

FENCING TIMES

The UK & Ireland

2023, Issue 1



Fancy Fence
presents
Banana Gate

New Beginnings

Until December I was the co-owner of the FOBS business – and the proud co-publisher of the FOBS Magazine. It's been my pleasure to work on the magazine for just over 10 years. During those 10 years, we've produced a lot of fine articles. Made the market smarter. Entertained fencing installers with both good and not so good jokes, as well as generally informing them about what is happening in the sector.

Over the past 10 years, I've personally become acquainted with an awful lot of great, fantastically friendly people, a few of whom have become lifelong friends. I've also learnt a lot because I'd never run my own business before, nor published a magazine. But sometimes it's time for a change and the result of that change is right before your eyes: the Fencing Times.

A completely new magazine for the fencing industry. With a new layout and a new style. Published by a new company.

There is a lot for you to read in the Fencing Times about the supplier side of the market. About new and improved fences, gates, motorised systems and access control systems. About new and expanding factories. About open days, anniversaries and a whole lot more. We'll also keep you up to date with events in the sector and about what is going on in trade associations.

Besides all that, we want to give fencing installers an opportunity to have their say. Hence, our appeal in this very first issue: Have you delivered a project that you are proud of? One for which you have great photos or an interesting story to tell?

rembrandt@fencingtimes.com





Or do you have a story about a funny, dumb or especially clever action by an installation team? If so, do let us know and we can share it with the market.

Do you have an opinion about something? Then write it down in a nice column. Or phone us with your story if you don't fancy writing it yourself and we'll do the writing part for you. Don't be shy – we're not some publishing house with a swanky office full of suits, where you're not taken seriously until you have 25 installation teams on the road and a 10 million euro turnover. Quite the opposite: we're simply a bunch of people with a passion for fencing. For us, each and every fencing installer is important, be they big or small. And we like to be called by our first names.

Because we want to reach as many fencing installers as possible, the Fencing Times is a free magazine. Every fencing company gets a printed version in their letterbox every month at no cost, and everyone in the company can sign up for a free digital version. If you got hold of this issue third-hand, then be sure to subscribe immediately via the website before you forget.

We hope you enjoy reading this first issue and all the issues to come.

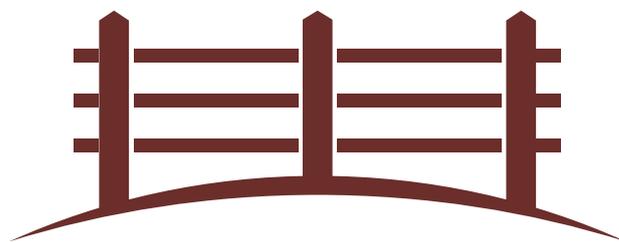
Rembrandt Happel

PS: Please let us know what you think of this revamped magazine. Tell us your thoughts on the style, the content, and issues we cover – we'd really love to hear your feedback. ■



