

Profile

'The Cowboy'

Services:

- Gas / heating engineer
- Plumber
- Electrician

Location:

- Milton Keynes

Reviews (12)

This thread has been locked by the moderators of Woughton on the Green Community Message Board.

New comments cannot be posted.

lucyindisguise

job: bathroom refit

rate: £250 per day (materials purchased separately)

date of job: Oct 2011

where did you find this trader: agent's website

trader contact: mobile only, 07744209975 (no longer working)

rating: 1/5

hire again: NEVER

Hello all,

I set up this profile to see if anyone else has had experiences with this tradesman?

My husband is pushing 70 now. I'm quite a bit younger but I thought a sit-down shower would be a good investment. We found this man online. He had no reviews but the price was reasonable. He was local and sounded friendly and knowledgeable on the phone so I thought I'd give him a shot. That was my first mistake. The boy turns up and quotes £500 for a two-day job. Cash only. This was much more than what he'd originally said, but he was here now so didn't feel I could say no. The first day was fine. He took a look at the bathroom and went about his work.

Me and my husband were going away the next day, so left the cash out on the hall table for him when he'd finished. We get back from the Costa del Sol a week later and the money was gone along with our bathroom suite. In its place were these strange metal objects. Giant grey protrusions where our new sink, toilet and shower should be. The only way I can describe them is that their shape and ribbed surface reminded me of

earthworms. They were quite roughly finished, which now I think about it, was odd for something so obviously expensive to produce. My husband was a civil engineer for forty years and said they were probably cast iron because the one in the shower was already cracked near its base, probably from when he installed it. And it had scraped the ceiling. God knows how he got them inside, let alone plumbed them in.

That was the first thing that alerted us. We came home to the house gurgling, the heating on and carpet that was soaked through. And when we opened the upstairs bathroom door to water spouting from these worm heads. Once we'd got over the shock, obviously we were furious. We called his mobile, but it was disconnected. I think by then we knew. I tried ringing the number of his agency anyway and they'd never heard of him. I know you might be reading this thinking it was our fault for leaving the money, and I agree. I'll never do that again. I doubt we'll ever see him or £500 again. Don't be like us, do your own checks. You can't just go on trust when there's jokers like him around, we were reminded of that the hard way. In any case if you come across JACK ALTRADE do not hire him. I wish I could give less than one star.

Ronaldo1998

job: tiling

rate: £900 (didn't pay)

date of job: Aug 2011

where did you find this trader: online search

trader contact: 07744209975

rating: 2/5

hire again: no

I saw this first review and thought I'd come on here to say that I think I had the unhappy pleasure of working with the same guy. Although he went by a different name with us: Jean Ouaine. Unlike the first reviewer, it was payment upon completion, but we've still been left out of pocket fixing what he left us with. At the time I thought it was just a misunderstanding, but if it is the same guy it puts it all in a different light.

We'd hired him to retile our kitchen floor. My girlfriend had picked out some tiles she liked and he said he'd purchase them as it would be cheaper. I would have preferred for us to have just bought them ourselves to be honest.

It happened exactly like "Lucy" experienced: we went away to a family wedding in Scotland and while we were gone the bastard had covered our kitchen floor in shiny copper tiles. Wall to wall, whole room like the fucking Cardiff Millennium Centre. You have to hand it to him, he did a very neat job – he's obviously a professional – but the mess he left. Dust and grease, even what looked like mud from outside, copper shows up every scratch and fingerprint unless it's properly polished. And all these different footprints too, at least two sets, and some of them bare. Don't know what he thought he was doing laying a floor with no shoes on.

Come to think of it, the prints were actually very small, more like a woman or a child. Did he bring someone else into our home?? I didn't notice his feet but I do remember he had quite delicate hands because I wondered if he was going to do it all by himself. Didn't look capable, he was so slight and pale.

My girlfriend thought it was a mistake, but too many things just seemed off. There were all these cables in the corner: aux, hdmi, that kind of stuff. Not ours either. But if it was a practical joke, what kind of sick fuck does something like this?

Cathy&Heathcliff

job: landscaping

rate: N/A

date of job: Sep-Nov 2011

where did you find this trader: word of mouth

trader contact: N/A

rating: 3/5

hire again: N/A

I'm only just putting two and two together but maybe this was also your man? A couple of months ago I asked around my friends to see if anyone had a good recommendation for a landscaper/gardener someone to help me with some trees on my property that had grown unmanageable but also with some of the general upkeep which is usually quite light heading into winter.

