality, time-saving products, Kerr's Home Products also manufactures and supplies Universal Prestoframe Plus, the only

complete door and frame package in the marketplace today. An ambidextrous door (the unit can be installed left or right handed), each package includes the door, jamb, stop, trim and detailed instruction which can guide even the most novice of installers through a perfect installation.

With no cutting or shims required, the installation of a Universal Prestoframe Plus is a simple

procedure which requires only levelling, gluing and nailing, explains Kerr, a strong supporter of the U-channel door and frame package.

"It's a product that really complements are existing lines," said Kerr of the unique product which is sold at various lumber yards and building supply stores. "I'm very choosy of the products we carry here. I don't add products for the sake of

increasing inventory. The Prestoframe is a good product that's starting to takeoff."

Not your typical carpenter, Kerr has become known in the industry as an inventor and innovator with a keen interest in creating and improving products by using equipment which he's designed and built at the company's 20,000 sq. ft. manufacturing and warehouse facility.

"Ian has a wonderful eye for design and a great ability to plan things in his

head," says Duffy. "He's a problem solver, a guy that can take an idea and make something of it."

One particular contraption that stands out as one of Kerr's most useful inventions happens to be one of his first.

Blessed with a mechanical mind that is constantly thinking about new inventions, Kerr takes pride in designing and fabricating inventions which ultimately save time and increase productivity. Known as the Freddy Flintstone machine because of its strange and rather primitive appearance, the handy gadget is essentially three drill presses bolted to a heavy wooden box.



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After a door is pulled one at a time, hole. Despite its worth its weight in gold, daily operations. pressure treated wood attached to the drill presses,” says Duffy with a laugh. “It’s wiggly, but when it comes down to cutting an accurate hole every time, you can’t beat it.”

placed in the machine’s and seconds later the operator has a cleanly unusual design, the joined the company in pretty but it works – It’s nothing more than

wooden handles are drilled door handle Freddy Flintstone is 1985 and manages its



Ian Kerr and Rob Duffy

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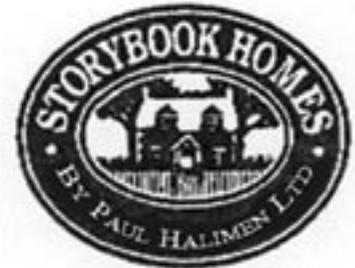
and fastens it together with an air nailer. The final step involves the channel being dropped into a cutter than makes the 45 degree cuts at the end of the casings. Total time: Under two minutes.

While the company remains heavily involved in the installation of its products, manufacturing and supply has over time become a major component of Kerr's Home Products' business. By not pigeonholing its scope of business, the company, which is

preparing to supply and install product for a Habitat for Humanity build this summer, is a bustling year-round operation, says Kerr.

"When it comes to customers, we run the gamut," says Kerr, a hands-on owner with a solid understanding of today's customers' expectations. "I can't really say we're one thing or another in particular because we don't really specialize today. Truthfully, I would say now we almost supply as much now as we supply and install."

Although the



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bulk of its products are shipped across Ontario, a steady stream of stock also makes its way south of the border to the northern United States. For supply and install contracts, Kerr's Home Products' carpenters generally stay close to home as the company has built a loyal following of customers in the Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes and surrounding area as well as the Durham Region where business has been booming recently, says Kerr.

"We like to stay as close to home as possible because

it makes jobs a lot easier," says Kerr of the company's primary service area.

In any form of construction or manufacturing, a solid core of employees is essential. Recognizing the need for experienced and skilled employees, the company has successfully developed a well-rounded team which consists of production staff, carpenters and office personnel. Kerr's Home Products currently has about 40 employees including sub-contractors on staff, and employs

Kerr's wife Maggie, the company's accountant, and Duffy's wife Lynn, who looks after sales and marketing.

"Our staff has been here forever," says Kerr. "Many of the faces that were here 20 years ago are still working for us today."

"We have a good reputation so when we are in a position to hire someone, we tend to get a lot of resumes from qualified and experienced carpenters," adds Duffy.

Teamwork is defined by Webster's Dictionary as work done

by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole. At Kerr's Home Products, ensuring the successful completion of any project requires a steadfast commitment to scheduling, quality workmanship and teamwork – characteristics which are at the forefront of its many completed projects.

The company's impressive track record of completing projects on time, within budget and to the exact requirements of its customers has led to repeat business from several past clients. Service-oriented, Kerr's Home Products has become the single-source contractor and supplier of choice for many clients who have come to rely on its knowledge and workmanship.

With Kerr's mechanical aptitude and Duffy's enthusiastic sense of organization,

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the partners have each created strengths which have helped the business grow and prosper since the mid-1980s.

"We both bring different strengths to the company," says Duffy, a Peterborough resident since 1985.

"Rob is very diligent in running the business and is extremely organized," states Kerr. "He's the guy that can run the business while I go out into the shop and build the machines. When it comes to organization he's fantastic."

In today's construction industry, scheduling can be the difference between a thriving business and one that falls to the wayside. At Kerr's Home Products, time management, organization and

scheduling go hand-in-hand with quality.

"Along with quality, our ability to schedule work and be

there when we say we will be is one of our key strengths," Kerr says. "We're upfront with customers. If we can't

make it on a certain day we don't tell a customer that we can."

Training is also an important facet of

the company which isn't overlooked, says Kerr.

"We'll be undergoing the training

necessary to become one of the first in Canada to be a NHQ certified trade."

With spring bringing warmer temperatures, customers are now starting new projects, signaling the beginning of another busy season for Kerr's Home Products.

"We're not much different than other businesses in that we get busy at certain times of the year," states Kerr. "I've never considered us to be seasonable because we're busy at various stages of the year. We're getting ready for another busy spring and summer."

"It's going to be pretty crazy around here," adds Duffy. "Here come the 60 and 70 hour work weeks."



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