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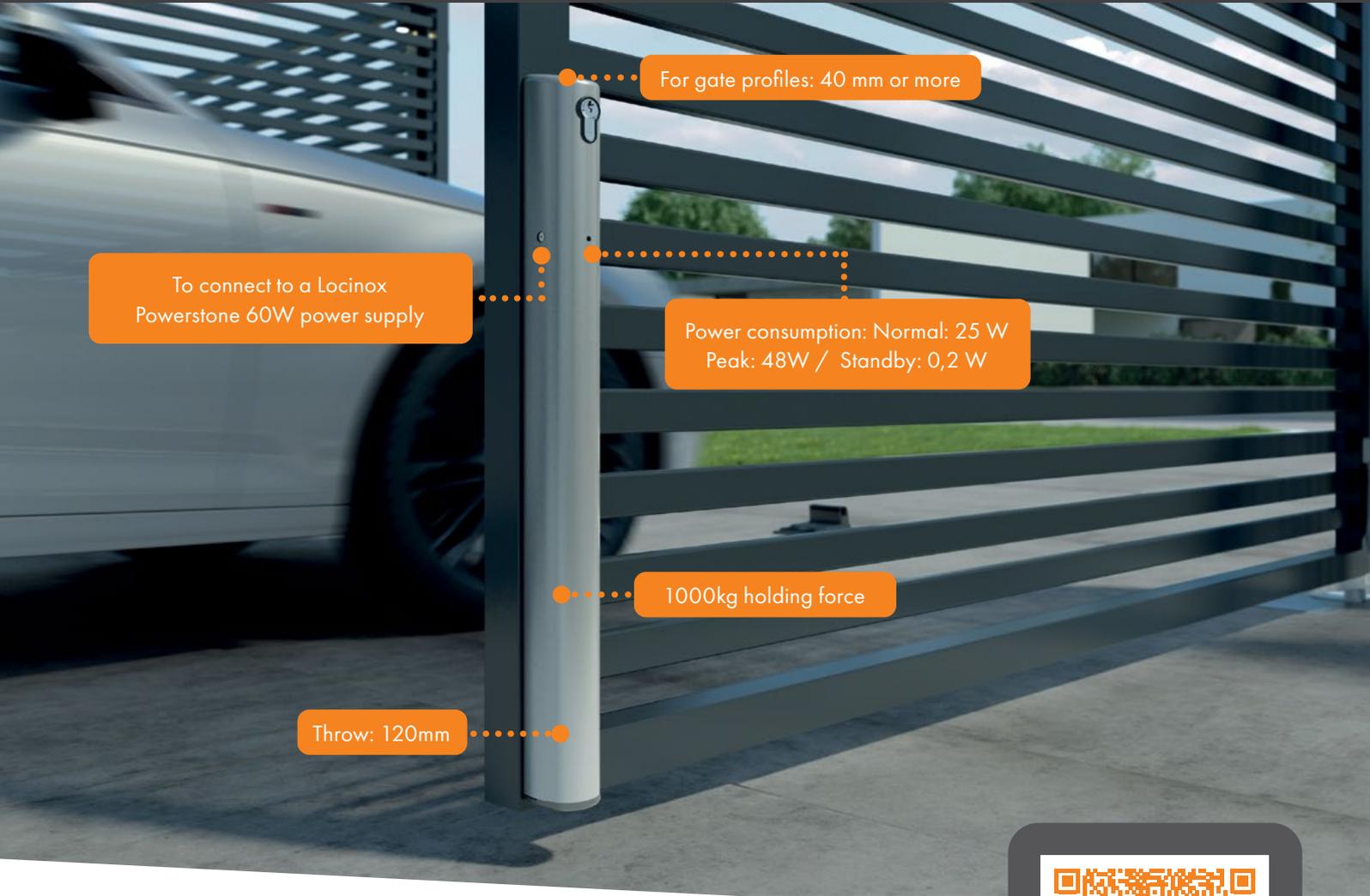


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Are you a fencing installer, but don't receive the Fencing Times? Call or email us and we'll put it right. You can also call or email us to sign up for a digital subscription; we'll be happy to add you to our mailing list.

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1) In Belgium, Germany, France, the UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.

FENCE POST



Marcel @Berlemann

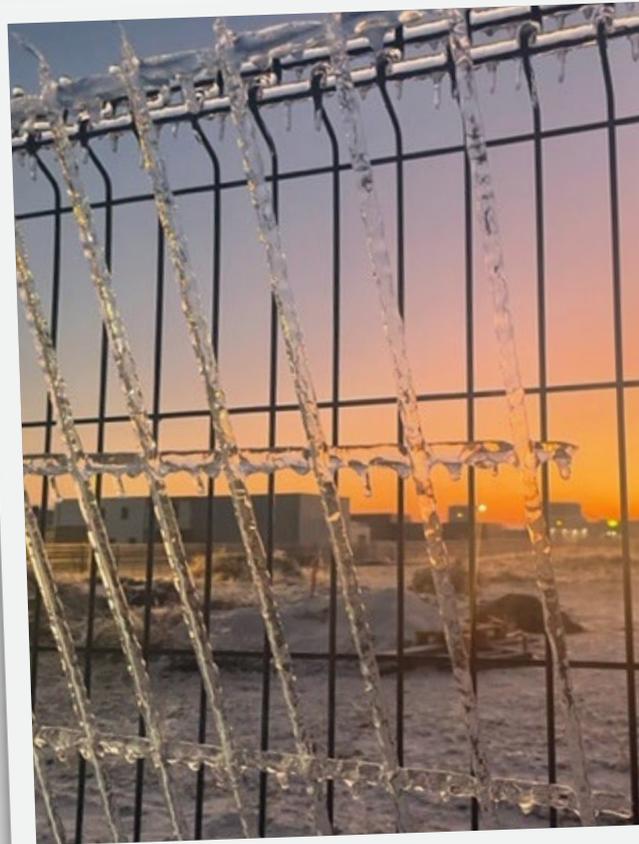
In the past year, German gate manufacturer Berlemann has supplied fencing and gates to Off-Grid Europe, an organisation that installs solar energy plants in remote areas of Senegal. You might have read about it in FOBS Magazine. Marcel Pfüller of Berlemann sent us these photos of the components of one of these solar energy plants while in transit. An Off-Grid truck unfortunately ended up stranded in the mud on its way to a village in rural Senegal. "But the Senegalese are clearly pragmatic people," Marcel wrote. "Perhaps these photos will give some fencing worker somewhere an idea for transporting materials across difficult terrain." Indeed, Marcel. It's certainly something other than having a bit of a play with the quad bike, on the boss's time.





