

ICONIC BRITISH BATHROOM MAKER ARMITAGE SHANKS LAUNCHES 200-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CAMPAIGN

- The Celebrate 200 campaign aims to engage plumbers, along with trade merchants and well-wishers
- DJ Molecules creates a celebratory piece of music using sound samples of plumbers and bathrooms
- Plumbers and fans can also download a free app to create their own 'bathroom beats' and win prizes
- Armitage Thanks campaign has also raised over £200,000 for charity as part of the anniversary

Armitage Shanks, the iconic and leading British bathroom manufacturer, has launched a celebratory campaign to mark the historic 200-year anniversary since it was founded in 1817.

The brand has also launched a number of celebrations with its long-standing trade merchant partners, including Wolseley, Graham and Grafton – with birthday activities and giveaways taking place at branches across the UK.

Originally founded by Thomas Bond in the Staffordshire village of Armitage, it has produced millions of items over the last two centuries that have adorned UK bathrooms in homes and in public spaces, including offices, pubs, shops, restaurants, schools, hospitals and sports stadiums.

CAMPAIGN

The kick-off piece of activity for the Celebrate 200 campaign sees Armitage Shanks collaborate with a professional music producer, to compose a piece of music generated from recordings of sample sounds in the bathroom and of plumbers going about their job.

The track is made using everyday noises and sounds, such as a flushing toilet, dripping tap and even the sound of a pipe being cut, to create a contemporary piece of music.

In addition, Armitage Shanks has created a free-to-download smartphone app, Beats 200, enabling plumbers and Armitage Shanks fans alike the opportunity to create their own pieces of music for fun.

Users can make and upload their own tracks via the app. The most widely shared entry will be rewarded with a £5,000 value Birthday Experience and published on a Beats 200 album.

A second piece of activity aimed at trade merchants and plumbers, is an H₂O-Levels online quiz that inspires users to test their knowledge of all things plumbing.

This is all hosted on a new campaign website, which also features a run-through of the history of the brand, at www.Celebrate200.co.uk

The campaign will be rounded off at a celebration event for colleagues, suppliers and customers in November, hosted by Armitage Shanks at Birmingham Town Hall.

Katie Cope, Marketing Director at Ideal Standard, said: "Armitage Shanks turns 200 in 2017, making it one of the UK's longest-standing brands."

We wanted to create a feel-good celebration atmosphere around the brand, which is looking towards the future, as well as celebrating the past.

"Over the last two centuries, Armitage Shanks has become synonymous with quality bathroom design for homes and businesses across the UK. The Celebrate 200 campaign celebrates this, promoting the brand to a multi-generational audience. Armitage Shanks' headquarters is the only remaining major scale manufacturing plant to continue producing ceramic bathroom products in the UK. We're delighted to celebrate this historic milestone, creating a platform for our brand to take water intelligence to the next level."

DJ Molecules is an electronic music production collaborative based in Shoreditch, London. Operating across Europe, they compose and produce inventive music centred on using eclectic samples and artist collaboration.

HISTORY

In 1817, a brick-maker called Thomas Bond built the first bottle kiln in the village of Armitage in a move away from the city of Stoke-on-Trent, but conveniently sited next to the Trent & Mersey Canal network.

In response to the Public Health Act of 1847, which mandated the use of sewers in towns and cities, the business began to convert its production to making toilets in response to the huge rise in demand. By 1876, railway links had been introduced at the site, improving incoming and outgoing goods – and business boomed, with its products even fitted on the bathrooms of the Titanic in 1912.

During the turn of the 19th century, 60% of production was exported abroad, and in particular to North America. The logo at this time was Johns and the brand became synonymous with the toilet. To this day, the toilet is colloquially referred to as the John, in many parts of the USA.

After the Second World War, the considerable demand for sanitaryware replacement saw the company embark on further expansion, with the addition of the first continuously fired tunnel kiln.

In 1969, the Armitage Ware Company acquired another company, Shanks Holdings Limited, a leading sanitaryware pottery – and the merger resulted in the creation of the new Armitage Shanks brand. The same year also saw Armitage invent the distinctive avocado glazed bathroom suite – a pale green colour similar to the flesh of an avocado. During the subsequent ten years, over one million avocado suites were installed across the UK, outselling all other colours and is now embedded in the national psyche as an icon for bathrooms of the 1970s.

The turn of the 21st century saw major investment in new machinery to ensure traditional craftsmanship was married with the latest technologies in order to bring the highest quality products to market at affordable costs.

Today, products are developed with a team of skilled pattern makers, well versed in the art of potting, and highly trained technicians creating and programming the latest production machines.

It's this commitment to innovation that keeps Armitage Shanks at the cutting edge of the industry – as evidenced by the pioneering Markwik and Contour 21+ healthcare range, which has been designed specifically to minimise the spread of bacteria in hospitals. Featuring innovations such as SmartGuard antimicrobial glazes that inhibit the growth of bacteria, ergonomics that improve water flow and drainage, and design features that reduce splashing by 90%, the range is Armitage Shanks' most advanced healthcare solution yet.

The Armitage Shanks factory now produces over a thousand toilets every day, along with other high quality sanitaryware, including basins and bidets, which are sold across the UK and exported globally.

For more information, visit www.Celebrate200.co.uk

PR contact: Havas PR UK

T: 0161 236 2277

E: idealstandardpr@havas.com

ABOUT IDEAL STANDARD

Ideal Standard International is a privately-owned company manufacturing bathroom ceramics, taps and fittings, fixtures and accessories providing innovative solutions for the residential, commercial and healthcare sectors. It operates across a portfolio of brands, among them industry leading brands Ideal Standard, Armitage Shanks, Porcher, Sottini, Ceramica Dolomite, or Vidima. The Group is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium and operates in over 30 countries and regions employing almost 9,500 people and works with world-class designers to develop innovative products using the latest technologies.