

# NEWS



# THE BLAST SHOP

## CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

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### NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

#### TRADEX 2022 - REVIEW



It seems so long ago now, when Tradex 2022, the Memorial Mason's Trade event hosted by NAMM, took place in September, but we'll take this opportunity to finally give a detailed review.

After the show had been postponed the last few years, we really didn't know what to expect, especially as the feedback building up to the event was mixed, especially on attendance.

Rob and Lee travelled down on the Wednesday morning to set-up and after a delayed start, with the help of Dominic, managed to get everything in place for opening day on the Thursday – In typical The Blast Shop fashion, we were last to arrive and last to leave!

On our stand we had several new and interesting products. The main attractions being our Tripod Gantry and Magic Size – More on these later, but we also had a Hodge Clemco memorial blasting Package, Goldmann Duplo, our Etching machine, Memorial Designer and lots of other consumable goodies.

After the doors opened on Thursday, it was steady trickle

meeting and greeting people, but when 10.30am arrived it was like POW – the trickle turned into a flood! There was an amazing amount of interest in our stand right across the morning and afternoon – we really didn't have time to breathe it was that busy. Luckily Mike and Sian had travelled down to look around, and without their welcomed help, we might have been caught a bit short.

The Friday was much the same for us, albeit over a shorter period in the morning and afternoon. It really was a pleasant surprise to see the show (at least our stand) so busy for such long periods of time.

Not surprisingly, lots of interest was centred on the new innovative Tripod Gantry, and the regular demonstrations drew in lots of attention from surrounding stands as most people hadn't seen anything quite like it before; it generated lots of oohs and ahhs from the crowds of fascinated observers as the one handed cranks were operated to manoeuvre a job clear from a foundation.



Another new product which generated lots of interest was our revolutionary Magic Size.

We had a small blasted sample tile, with lettering prepared, and applied the Magic Size first thing and waited about half an hour window in which to apply the gold leaf. We then proceeded to apply Gold Leaf periodically throughout the day to illustrate how the huge gilding window can be of massive benefit to our customer...

Unbelievably, the size applied on the Thursday night was still able to take gold leaf perfectly well on the Friday morning!

We basically ended-up selling all of our available stock from the stand and had to immediately re-order more from the supplier to fulfil back orders. Another success story!

We also had the pleasure of Liam from Hodge Clemco offering advice on free blasting units on the Thursday and Ellen, from Graphtec GB, covering plotters on the Friday. They were a great addition and will be here for our Open Day – more on that later...

Throughout the show, we had a 'Ludicrous' Peg & Tube offer, and we were unsure if we would have to take the two crates back with us – They are heavy! Low and behold, nearly all of the 1200 units were sold and taken off the stand!

## CRAFTEX 2022



NAMM's trade competition, was again inundated with entries – We've noticed the last few years a proliferation of painted work, with the emphasis on actual stone masonry somewhat diminished -

Anyway, we are so proud that Rob's entry (a hand-carved etched sandstone disc on a spindle – fixed to a mirrored base) won the Gold Award, for "Hand carving, sculpture or artistic work with Stone".

## PRICES

Unfortunately, we've once again been hit by price increases across most of our core products.

Intertape, who manufacture Anchor rubber stencil in the U.S. have raised prices again, and with the Pounds poor performance against the Dollar, we've been presented with a perfect storm situation – This came into effect on our last Anchor Stencil delivery in November.

Although shipping and container costs seem to have stabilised somewhat, the cost of raw materials continue to rise and we've seen increases on grit, peg & tubes, stonemask and overblast tapes. Under the circumstances, we have decided to hold-off on increasing our prices now and wait until the New Year.

## THE FUTURE – 2023

On the back of the success of Tradex, we want to keep the momentum going into 2023, so we have a number of exciting events planned for you.

### Open Day:

Our Open Days have been a great way of bridging the gap between trade shows, as it basically is a mini-trade show in-itself – We had several stone suppliers, core-drill rig specialists, electric sack-tucks exhibiting, and even Bridge Insurance on the last one in 2018; with over 50 visitors from all over the UK.

We had planned on running an Open Day in 2021, but obviously that didn't happen because of the restrictions at that time....

So it is with great pleasure that we can announce a The Blast Shop Open Day for 2023. Not much information at this point as we've only really started to discuss it between ourselves, but lookout for updates on future newsletters and our social media platforms.

They are obviously popular and places are limited, so be sure to book your attendance when details become available.



### Training Days:

We often get asked for training on a number of skills, including deep-carving, photoblast and fixing. The last few years have been too fragmented to offer courses, but we hope to be back with regular courses in 2023 – photoblast is always popular and eagerly attended - Usually a 2 day course covering image manipulation, stencil creation handling, sandcarving and painting.

The photoblast course is based around G.I.M.P. Basically a free graphics package, similar to Adobe Photoshop. If you use are familiar with it, you should be able to easily find your way around G.I.M.P.

On day one We'll show you how to assess original artwork, use digital masks and tools. Create and utilise layers. Add lighting and shadow effects on both monotone and halftone style images. You'll then learn about printing settings and vellum production.

On day two, we'll show you how to produce a photostencil, using Rayzist's letralite kit; which has everything you need to start creating your own photo-stencils. You'll then get to learn how to apply the photoresist onto stone, then sandcarve the stencil using some of the more specialist sandblasting equipment available, including the excellent PAB Blasters.

One of the myths surrounding photostencils, especially the halftone designs, is whether you can paint them – We'll show you how to do this too, using our fantastic range of photopaints.

All of our courses are recognised by NAMM and you will receive a certificate which will go towards your continuous development and improvement program.



## SEASONS GREETINGS

With that, we'd like to wish you a very merry Christmas and prosperous New Year and thank you for your continued business and support through, what has been another challenging but interesting year. Our last day for shipping orders is 21<sup>st</sup> December.