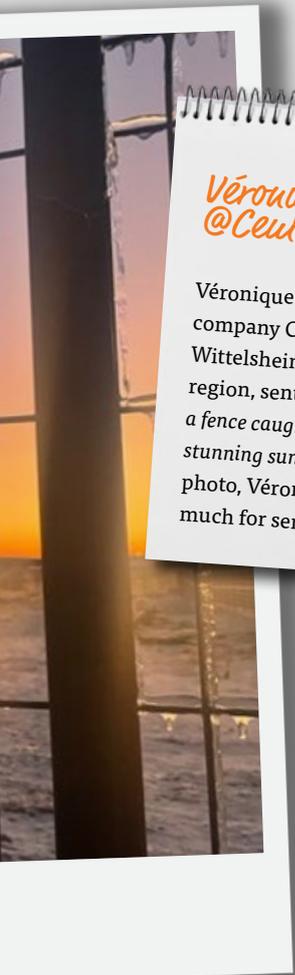
Matthias @Gartenhag

While we're sharing weather photos: Matthias Mosimann of fencing company Gartenhag ('Gartenhag' means garden fence in Swiss German) from Menziken sent us this photo of a rainbow that ends precisely in his trailer. "They say that there's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow," he writes, "but they've never said which end..." Thanks for the photo, Matthias!



Jeroen @B&G Hekwerk

Another lovely image of a fence and the sun, though these are not the last rays of the day but the first, shining over the still-virgin snow. Jeroen Huisman of B&G's Belgian branch in Mechelen took the photo on a project in Zeebrugge, when the temperature was -10 degrees. Gorgeous photo, Jeroen! Thanks for sending it in.



