

# NEWS

# THE BLAST SHOP



## Christmas 2013

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- Training Courses

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 2

NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY



Our Automatic Cabinet

### OPEN DAY SUCCESS

“Really good to see it for real rather than on the internet.”

“Seriously well done”

“We had a great day”

“Very enjoyable and informative both seeing what was on offer and chatting with other masons”

“It was great to be able to have a go with the different tools and machinery”

“Enjoyed the PhotoBlast stencils - from creating a monotone design through to making the stencil and blasting it using the PAB blaster”

These were just some of the comments made by masons who attended our open day in September. When we first looked into holding an open day to



Seminar Room

celebrate the opening of our new warehouse we envisaged we might get a fair few of the local masons to visit us. Little did we realise the amount of interest we would generate. Despite the odd cancellation late in the week, we still had 44 companies and 71 people over the 2 days (nearly as many as we saw during 3 days of the NFE this year!). We had visitors from Cornwall, Northern Ireland and the north of Scotland who all found the trip worthwhile. Our wholesale exhibitors were also enthusiastic about the event, the five exhibitor stands were busy throughout both days.

Whilst it was possible to see everything from polishing to sandblasting, cleaning to painting, the seminars focussed on trying to



Gantry and Lockdown Display

make your work stand out from the competition. One of the most rewarding sights was watching people realise that PhotoBlast stencilling is not difficult to do and the results generated are significantly better than those generated using standard rubber or pvc cut stencils.

The day didn't go without the odd hitch (we didn't realise how hungry masons would be after an hour or so of seminars!) but by the second day we got more into the swing of things which meant that at least we got food on the Saturday... We must have done some things right though because everyone stayed for at least four hours with the last people leaving more than eight hours after they arrived!



Thomas Group



C J Imports



3 Step Polishing

## DOING IT ALL AGAIN

As the first open day was so well received and also over subscribed we are going to be holding another 2 open days on 28<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March. If the last one is anything to go by then book now to avoid disappointment. Whilst it would be lovely to see some of the people who came in September we will be running a very similar day to the previous open day, watch out for a new set of seminars at the end of 2014.



**Odgings posing for a caption competition?**

## POLISH IT QUICK

One of the best received products we had at our open day were the three step polishing pads. These high quality, thick pads are capable of polishing black granite with three diamond pads and a buffing pad. Each individual step takes slightly longer than when working with a standard 7 stage process but overall it takes about two thirds the length of time it would take normally. The pads work out at £74.85 for a full set, so they are cheaper than our high quality 7 step system too! By popular demand, the buffing pads and polishing paste will be available early in the new year.

## TRAINING COURSES

We're always keen to try and help out whenever we can, whether that is spending time on the phone discussing problems you are facing or giving advice and demonstrations for visiting masons. One thing we haven't done for nearly 20 years is training courses for the trade. This is set to change in 2014 as we plan on starting a number of courses primarily to promote quality and pride in our work. The feedback from our open days indicated that

one day was insufficient for the many processes we covered, however it would have been impossible for us to train the number of people present in any specific aspect of our work. Moving forward we have one course on PhotoBlast stencils that is close to completion. The course will be run over a single day and will cover everything from selecting appropriate artwork, converting the artwork to black and white, creation of stencils and blasting glue-less and glued designs. If you are interested in the course then please contact Lee.

## COLDER WEATHER

Whilst we have been relatively lucky so far this winter and haven't had much snow as yet the temperature has still dropped. Lower temperatures mean that PVC sandblast tapes can become harder to cut, particularly in the morning. One tip is to store your current roll of tape near a radiator so that it's as warm as possible when you cut it.

## ORANGE GAFFER TAPE

Over the last few months we have been trialling a new overblast tape in our memorial business and we're impressed. It is a fluorescent orange gaffer tape so you can't lose it in the workshop. It has a fairly thick pvc layer and will stick to anything - it hasn't lifted once while we've been using it. It doesn't tear quite as easily as thinner tapes but once you get the knack it is not a problem. We haven't experienced the glue residue problems that you often get with gaffer tapes and perhaps best of all it's the cheapest gaffer tape we've ever sold.

## SHINING BRIGHT

We launched our popular MonuPaint range of paints in 2012 when it became apparent Lithichrome would not be available for export any more. Since then we have been adjusting slightly the colour of the silver paint. Our new silver colour is our brightest yet! A significant amount of the silver colour comes from aluminium flakes in the paint. In some paints the aluminium floats to the surface of the coat of paint and plates to

create a very shiny surface finish however this comes at a cost. Plating aluminium paint doesn't last as long as paint where the aluminium remains in suspension within the paint, you can test this yourself, plated aluminium will come off on your finger with a firm rub. Our latest silver paint keeps the aluminium in suspension but still has a bright finish to it (which doesn't dull over time). The MonuPaint range is available in spray cans as well as liquid form for use with an airbrush.

## ETCHING MATTERS

With the increased interest in high quality designs it's worth re-visiting the Granite Impact Etcher. This little machine emulates a manual etching process by hitting the stone with a diamond tip rather than burning the surface with a laser. The etcher has been designed for people who don't know anything about technology and want to stay that way. The only complicated part about using the machine is generating suitable artwork to download to it and for a small fee (roughly £15) the artwork can be done for you so that all you need to do is connect the etcher up to your computer and press the start button. To explain the system clearer a small animated video has been put together to show you the benefits of the machine and how it can easily be incorporated into your business. Have a look at [tinyurl.com/ofsvbof](http://tinyurl.com/ofsvbof) for more information.



## CHRISTMAS (AGAIN!)

I'm sure it comes around faster every year! With our Christmas rush well under way, Lee, Monika, Sue, Gavin, Steve, Mike and Rob wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.