

# NEWS



# THE BLAST SHOP

## WINTER 2020

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### NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY



#### TRADEX 2021

We usually start with a review of what has happened this year, but I think we all can agree that this year is probably best forgotten...

So instead, lets look forward to 2021!

You'll be happy to hear that 2021 is a TRADEX year! The event, hosted by NAMM, is due to be held at Warwickshire Exhibition Centre on the Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> September. Those who have been before will know that it's an intimate venue, perfectly placed to support our trade. We expect to have some exciting new products to show you but more about that next year.

Like previous years you will probably need to register. As soon as we get more information we will of course let you know so keep your eye on our website or social media (follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram)

TRADEX also means a CRAFTX competition and after Lee's win for 'Most Innovative Memorial Design' in 2019, we will be entering at least one memorial into the competition. Good luck to all entrants. See you there.

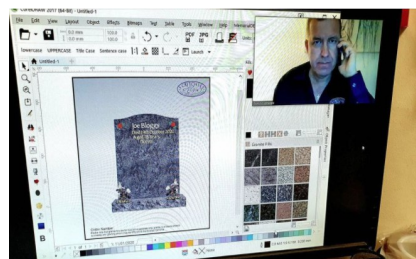
#### ZOOM DEMOS

One positive thing for The Blast Shop to come out of the Lock Down, was the need to find a way in utilising technology to offer continued support and services to our customers.

As you know from the previous newsletter, we used ZOOM video meetings during the first lock down to keep our staff involved and entertained while furloughed, with a weekly get together to do quizzes and the like.

During the second lock down we decided it wasn't appropriate for Dominic to be out visiting customers but he has been busy doing virtual demonstrations of our Memorial Designer UK software, which he can carry-out remotely using the same platform. Zoom is supported on any device that has an internet connection so he can simply send you a link and you can see why our new software is proving so popular.

Let us know if you would be interested in seeing the benefits of Memorial Designer and we will arrange a virtual demonstration at a time to suit you.



#### NEW ORDERING SYSTEM

##### Want to make a quick Order?

Would you like to place a quick and simple order for our most popular products?

Tapes	Quantity
Anchor T226 25"	<input type="text"/>
StoneMask 2000 (Blue/Paper) 25"	<input type="text"/>
StoneMask 3000 (Green/Blue/Clear) 25"	<input type="text"/>
StoneMask Orange 45 (24")	<input type="text"/>
StoneMask Pink 35 (24")	<input type="text"/>

Resin	Quantity
FirmaBond (Stone)	<input type="text"/>
FirmaFix (Botting)	<input type="text"/>

Grit	Quantity
All-Oxide 40/60 (Standard Grit)	<input type="text"/>
FastBlast 35/70 (Standard SinterBall)	<input type="text"/>

We've looked at our current electronic ordering system which we introduced as a temporary measure during Lock Down, and have found that although it just about does what we need it to, it could be so much more...

So, we are investing in a bespoke piece of software that will not only revolutionise the way we work in our office but it will also give our customers the ability to create online orders, if so required.

It will be web-based giving you secure access to the ordering system, review your last few orders, set-up a repeat order and make amendments. In order to ensure we still provide advice on new products, any product that is outside your normal ordering scope, will still require you to call us to ensure you're getting just the right products.

Those of you that are familiar with our website's 'quick ordering' feature, will have an idea of what we will be offering.

## 2021 WORKSHOPS



We are often asked if we will be staging any more of our popular training workshops, and you'll be pleased to hear that in 2021 we will be doing just that. If everything goes to plan, we will offer limited spaces for at least one two-day Photoblast course during the Summer months. This will include basic to medium image manipulation using a free piece of software called GIMP and basic to medium sand-carving skills. Demand will be high, so please register your interest with Lee as soon as possible.

## REFERAL SCHEME

We've never really spent any money advertising our goods and services, relying instead on word of mouth and ensuring that we provide a service worth telling others about. We like to reward people where possible for helping spread the word so Dominic has created a referral scheme for users of the etching machine and Memorial Designer software.

Any customer who has purchased Memorial Designer UK or an Etching Machine, will be given a £25 Amazon Gift Voucher for passing on information to other customers which results in a sale. It's just a little way of saying thank you for doing what a lot of you do anyway!

## PACKAGING

We're always interested in feedback, both positive and negative, and following some constructive criticism of our environmentally unfriendly Peg &

Tube packaging, which basically consisted of a large amount of Bubble-Wrap, our latest order of stainless steel Peg & Tubes is now packaged in a new, more environmentally friendly way.

We've removed the bubble-wrap, and replaced it with a recyclable cardboard matrix. This should still offer the same level of protection and be better for the environment.

If you have any feedback on the new packaging, please let us know, we'd be grateful to hear from you.



## PORT DELAYS

It seems as though we are not the only ones who fell victim to delays at the ports of Felixstowe and London Gateway. It was frustrating to find that everything we put in place to mitigate potential stock shortages, due to COVID and Brexit, didn't make any difference because of an unbelievable situation that was completely out of our control.

If the rumours are true, the delays have been caused by 1000's of containers full of useless PPE equipment that the government didn't know what to do with, which resulted in massive congestion blocking the ships from unloading and the supply of empty containers...

The containers are being cleared now, so the back-log should be diminishing but it is likely to have a knock on effect of raising shipping costs in the new year as all the containers are currently in Europe rather than the far east where they are needed.

On a brighter note, we are happy (and a little relieved) to inform you that we are now fully stocked, ready for the New Year with or without a Brexit Deal.

## SHIPPING CHARGES

We review our UK shipping options at least once a year to ensure we are getting the best value service taking into consideration your feedback.

One of the reasons we are limited in our UK shipping options, is that not every courier will take goods classed as dangerous, even in so called 'limited quantities'. At the moment we are using UK MAIL/DHL and are generally happy with the overall service. However, they are increasing their prices beginning of next year.

We have decided to absorb these price increases for the foreseeable future and review it later in 2021, as finding an alternative may be problematic, given the 'dangerous' nature of some of the goods we ship.

## 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 4th January 2021.



Obviously we haven't actually had a Christmas party but here is a reminder of how we used to celebrate in a non socially distant way. Let's look forward to a more normal 2021 where the phrase 'stay safe' isn't our regular way of finishing conversations.