

NEWS



THE BLAST SHOP



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NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

ABRA DISTRIBUTORSHIP



Since 1984 The Blast Shop has exclusively offered Goldmann sandblasting equipment. The 40P we have in our workshop is not our original blaster but it does date back to the 1980's and is still going strong. It is therefore a significant moment for us to consider supplying anything other than Goldmann machinery.

We've seen and played with the ABRA equipment in the past. Technically it's always looked promising, but we've always felt the Goldmann solutions were a significant step ahead. However, when we saw the ABRA automatic table at the Verona Stone Show in September, it was apparent that ABRA has closed the gap. So, it is with great pleasure, we can announce that we are now official distributors and service agents for both Goldmann and ABRA sandblasting systems in the UK.

We're aware that there are a number of existing ABRA units in the UK at the moment that could benefit from a professional service and we are currently building up a stockpile of original spares, so that

we can get any of the ABRA manual or automatic systems back in tip top condition over the summer period. If your sandblaster is due a service then give Lee a call and we will schedule a visit, ensuring that we combine service calls in different areas of the country to keep costs down for everyone.

In February we installed a couple of new ABRA sandblasters in our workshop. The automatic table has proved a hit with our masons providing us with a cost-effective way to automate the sandblasting process. Memorials remain flat on a heavy-duty worktable and are then rolled into position within the sandblaster "bay".

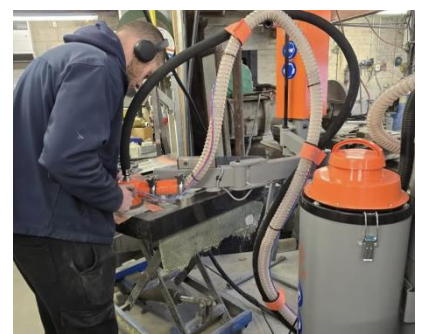
Where the ABRA system excels is in how you program the table to blast what areas you want. If you need to, you can set each line length individually, but we tend to stick to 2 or 3 blasting zones which can overlap to cover the entire inscription.

All table or bridge style automatic sandblasters are sensitive to being placed on a level floor and obviously the ABRA setup is no different. However, the system can cope with sloped surfaces, provided that they are flat (curved pages require manual blasting). In an ideal world, you wouldn't need to set the angle of the memorial but it's nice to know that it will work in the real world as well.

Are there things that the Goldmann automatic cabinet can do better?

Of course, but, for our regular work, the automatic table is now becoming often the machine of choice for our masons. There are 2 primary reasons we default to the ABRA table; firstly, we don't have to lift the memorial onto the vertical prior to blasting. Secondly, we don't have to mask off the entire stone. The dustless head and programming of the table means that you can be very precise in the areas that you blast. Once the field(s) have been set up, you can double check with a perimeter walk where the blast will take place to ensure that you don't accidentally stray outside of the protected area. It saves both time and materials by not having to mask unnecessarily.

Also new to our workshop is the smaller ABRA JUNIOR sandblaster, complete with support arm. This unit is better suited to smaller workshops producing less than 5 memorials a week. When attached to the electric support arm it allows even new operators to use the sandblaster whilst ensuring that the head remains perpendicular to the stone and therefore less likely to cause any lift in the stencil. It takes the strain off your back too!



The Blast Shop has always focussed on only selling equipment that you need, not the product that makes us the most profit. We also want you to know exactly what you're getting when you buy from us, which is why we now have five different sandblasting units in our workshop. If you want to see the benefits of how an automatic system works or are interested in adding a standalone dustless machine to your workshop, then give Rob or Lee a call and we'd be happy to give you advice but more importantly, schedule some time for you to use any of our equipment to make your own decision easier.

SWANSEA ROADSHOW

Following on from our successful visits to Exeter and more recently Perth, Rob and Lee are being let-loose again! This time The Blast Shop is heading down to Swansea in South Wales.

The Roadshow will take place on Thursday 15th of May at The Village Hotel, Langdon Road, Waterfront, Swansea, SA1 8QY from 10am – 4pm.

In the conference room, we will be presenting the latest versions of our software packages, The Memorial Designer UK (MDUK) and The Memorial Order Management System (Moms). We'll also have an Diamond Impact Etching Machine on demonstration and the new Graphtec CE8000/60 Cutting Plotter.

Outside, we'll have a practical demonstration of the innovative and popular Tripod Gantry system. Places are limited for this one, due to the capacity of the conference room, so please book your interest immediately by emailing us, or calling the office directly. Based off recent feedback, demand for places will be high.

GOLD



gold prices continue to rise, which tends to happen in times of uncertainty, which these most certainly are given all the recent tariff import and export activity (Ahem). Some of which we'll come onto later.

So gold is at a record high, which means that we have recently had no option but to increase our gold leaf prices. It will probably mean that prices increase again when we next order in. Not much we can do about it unfortunately, but there may be some relief if the Pound continues to do well against the Dollar, as gold leaf is purchased in Dollars. However, every cloud and all that – It also means that if you have any scrap gold – Send it in to us as for assaying, as you're likely to see a much nicer return!

TARIFFS & TRUMP



You must have been living as a hermit in deepest Borneo with no access to the outside world for the last few weeks, if you haven't been bombarded with the word: Tariff.

It's been everywhere recently, and disregarding the politics that are driving the situation, it's surprising how little the general public know about tariffs and the wider world of Importing and Exporting.

We deal with tariffs, duty and commodity codes on a regular basis. A commodity code, also known as a tariff code or HS code (Harmonized System Code), is an internationally recognised numerical code used to classify products for import and export purposes. This is then used by the local customs authority, in our case HMRC to charge import Duty where necessary.

So, how does this affect you, our lovely customers...

Well, this duty is an additional charge which is 'usually' allocated against specific commodity codes. For example, some of our stainless-steel products are currently under what is called 'Safeguard', which means there is an additional 25% duty charge for imports of this type. The government occasionally introduces this type of additional tax to try and protect the locally sourced market from cheaper imports. So, ultimately every £1 we spend on the product, HMRC take an additional 25p!

With the potential of universal Tariffs being implemented across the globe, this means that ALL imports may end-up bearing additional duty costs.

Now, some of this can be offset if currency exchange rates are favourable, but when you start talking about 10-25% duty charges across everything, then we start to get nervous, and unfortunately this will almost certainly lead to price increases.

As it stands, we haven't implemented an annual, or inflation-based price increase – We are waiting for the current trade situations dust to settle before finalising, but there will be some kind of price increase in the near future – We just don't know what it will be.

TRADEX 2025

We'll take this opportunity to remind you that the N.A.M.M The National Association of Memorial Masons' trade show, Tradex 2025 will take place at The Warwickshire Exhibition Centre on 4th & 5th September.

We have already started preparations for our stand, as although it seems a long way off with these types of events, it will be upon us in no time. Please put a note in your diaries now, as it should be well worth a visit as it's the only Memorial Masonry specific trade show out there. You will need to register directly with N.A.M.M to attend.