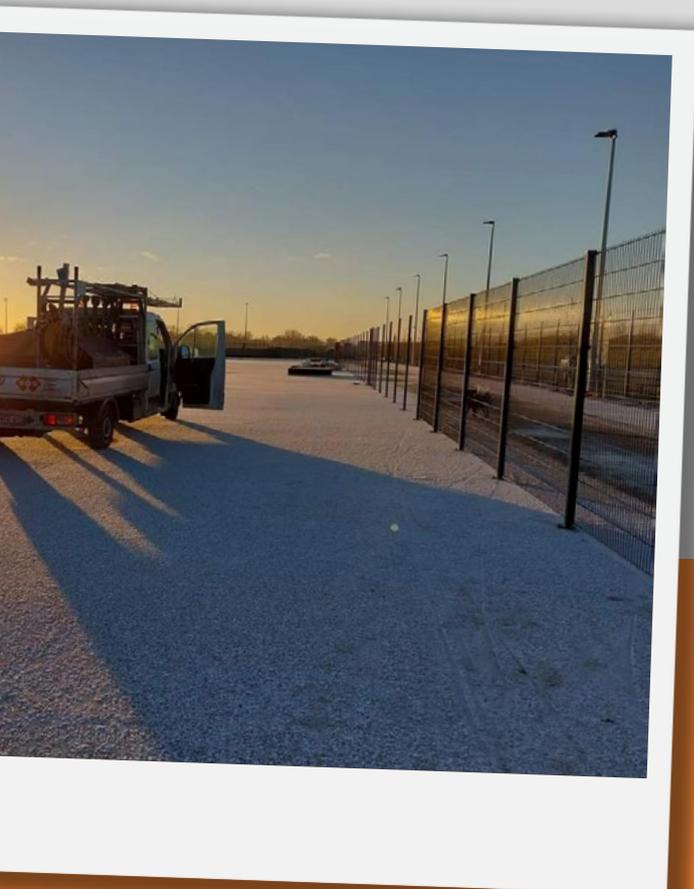
*Véronique
@Cemma Heyer*

Véronique Heyer, of fencing company Cemma Heyer from Wittelsheim in France's Alsace region, sent us this photo, "of a fence caught between ice and a stunning sunset". It's a beautiful photo, Véronique! Thank you so much for sending it in.



Franck @Multisepa

Franck Walravens of fencing company Multisepa created this special extension of wire panels on top of a mesh fence around a cat shelter, to prevent the cats getting out. A creative solution, Franck! Thanks for the photo!







Nidal @Marantec

The photo of the month comes to us from Nidal Hasan, export manager at drive manufacturer Marantec. He came across this colonial gate in Cyprus. Thanks for your submission, Nidal! The construction radio is heading your way!

Send us your photos!

Would you like to share a great photo with your colleagues in the industry? Scroll through the photos on your phone and send the loveliest and the most fun ones to fencepost@fencingtimes.com. Send as many as you like, we can never get enough! The reader who submits the most beautiful or fun photo of the month wins a Locinox construction radio.

New export director for Gardenode

Gardenode, a Belgian supplier of primarily privacy fencing, based in Mouscron near Kortrijk, has a new export director. Until now the majority of the company's turnover has come from France. This winter Bas Hendriks joined the company to extend its activities into the rest of Europe – and, if possible, America – in the coming years.

“We’ve been growing exponentially since 2019,” business unit director David Deslypper says. “In France in the past three years we’ve built up a nationwide network of wholesalers and big fencing installers. We now want to grow the same kind of network in the rest of Europe as well. That’s why we’ve brought Bas in to join us. He has experience in business development, and speaks a few different languages.”

Bas Hendriks previously worked for an arm barrier manufacturer, so the fencing market is not completely unknown to him. This will come in handy, because as he says, *“scouting is a big part of business development. We need companies that are a good fit for us in terms of their growth ambitions and organisation. The people working there also need to be on the same wavelength in terms of their mindset, because we want our collaboration to be enjoyable. So we prefer to take a bit longer to find the right partners, and then there’s a bigger chance of being able to create a long-term partnership with them. I’ve been lucky with the timing in that regard, as I was able to go to Perimeter Protection in Nuremberg in January and then to Fencetech in Oklahoma in February, and I’m already starting to get a good idea of how the European and US markets work.”*

Hendriks is a crucial link for Gardenode. David Deslypper picks up the conversation again: *“We’re currently scaling up in all sorts of areas. For example, in the Christmas holidays we moved from Dottignies to Mouscron, where we have five times as much storage space. We’re also continuing to expand the internal sales team, so we can keep responding to every request for a quote within four hours, and we’re automating our order-picking system further to enable us to load the trucks faster. All of these things are only useful if volume continues to grow rapidly too. With Bas on export, I’m certain that that’s going to happen.”* ■



Bas Hendriks

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Assa Abloy takes over D&D

At the end of last year, the Australian lock manufacturer, D&D Technologies, which is based in the Frenchs Forest suburb of Sydney, was taken over by Swedish-based industry peer, Assa Abloy.

'I'm delighted to welcome D&D Technologies into the group,' says CEO Nico Delvaux. 'The company will strengthen our current range of gate accessories and it presents further opportunities for growth.' Simon Ellis, executive vice president and head of Assa Abloy Opening Solutions Pacific & North East Asia, adds:

'D&D has solid expertise in developing premium gate accessories and its extensive portfolio makes it an excellent addition to our Pacific & North East Asia Division. I'm looking forward to working with their experienced team on the continuation of D&D's successful journey.'