A woman in my Zumba class (I go to lovely Yasmin at the PureGym Winterhill) recommended a friend of her son. Jamaican boy, very sweet. He came around to look at the place and I don't know what I did but he took a shine either to me or the garden and said he would do it for free.

The first few weeks I didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. He was as diligent a worker as I've ever had especially considering I wasn't paying him (I did keep offering but he insisted). But as the days started to get shorter I'd be coming back from walking the dogs and just see him sat on one of the four tree stumps at the bottom of my garden looking away from the house. He'd still be there even after I'd eaten dinner. I could see him from my kitchen window as I did the washing up. I often watched him until it was too dark to see and he disappeared into the dark night.

I started to see him reclining on the grass too during the day. Every time I looked up he would be in a different pose, always with his back to me and the house. What he was looking at I don't know. No sooner he'd get here than I'd see him propped on his elbows on the lawn in his peculiar manner. Once I went to check on him. He was wearing headphones from which was coming rousing classical music. Although I consider myself a bit of an amateur expert in that area I didn't recognise the composition.

It was shortly after that that he stopped coming. He just didn't turn up one day and it was as if he had completely vanished because my friend's son had not heard from him either. I later found out they'd met in AA which I have to say given all this now does not surprise me. I also wonder if he is alright in the head.

Jackthelad

job:

rate:

date of job:

where did you find this trader:

trader contact:

rating: 5/5

hire again:

HI SO IVE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE ON HERE SLANDERING MY GOOD NAME SO I THOUGHT ID JOIN THE PARTY AND DEFEND MYSELF. DONT BELIEVE WHAT THESE CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING ABOUT ME, I HAVE A LOT OF SATISFIED CLIENTS. ITS NOT MY FAULT THAT THOSE FEW WERE NOT HAPPY AFTERWARDS OR CHANGED THEIR MINDS WHEN ID COMPLETED THE JOB. EVERYONES A CRITIC AND YOURE ENTITLED TO YOUR OPINION BUT PEOPLE ALWAYS BLAME THE WORKMAN. IF YOURE A FAIR EMPLOYER ILL DO A FAIR JOB. YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. NOT JUST FINANCIALLY IF YOU CATCH MY DRAFT. IF YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP YOUR SIDE OF THE BARGAIN HIRE ME. DESPITE WHAT "LUCY" SAYS MY NUMBER IS STILL THE SAME.

foxyrenard

job: electrics

rate: £29 p/h

date of job: Dec 2011

where did you find this trader:

trader contact: as above

rating: 3/5

hire again: yes

hello all. Ive been following this thread with interest, and Ive got to say, a few things are not stacking up for me. The claims made by the previous posters are quite outlandish. There's really no need for what is either a genuine misunderstanding, or huge exaggeration. I don't think people realise what a bad review can do to a persons career. To try and end this once and for all, Ive decided to set a trap. Or maybe it's better to say run a little experiment. Ill call the original number, hire the guy that answers (if anyone does) and report back here.

EDIT:

I phoned the mobile number in the first post, and a young man answered the phone. Very young by the sound of it, thought he was a woman until he showed up. Id planned a simple and small job: fitting a hanging light, which I let him pick out as (given the previous reviews) I was interested to see what hed bring. The lamp was a little unusual, but nothing crazy. Old-fashioned, but with a chic steampunk twist. Jack had obviously taken on board my notes, the orange blown glass bulb looks very tasteful against my

accent wall. And the cable is a nice touch too, it really does look like it's hanging there on a silver paper chain. In short, I was taken by Jack/Jean and his handiwork. Is he unconventional? Sure, but nothing to justify the kind of abuse thrown his way on this website.

Jackthelad

job:

rate:

date of job:

where did you find this trader:

trader contact:

rating: 5/5

hire again:

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU THINK YOU CAN SWEET TALK ME WITH A GOOD REVIEW. I DO NOT APPRECIATE YOU TRYING TO "SET A TRAP" AS IF I WAS SOME ANIMAL. IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO HELP BUT JUST WANT TO INSERT YOURSELF INTO THIS PSYCHODRAMA OF YOUR OWN MAKING. MEANWHILE I DON'T NEED YOUR PITY OR YOUR VALIDATION. I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE UP TO ALL ALONG AND YOU LET ME PLAY YOU NICELY. NO NEED TO PATRONISE ME ON HERE. I DID MY JOB AND I DID IT WELL. LET ME REPEAT, PLEASE, ONLY CONTRACT MY SERVICES IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT MY WORK.

the_marlborough_man

job: electrician/plumber

rate: £27.99 per hour

date of job: May 2011; Jan 2012

where did you find this trader: local noticeboard

trader contact: jahandyman@gmail.com

rating: 1/5

hire again: I did, but hard to recommend

I'm adding my voice to the chorus, hoping I can clarify a few things. I found Jack's advert on the noticeboard by the Walnut Tree Tesco Express last year when I was looking for someone to fit aircon in the master bedroom.

