

NEWS



THE BLAST SHOP

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NEWS FOR THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY

STAINLESS STEEL DUTY

As well as outside pressures on fuel and material costs, a fortnight ago we were informed that HMRC are introducing safeguarding duty to a wide range of stainless-steel products from the beginning of July – A massive 50%! We've done some homework and it appears that most of our products sit outside the scope of this extra import duty, but that could easily change. If it does, then we would have no other option but to increase our prices, as we just aren't able to absorb that amount of additional cost.

GOLDMANN FUTURA



As agents for Goldmann and ABRA we are ideally placed to provide advice on how automation can help achieve your business goals, whether that is more capacity, more consistent blast depth or just the opportunity to leave the workshop early on a Friday! When Haven Memorials first visited us in early 2025 it was clear the best automation solution for them would be the Goldmann Futura cabinet.

Roll forward just over a year and we're delighted to say the machine is now installed and providing Haven with the much needed extra capacity they required. Delays in manufacturing meant that The Blast Shop had to get creative to ensure that Haven were able to meet the increased demands the Futura was there to resolve. We are determined to provide as good an experience of large purchases as we can and in this instance we loaned one of our automatic blasters for a couple of months to get them over the hump of the extra work they had taken on.

As is often the way with larger installations a few changes were made to the design to ensure the system fitted their workshop perfectly. In the middle of April the machine left Germany and despite a random customs inspection Rob and Steve met the delivery vehicle to assist with the unloading and installation.

Once installed, attention turned to hands-on training. Rather than a brief demonstration, time was



spent guiding the team through the full operation of the system and sharing practical tips from real-world experience. The aim was not just to explain how the machine works, but to help operators achieve consistent, high-quality results efficiently and confidently.



Installations like this are about more than the machinery itself. They're about support, answering questions and passing on knowledge that helps ensure long-term success. Seeing the system up and running, and knowing the team were comfortable using it, made the trip entirely worthwhile.

Alongside their new impact engraver, the Futura cabinet will allow Haven to improve quality and productivity within their new workshop. Many thanks to Haven Memorials for their patience during the manufacturing process and for the warm welcome extended to Rob and Steve on site. We wish them every success with their new Futura Automatic and look forward to supporting them for many years to come.

ROADSHOWS

Following the success of last year's roadshows, we'll be getting back on the road throughout 2026, giving customers the opportunity to see a range of equipment in person and explore our Memorial Designer and MOMS software. We understand that not everyone can make trade shows or our open days in Manchester, so our road shows are our way of getting closer to you, giving as many people as possible the chance to chat directly with Lee and Rob.

We're, therefore, pleased to confirm a two-day roadshow covering London and Norfolk, where we'll be bringing selected equipment and demonstrating both Memorial Designer and our Memorial Order Management System. These events are a great opportunity for us to spend face-to-face time with you, answering your questions, discussing issues the trade faces and showing how modern equipment and software can make a genuine difference to your business, ensuring it's working for you as much as you work for it. We've secured two excellent, easily accessible venues:

Tuesday 21st July
Mercure Hotel, Tunbridge Wells,
TN2 4QL

Wednesday 22nd July
The King's Lynn Innovation Centre,
King's Lynn, PE30 5BY

Spaces at both venues are extremely limited, so please book your place as soon as possible.

We're also planning a long-overdue visit to Northern Ireland in September, so watch this space!



SOFTWARE



We continue to develop and refine Memorial Designer, with recent updates focused on improving accuracy, usability and day-to-day workflow. These changes are based on feedback from users and our own experience using the software in real memorial workshops.

One useful addition is the ability to copy inscription text directly into Notepad. This makes it easier to check wording, share text with colleagues, customers, or authorities and keep clean copies of inscriptions without the risk of transcription errors.

We've also introduced enhanced kerning control, allowing finer adjustment of character spacing. This helps achieve better-balanced lettering, particularly on longer inscriptions or tighter layouts where spacing can make a big difference to the finished result. You can now confidently save kerning values, and the system will automatically keep those adjustments for use next time the font is loaded.

Another improvement is the option to pinpoint the desired location of multiple block text on memorial shapes. This gives greater control when positioning text, especially on shaped memorials or panels, helping ensure consistency and accuracy between approved designs and final production.

Finally, a drop shadow effect has been added to lettering. Something we don't do a lot of in our own

business, but it was a feature request from one of our customers.

As always, these updates are about making Memorial Designer more practical, efficient and reliable in everyday use. The new features will be demonstrated at upcoming roadshows, and we're happy to go through them with customers who want to get more out of the software.

A link for the download and instructions will be posted on the Facebook Group, but any questions, you can get in touch with James in the office, or via james@theblastshop.co.uk

NEW TEAM MEMBER



We're pleased and excited to introduce to you our new team member, James Duerden.

James has been with us for the past 4 months working hard in the background, primarily involved with software development.

He's certainly hit the ground running using his skills and experience to implement our latest Memorial Designer upgrade, with fixing a few bugs along the way.

James has also started to help with technical support calls and has already began rolling out the MDUK update to selected users.

He comes to us with a degree in computer science with games, experience with VR and AR, so you can imagine that learning the memorial trade is a bit of a learning curve but he is settling in well!