

NEWS



THE BLAST SHOP

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NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

Ground Anchor Update

The more observant Blast Shop News readers will recognise the picture on this page as being one we have used in the past. In 2012 BS8415 changed to include sand and gravel as the the specification for soil conditions that all ground anchors are assessed against. At the time we were assured that the testing conditions NAMM used were compliant with this definition of soil. Ultimately British Standards reviewed the testing criteria in 2018 and now require all testing to take place in a dedicated test pit of sand/gravel. All this should be nothing new to masons who have kept pace with proceedings.

In January this year NAMM began re-testing previously accredited anchors to the new standards and all those tested have subsequently passed in the new sand and gravel conditions. Whilst some other suppliers required 18" front to back foundations in order to pass the new tests, for memorials up to 3', our Peg and Tube was tested successfully on 15" foundations, the same as when we first tested them in 2008. Like NAMM, we still recommend that you should aim to use a larger foundation where possible but it's nice to know that, if you are restricted, fixing with a Blast Shop Peg & Tube on a 15" foundation is still complying with BS8415:2018.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of NAMM and most ground anchor manufacturers, the



supplier of an alternative fixing system who campaigned for the original amendment to soil conditions is now claiming that the standard produced in 2018 has a significant typographical error in its specification. BS8415:2018 states that test enclosures should be filled with "medium/coarse sand and fine gravel as defined in BS5930:2015 having a maximum particle size of 6mm" (bear with us because, whilst there are lots of numbers, it's important to understand how unlikely a "typo" is here). It is now claimed that 6mm should have 'actually' been 0.6mm. As a rough guide, 6mm particles resemble the small pea shingle found in fish tanks, whereas 0.6mm particles would be more at home in bunkers on a golf course.

Now we all make mistakes but the change from 6mm to 0.6mm means a change in classification

according to BS5930:2015 so, in order for this to be a "typo", the classification would need to read "fine/medium sand having a maximum particle size of 0.6mm" which doesn't look like a simple "typo" to us. Is the real reason behind this push for another re-specification the fact that anchors have passed in the new test conditions? Maybe a better reclassification would be to give better guidance on what mix of sand and gravels we should be using rather than leaving it to manufacturers to guess what British Standard expected us to use?

When discussing future conditions for testing, it is often argued that "since we started using ground anchors there haven't been any issues with memorials becoming unsafe". Whilst it is a convincing argument for the moment, there is likely to be a time when a memorial fails with a ground anchor installed in it. If it does happen though, we doubt it will be down to soil particle size or failure in the design of any of the current selection of anchors. The chances are that it will be a poorly fitted or inappropriately used anchor. To that end, The Blast Shop anchors are designed to be non-adjustable; we don't want you to become liable for adjusting them so they don't work properly. The design also compensates for poorly drilled holes in our tests so that our anchors will work even in the poorest examples of "28mm"

holes! The one area we, as masons, can't control is the quality of the ground conditions. We're not talking about sandy soil though. The biggest concern we have is cemeteries not back-filling the graves properly and then expecting us to fit onto the disturbed ground. Sandy soil tends to back fill fairly well, it's the dense clay blocks that cause the majority of our concerns. We always allow 6 months before fitting a memorial back onto the grave but even then we still suffer from subsidence and no anchor will work efficiently if there are huge voids in the ground underneath the memorial.

OPEN DAY 2020



We can't quite believe that 2019 has been and almost gone... It's been a busy year for The Blast Shop, what with Tradex and testing following the changes to BS8415. However, with stock take finished, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

As there isn't a dedicated Memorial Masonry trade show in 2020, we are pleased to announce that we are planning one of our popular and informative Blast Shop Open Days.

The open event will take place in May and run over two consecutive days. There are limited spaces available, and based on previous attendance figures, they will fill-up quickly. Please register your interest by contacting Lee.

The focus this year will be on customer experience and how we can ensure that the families we deal with are provided with the best experience possible from showroom to completed memorial. Like previous events, there will be supplier stands and the opportunity to get hands on experience with our equipment.

WEBSITE



Some of you may have noticed that we have updated the website. It has taken a while, but we now feel as though it is where we want it to be; a nice balance between informative substance and marketing – With tons of useful and up-to-date information, videos and **Pssst**: even some of our own trade secrets.

We've also introduced a, 'Quick Order' form to the Home Page recently. It's nothing fancy and is aimed mostly at casual browsers who may realise that they need a roll of tape or some Peg & Tubes, and can place an small order, quickly, easily and conveniently while looking through the wealth of information on the website...

We've already had a few orders come through that route and will be offering free shipping on all orders that wouldn't normally qualify, as a little thank you for using the quick ordering system.

STAINLESS STEEL DUTY



The trade war between the U.S. and China continues to cause problems with extra duty due on Stainless Steel products coming into the E.U. At the moment we are able to avoid paying the extra 20% duty but we don't know how long this will last.

Sadly in 2019 there has been an increase in production costs on most of our product range so there will be a price increase of between 2% and 5% across our range in January 2020.

RECYCLED GOLD LEAF

All those Mason's who chose to recycle their waste gold with us recently, should all now have received their personal cheques. It's one of the more pleasant phone calls that Lee actually enjoys making...

There was one memorable moment during the recent batch of calls, where after giving the value of the cheque, he was confronted by a long silence, then after repeating the value a couple of times, was greeted with a rapturous, 'Yipeee...' - Obviously way more than what the Mason was expecting.



If you have any waste gold leaf lying around, don't hesitate, just send it in. You never know, you could be receiving a welcome cheque in the New Year.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS

Whilst it is a quiet year for domestic shows, Rob and Mike will be heading over to two international shows. The first in China will be before our Open Days, the second is in the summer in Germany. So look out for exciting new products later in the year.

SEASONS GREETINGS



And finally... From all of us at The Blast Shop, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. Our last day this year is 23rd December and we re-open on 3rd January 2020.