Nothing to report from that occasion, except for the fact that when he was finished installing the unit, he placed a pair of my ex's tights over the vent at the top – to test the airflow, he said. Bit sus that he'd found them under the bed, but it did work, kicking away up there. So, when I needed the underfloor heating looking at last week, I called him out again. By this time my brother had told me about this forum and I'd been having a browse – it's not often that something like this happens round here. I was called away to answer a delivery, and when I came back, Jack was very quiet. I didn't think much of it at the time, it never occurred to me that he'd gone into my laptop, let alone that he would

have been upset about some local gossip. But later, when he'd gone, I discovered a figure behind my bedroom door.

This person was fashioned out of steel wires and a plastic shopping bag I use for football practice Jack must have found in the wardrobe. He'd dumped my dirty kit out all over the floor and split the bag up the sides to use as the thing's 'torso'. It had a real air of desperation somehow, its wire legs bent up, knees together, and arms in the air reaching – for what? And the final touch (this was really unsettling): Jack had shoved my goalie gloves onto the ends of the two sticking-up wires to mimic hands. Its hands, appropriating the ghosts of *my* hands, I felt like the little guy was mocking me, waiting to spring up and catch me.

Maybe Jack just thought this was harmless fun, and I'm jumping to conclusions because of all the comments here – but do you think this is a warning? The fact he went through my clothes and made this perverted representation of me (???) sends shivers down my spine.

Ronaldo1998

But if it was a practical joke, what kind of sick fuck does something like this? Maybe he's ot very well...

I've been thinking over my earlier post, and I feel ashamed of how I handled myself. I didn't think what I wrote would start all these rumours. On reflection, I genuinely think what happened to me and my fiancé was a mistake. The lad was just naive, like I said, he was very young, and my post was agry and hasty. I later checked the invoice for the tiles and it seems like the suppliers set him the wrong ones and he just laid them without checking with us. I'm not sure about you marlborough man , but I think the most likely explanation is that your engieer read the forum and decided to play a trick on you.

foxyreynard

Maybe Jack just thought he was having some harmless fun, and I'm jumping to conclusions because of all the comments here – but do you think this is some kind of a warning?

hello Marlborough. Im sorry this happened to you! Yes, one thing I keep coming back to is whether we are all talking about the same guy? The very basic physical descriptions don match. Someone above mentions him being Jamaican, but the guy I hired was white and had an Eastern European/Polish accent? They all seem different ages too...

the_marlborough_man

hello Marlborough. Im sorry this happened to you!

Thanks Reynard. I think you're right, this is definitely something I've considered. And looking back over earlier reviews, I was also thinking – the guy who came out to me was really quite small, I'd say almost feminine. Something about the way he handled the tights too, this definitely wasn't his first time stretching out pantyhose. And someone else mentioned a girlish voice? Are we sure it's even a dude?

And what about the person on here commenting as Jack? Who are they? Could we trace their IP address and find out?

TheWorldIsNotEnough

job: ?

rate: ?

date of job: 2012

where did you find this trader: N/A

trader contact: N/A

rating: /5

hire again: N/A

I think I may know the man at the centre of all this...

I've a small holiday cottage down by the St Ives on the Cornish coast, and last summer a new family moved in next door. Since my wife's death I'd been spending a lot of time down there. I got to know the mother well, with her at home looking after the young kids. A more warm and friendly woman you couldn't hope to meet. And two beautiful children, very well behaved. Their father was some kind of craftsman? He had a white van in the drive, and a workshop where he spent most of his time. I think she was very lonely raising two kids like that, effectively single-handed.

Soon after they moved, she left him. He didn't put up much of a fight, didn't even want partial custody. After that he was alone in that house. I never saw him, just the constant noise of power tools. Considered reporting him to the council a few times, but I thought it was wise not to poke the bear, so to speak. I went back to work, and it became less of an issue.

A few months went by like this, until one day I was walking my dog along the strand (her kids loved that dog, that was her excuse for coming round, the kids want to see Edie) and I saw him down underneath the cliff, looking out to sea. He was only visible from the waist up, and my mind must have been playing tricks on me because just looking at his chest, I would have thought it was her profile. But he turned and stepped up from the pool where he was standing, and I saw the thick hair on his thighs, the strong muscles.

