

NEWS



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NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

OPEN DAY 2023



After our last one was cancelled due to something called COVID in 2020, we are very pleased and excited to announce that we will definitely be having a, The Blast Shop Open Day in 2023. It will take place on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd September, here at our premises in Manchester.

Lee has been busy contacting potential suppliers over the last few weeks, to see who would be interested in supporting us over the two days, and he's also been talking extensively with customers to gauge interest and get an idea of what you would like to see.

Both sets of feedback have been really positive, with lots of suppliers and Mason's expressing a keen interest in what we have planned...

So, for those of you who have never been to one of our previous Open Days, here's a little snippet of what to expect.

During the Open Day we will be looking at how you can differentiate and make your business stand-out from the competition. There will be a variety of presentations on how you might achieve this from new

skills to new technologies. All with one aim in mind – providing the best products and customer experience.

We will have a number of hands on demonstrations where you will get to play with some of our toys, including sandblasting with the Goldmann dustless sandblaster and Futura automatic cabinets. Dominic will be looking after the impact etching machine, showing how easy it is to transfer digital images from a computer or smartphone to the engraver to be reproduced as a high definition etch on stone.

Gantries and lifting devices are proving very popular, particularly when removing 'securely' anchored memorials from the cemetery. We will have a dedicated area where you can try out our 2 gantry solutions as well as electric sack trucks.

In our dedicated stencil preparation room we will have a variety of different plotters for you to use. In the Photoblast room Monika will be helping you to create your own Photoblast stencils. We use an automatic washout system but also available for use will be the Letralite kit from Rayzist which is more suitable for most masons wanting to create their own high resolution artwork and designs. We recommend getting the stencils created in the morning sessions so that you can blast and paint your designs later in the day.

No Open Day would be complete without other stands to visit. Confirmed suppliers so far include CJ Imports, Odlings Memorials, MGB Handling (Electric Sack Trucks), Hodge Clemco (Blast Pots) and Graphtec (Plotters).

NAMM will be here and we also have Bridge Insurance who provide 'Stoneguard' Insurance for memorials. It really is a mini-trade show!

The two days will be running the same sessions, so just choose which day suits you the best, you wont miss out on anything.

As on previous open days, there will be a competition running over the 2 days, only attendees will get the opportunity to take part and win over £350 worth of Blast Shop goodies. Watch this space...

We'd love to see you here but please book with the office as soon as possible as spaces are limited and demand will be high.

For those that can't make it in person, we'll have social media streams during the day but you will miss out on the full experience as we don't have interactive VR available yet!



SOCIAL MEDIA

We're not yet TikTok ready but we do have some social media presence. In addition to our private MemorialDESIGNER_UK Facebook group, where members regularly ask questions and share designs they have been working on, we also have our regular PhotoBlastPhriday articles. These articles give a flavour of the bespoke work we have been creating that week for Blast Shop customers. The hopes are that they give you ideas of what can be achieved with PhotoBlast stencils. New to our Facebook feed are:

Dom's Monday Mugshots

The Blast Shop
27 March at 10:10
Dom's Monday Mugshots!
I am pleased to introduce Chris from Martin & Sons in Plymouth, proudly displaying his coveted The Blast Shop Mug!
Martin & Sons have been our valued customers for some time using our Stenemask tapes and also about to join our growing Memorial Designer UK software community... See more



Dom has been visiting customers face-to-face all over the UK for a few years now, adding that personal touch and answering questions and offering advice and demo's on all our products and services. If you needed another reason for the visit, Dom now gives away a coveted Blast Shop during the visit.

We usually post details of one of his weekly visits to Facebook, on a Monday, with a photo of the Dom and the business he's visited holding the elegant mugs. We think it's just a way to ensure he gets a brew but it gives us an excuse to get a "Mugshot!"

So, please have look at our Facebook page, which is **theblastshopuk** where you can find this and other interesting stuff, if you arrange a visit from Dom, you too could end up on his Monday Mugshots too...

HSE VISITS INCOMING



If you haven't had a visit recently then start preparing now because they have had a big push recently with lots of unannounced visits. We had our inspection in January and since then we've known of 10-15 companies who have also enjoyed showing inspectors around their premises. Talking to others who have had recent inspections there are 2 main areas that they are focussing on at the moment.

Firstly is Dust Extraction System testing or LEV testing. A number of our customers were unsure where to go for LEV testing, our advice here is to speak with your insurance company. They often have arrangements with a local company who will test your equipment in line with regulatory guidance and it often forms part of the requirement in having insurance with them.

The second item that HSE are pushing for is Occupational Health Assessments for your staff. It's often overlooked by businesses as an added expense associated with employing staff but there are benefits to you in ensuring that your staff are assessed regularly. We once had an ex employee approach us through a no win no fee solicitor claiming hand arm vibration symptoms which he maintained were due to the work he did with air tools in our workshop. Fortunately for us we had records of tool use and specifications of those tools which proved the claim was unfounded, however if we had also been assessing our staff annually then we would have those records to rely upon. We use a national company who do on site visits which are inexpensive and don't take much time out of the working day.

ANCHOR TAPE

We had a visit from the head of European Sales IPG (Anchor) recently. One of the issues we raised was of course the significant increase in the cost of Anchor Stencil tapes over the past six months.

It's safe to say that the current situation is exactly as we predicted - when 3M pulled out of the stencil market last year, Intertape immediately inflated their costs... Basically a Supply and Demand situation.

It's not a policy we agree with, but it has left us with significant increases to all of the rubber stencil tapes. With competition hot in the UK stencil tape market, margins are tight, limiting our ability to fully absorb supplier price increases. That said, a roll of T226 25" was advertised at a "Show Special" price of €139 at the Nuremberg Show last year, we were charging £84 at the time.

STENCIL FILLER

Finally, we have had an order accepted and it should be with us in the next 6 weeks.

Worth mentioning that it will be only available the U.S. Gallon tins and expect the price to have changed significantly.

SMALL ADS

We have an Odlings 103 cabinet and compressor package available - Cabinet is in excellent condition and the 3Phase compressor has only run for 373 hours. Ideal for small jobs and house signs - Call for details.

