

# NEWS



# THE BLAST SHOP

## WINTER 2021

- INVESTING
- AUTOMATION
- PRODUCT NEWS
- 3M
- PRICES
- SEASONS GREETINGS

### NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

#### OUR INVESTMENTS



So here we are again, coming up to the Christmas break and has anything really changed..?

Something that has drastically changed at The Blast Shop over the last 12 months is the way we are ordering.

With the increases in shipping costs and delays due to vessel capacity and local logistics, we have basically increased our stock on hand or on the water by 50% by accelerating our ordering frequency. This has put a large dent in cash flow, but we decided early on that it was the only way forward; you can't sell stock if it isn't on the shelves.

Even with the additional investment, increased order frequency and rationing there have unfortunately been times where we have run out of certain items for a short period. We didn't plan for a container stranded in Charleston Port for four weeks before it gets a vessel and then going to Northern Europe before arriving in Southampton; which you would think was a relief, but the actual destination was

supposed to be Felixstowe so they put it on another boat...

This turned a regular 2 week sailing in to a epic 3 month stencil tape odyssey that Homer himself would have been proud of.

#### YOUR INVESTMENTS

A lot of masons have taken the opportunity during recent events to make investments themselves. Sales of Goldmann sandblast equipment this year has been exceptional.

On top of the normal mobile and workshop dustless equipment sales we have also sold two Futura Automatic Sandblast Cabinets.

When we bought our first automatic sandblaster in the 1980s we took the opportunity to set up The Blast Shop in the free time we had available because we weren't doing things manually. I'm hoping that the support and assistance we provide doesn't mean our new Futura customers look to set up in competition but it does give them the opportunity to let the blaster do all the work and just get on with other revenue generating work.



To outline the benefits an automatic cabinet provides, we've developed a personalised template to illustrate how the investment in a Futura Automatic System can change your business too. You may be surprised by how quickly the investment pays for itself. If you are interested to see this in action, please contact Dom. He'll ask you some basic questions about your production and will create a personalised illustration, highlighting the potential cost or time savings.

#### LONGER ROLLS



You talked, we listened. So, by popular demand, here are 20m rolls of our best selling StoneMask Pink tape. It's proving to be such a hit that we've already placed a much larger order for next year to meet demand.

Longer rolls mean less time changing media, less risk in damaging blades, less waste and packaging. Unfortunately, the Orange tape is just too heavy for most plotters to cope with 20m rolls.

## MDUK COMMUNITY



Since its launch 3 years ago, sales of our Memorial Designer package have gone from strength to strength - we now have over 75 users. To support the user base we launched our exclusive MD UK Facebook Community which now has 51 members. This is a huge milestone and something we are really proud and excited about.

The community is really active, asking questions, sharing fonts, shapes and ideas on an almost daily basis. The Blast Shop obviously support the community but there is also support from the US. Recently, the developer of the base MemorialDesigner software told us he spends more time on our group than he does on his own - it's more informative, active and fun! He's also very impressed that UK sales were comparable to the US market as well this year!

The next update of the software is due in February. Free updates are included with the small annual support charge and we've also launched an all inclusive package where you get the current version of MDUK and Corel for £75 per month. The subscriptions includes unlimited support and all upgrades to MD and Corel (when we require it). You can still make a one off purchase for £2,470 if you choose too. Ask Dom for details and a demonstration so you can join in with the Facebook community fun.

### 3M

In the middle of October, it was confirmed that 3M would no longer be manufacturing stencil or filler products, and exiting the Monumental market for good. It was stated that this was in direct

response to rising raw material costs and shortages; compounded by the influx of cheaper but less reliable Chinese rubber stencil.

This sent shock waves through the American Monumental industry as it leaves a huge gap in supply of critical products to their market. 3M never got a foothold in the UK market but in the US, 3M were the main competitor to Anchor for Stencil products. There has been chaos as 3M users panic buy as much tape as they can whilst desperately looking for an alternative.

We are well stocked on Anchor products with more rolls in transit but Intertape (the manufacturer of Anchor tapes) have also reassured us that they would not let orders from new customers impact their current customer base.

The only product in our range this will effect is the 3M Stencil Filler. We have good stock levels at the moment and will be reverting back to the Anchor 211 stencil filler longer term, the only disadvantage is that 211 filler is only available in gallon tins rather than the more appropriate 500ml or 1 litre ones. Alternatively you can use the T-Fix spray adhesive. We use this adhesive on the PhotoBlast stencils which works a treat, it won't fill the pores as well as the 3M or 211 fillers but will provide a stronger bond on non-polished surfaces when you might otherwise use the fillers.



### EMAIL ADDRESSES

You might have noticed that our invoices have all changed this year. In order to enable members of staff to work from home through the pandemic we upgraded our

stock management software so that they could process orders remotely. This required us to import email addresses from our old software and it turns out we had a lot of old email addresses for everyone! When chasing outstanding debts we discovered a number of people who had never received their original invoices. If you fall into this category and we haven't managed to get in touch with you yet, please have a look at your recent statement and email **accounts@theblastshop.co.uk** with your main point of contact and the correct email address, it would be gratefully appreciated.



### AND THE INEVITABLE

We have been absorbing steady (and more recently rapid) increases in the cost for raw materials and shipping over the past 12 months. Unfortunately, we are no longer able to do this. As a result we have no choice but to increase the prices on the majority of our products from January the 1<sup>st</sup> by at least 10%. No price increase is good news but for some of our core products we've managed to hold prices consistent for over 10 years, back to the year that Lee started working at The Blast Shop!

Just ask Dom for the updated price list when he starts his visits in the New Year.

### A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Next year is show time but more of that in 2022. All that remains this year is to thank you for your continued custom and support and to wish you a very Merry Christmas and, most importantly, a healthy and prosperous New Year. The Blast Shop will close on 23rd December and we re-open on 4th January 2021.