He was dressed in a white singlet and boxers, which were both dirty. For a second I thought he'd soiled himself, but the rusty stains on his shorts were just the orange lichen you find in this area. I put Edie on her lead, and kept walking. As I came to where the sand rises and you can look down into the sunken pools, I saw him again. He had covered his crotch in small boulders and was writhing under their weight.

His dance was magnetic, I couldn't tear myself away, crouched there like some Peeping Tom. I didn't want him to see me looking, such that when Edie set off a little avalanche, I let out a cry like a seagull to cover up the commotion. It was mortifying, how afraid I was of being discovered. I thought the jig was up, but we seemed to get away with it. The whole affair pulled me out of my stupor though, and I dragged Edie back up to the coastal path.

As we arrived at the steps to the road above, I saw a pile of crabs. Poor little blighters laid there all higgeldy piggeldy, blushed shells like crimped pasties. Their legs and claws were gone, and all the meat had been carefully extracted so when Edie nosed one over onto its back, I could see inside the shallow cavity. I tugged her lead, but Edie's investigations had already exposed a bag tucked beneath the hollow carcasses – a black tool bag which I recognised.

This was last week, and I've seen him once or twice since, going into or leaving the workshop. I went down to the beach the next day, but the shells had vanished. Had the dirty boxers and singlet not been left on the front wall I'd have believed I imagined the whole thing. When I started Googling and found this forum I thought, could this be Jack? I hope there is an explanation for all this...

TheWorldIsNotEnough

I hope there is an explanation for all of this...

I woke up this morning, some time before dawn, to a loud bang from nextdoor. I went to investigate and, coming up to the house, I saw all the lights on, but no other sign of life. The rooms were empty of furniture; even the curtains had been taken down. I went round the side, calling out to see if anyone was there – and that's when I found that the garage door was wide open.

For the first time I could see into Jack's workshop. The concrete floor had been recently swept. A small pile of dust, metal shavings, chips of paint etc, danced in the draught. There were pale shadows on the wall where machinery or shelving had been ripped out, I can only guess to give Jack more space. For right in the middle of the room – carefully placed as if awaiting me – stood a large white box.

A thick pink stripe ran around the base, about a quarter of the way up, either side of a square logo and thick black text that read 'Kolzer'. Just above this, in the centre panel of the long rectangular side facing me, there was a round hatch with a little porthole, reminiscent of an industrial washing machine. The door was unlatched and slightly open, offering me a half-moon glimpse inside. I went to peer through the window, but temptation overruled my cautiousness, and I pulled on the handle. The door swung outward to reveal a drum, white and clean like the outside, as empty as the room in which it stood.

As I made to leave, my foot fell through something brittle, reaching the concrete with a sharp crack. I looked down and saw the corner of a crab shell, now in two pieces beneath my boot. The appearance of this carapace disturbed me, and the thought came into my head that I should walk down to the beach.

Slowly, and with apprehension, I rounded the same dune that me and Edie had crested a week ago. On the sand, looking out to sea, I found myself confronted by an odd contraption. It consisted of an open cylinder raised on a black metal frame. The supporting legs ended in red and white casters, like a big trolley, only the top reminded me of the rotisserie carousels they used to have in the Saxon Gate Sainsbury's. But instead of chicken, impaled on the stationary spits were metallic objects, cast in the same shining silver as the barrel. Some looked soft and smooth, while others reflected the moonlight off their roughly textured surface.

Tucked among the silver objects were other, copper-coloured forms. Closer inspection revealed these to be the same dimension and size, but with a matte finish. And then I realised: the crab shells. They looked raw and naked next to their plated companions; for I saw that the silver objects were also shells, even though they looked like they had been dipped in mercury.

There was something alchemical about the object: an esoteric recreation of the large hadron collider at Cern, sinking into the Cornish sand. Only its absurdist maker believed God was to be found not in atoms, but in crustaceans. I stood before a model of the universe, its intricate cogs and chains stilled so that one might recreate and study heretofore hidden patterns. Here was this total schema consisting of real objects and simulacra placeholders, whose appearance as one or the other was dictated by a series of obscure laws, meticulously planned but impenetrable to me. I grasped at the traces of another man's mind, unable to find the switch that, when pressed, would open up the entire mystery.

Moderators

*AS OF 6 MARCH 2012 THIS FORUM IS NO LONGER ACCEPTING NEW POSTS.
COMMENTS ON THIS THREAD HAVE BEEN LIMITED.*

Several of the active accounts have been found in breach of the messageboard's terms. A single user is not permitted to have multiple accounts linked to the same email address, as a precaution against online harassment.

The affected accounts have been closed and users contacted.

Francis Whorrall-Campbell