

NEWS



THE BLAST SHOP

Christmas 2018

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NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

BS8415 - UPDATE



No doubt that you will have heard about the introduction of the new BS8415 standard for memorial fixings and are wondering what exactly that means to you as a memorial mason. We've mentioned the new standard in a few of our recent newsletters in an ongoing effort to keep you up to date. However, speaking to some of you directly we have found that there has been a lot of conjecture put-out there and maybe even some miss-information, as a small number of suppliers attempt to use the situation and any subsequent confusion to promote their products. Well here it is broken down for you in plain, unbiased English:

The Blast Shop's Peg & Tube ground anchor systems 'do' need re-testing in sharp sand and gravel for accreditation to meet the new standard. From our own tests in very similar soil conditions here, we expect all currently sold anchors to work without any changes in specification. We expected we would have the relevant

accreditation by this point but unfortunately we are a few weeks away from having the necessary tests overseen by a qualified engineer. We should have the new accreditation by the deadline, which is February next year.

One thing in the new standard which is disconcerting revolves around the bolting method of fixing and the use of locking nuts.

We've already introduced NYLOC nuts to our 16mm bolting kits but have always thought them unnecessary and more than a bit of a pain to use in the real-world. We believe the main issue for bolted memorials becoming unstable is washers bending under stress, rather than coming loose from the effect of ground vibration.

Of the options suggested in the new BS8415 we still feel that NYLOC nuts are the best solution but there are other options available. You could use an additional locking nut but this would effectively double the thickness of the nut and also double the price. Alternatively you could use a spring washer. If you use a spring washer then you should use them in addition to the standard 3mm thick washer. We can provide either additional nuts or spring washers if you wish. Incidentally, we don't use or sell washers at minimum specification because, done to standard, there can be instances where on one

side of the washer there is only a 1mm overlap of the granite. Instead we continue to sell the old size washers which always provide at least 9mm overlap when used with 16mm dowels.

TRAINING DAY - SUCCESS

Following hot on the heels of our very successful open days this year we ran a number of training days which also proved a resounding success! Our classroom was full for 4 days of intensive classroom and practical training in the art of Deep Carving and Shading.

The classroom side of things covered all the basic theories from recognising the fundamentals of a deep carved design, to creating cuttable designs based on photographs of existing work.

The practical sessions took things much further with correct stencil tape selection, weeding technique together with shaded and deep-carved blasting. We hope to offer more training early next year. Contact Lee for more details.

BREXIT AND THE £

By now you'll almost all be sick to death of Brexit and the likely impact to UK businesses. Ultimately though, whilst most of us do not import or export directly, there isn't much black granite in the UK so clearly there

is going to be some effect on our trade.

Aside from the turmoil in the foreign exchange market which has seen the pound lose over 15% of its value against the dollar, we're also starting to suffer the fallout of the US vs China trade war which recently added a significant amount of duty onto all steel coming into the UK.

Regardless of whether it's a soft, hard or no deal Brexit the next few months and years will see a degree of price fluctuation as the country comes to grips with life outside of the EU. We're reviewing all our memorial prices and expect to have to put prices up in the new year and will continue to monitor the cost of imported granite and supplies.

All of this uncertainty comes in addition to the certainty of increased staff costs due to increased pension contributions!

A SALES PHILOSOPHY



There must be something in the air at the moment because lots of people are investing in new machinery, with Dominic and Lee receiving loads of enquiries for sandblast equipment, plotters and impact etching machines.

Our philosophy at The Blast Shop has always been to offer advice on the equipment and products we sell on an individual basis; what may be the right for one person, may be completely wrong for the next. We would rather lose a sale than to sell someone something that isn't right for them. Our impression is that you seem to appreciate and understand this

philosophy which can often lead to sales closing further down the line from their initial enquiry.

A perfect example of our sales philosophy in action came up recently. A mason we had never dealt with before had come to our stand at the 2016 July N.A.M.M Tradex show and showed some interest in our products, especially the portable Goldmann DUPLO dustless blaster.

We established their specific needs, explained the advantages of using the DUPLO, along with any disadvantages they should be aware of. We swapped contact details and followed it up when we got back to the office. It turned out that on this occasion the DUPLO was an investment they weren't quite ready to make.

Fast-forward to September 2018...



Dominic received a telephone call from the very same mason, enquiring about the very same DUPLO. They had unfortunately experienced a catastrophic failure with their existing equipment so needed a replacement. They remembered how helpful The Blast Shop were, and especially that we had not adopted an overly aggressive sales strategy.

As circumstances have a habit of changing unexpectedly, we immediately assessed the current situation to ensure that the DUPLO was still the right choice – Turns out that it no longer was, and after several more conversations, we all agreed that a more industrial type Goldmann unit would now suit their needs better.

Luckily, there was a perfect solution at hand, as we recently came in to the possession of an 80's era Goldmann dustless 40/I unit, which we were about to refurbish for resale! So not only did we finally get a sale, we also matched the equipment to the customer's needs perfectly and

even managed to save them some money in the process!

NEW STAFF

There have been some changes here at The Blast Shop recently, with Gavin, our warehouse operative of over 9 years, leaving us for pastures new in sunny Scotland.

We'd like to now take this opportunity and introduce our new warehouse manager, Andy Bamford who comes to us with over 20 years' experience in stores management and distribution, mostly in the kitchen and bedroom sector.

Andy has certainly hit the ground running and is already putting his extensive knowledge to good use in making sure your orders leave us correctly made-up and on time.



CHRISTMAS CHEER

It's that time of the year again as we all face the list of memorials we need to fix before Father Christmas arrives. December used to be a quiet month for The Blast Shop but these days people expect deliveries right up until Christmas eve. This year we close on 21st December and reopen after the festive season on 3rd January.

TRADEX 2019

Next year is a Tradex year and as normal The Blast Shop have begun to plan our stand. We'll have more details in the New Year but in the meantime, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2019