Founded in 1989, D&D Technologies has around 110 employees. In 2021, the company's turnover was in the region of 44 million euros (68 million Australian dollars). ■

Nico Delvaux



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Avantgates launches new 4 Series

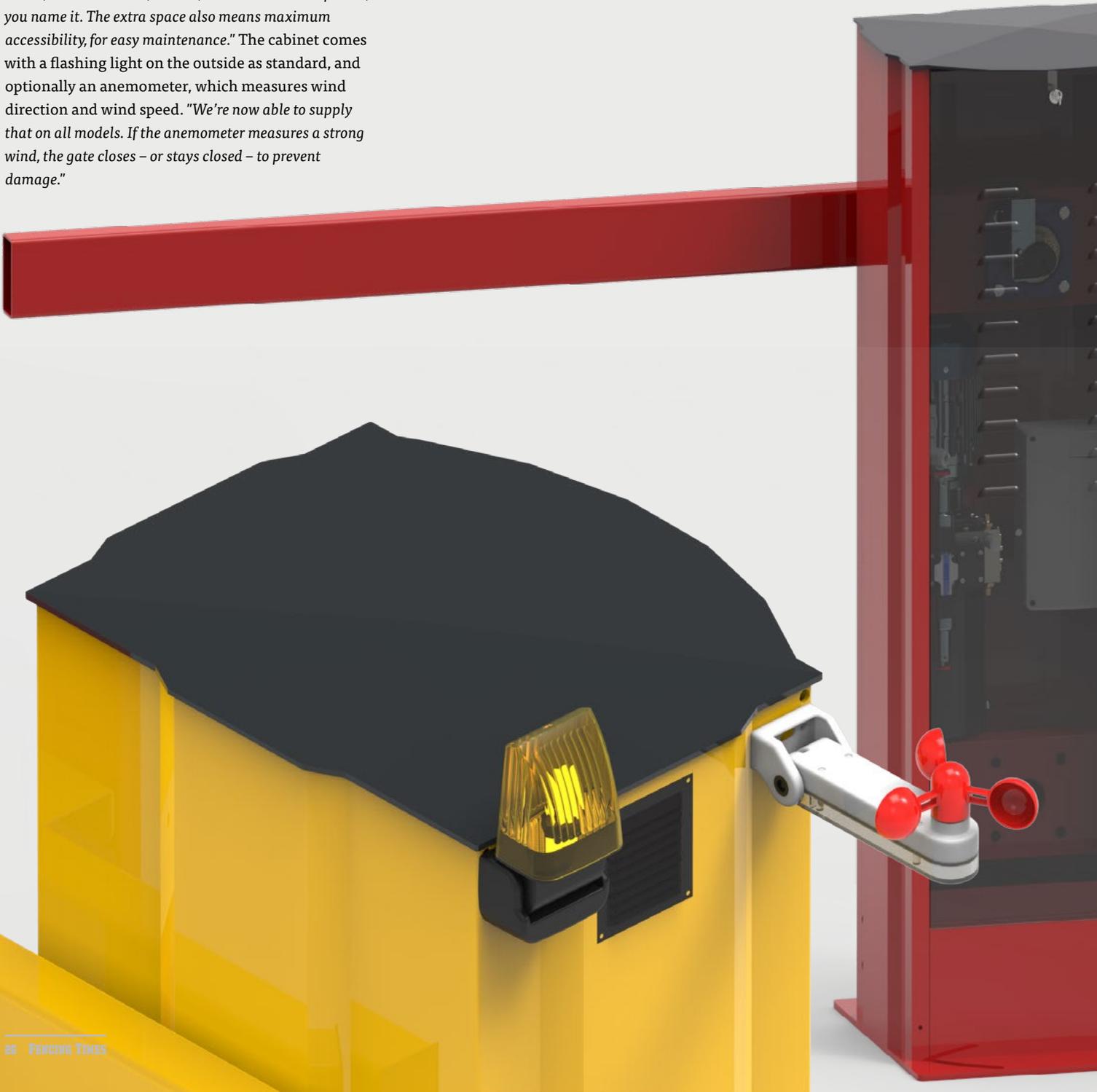
Italian gate manufacturer Avantgates released a new range of vertical gates. Known as 4.x, it is the successor to the 1 series. The new 4 series is available with either a high or a low beam. The version with the high beam is available in both an industrial and a residential version.



The main difference with the 1 series is the drive pillar. In the 1 series the controls and other electronics were housed in a separate cabinet, installed up against the pillar. "Now we have a gate column which contains and accommodates both the hydraulics and the electronics," CEO Loris Gentili says.

PILLAR

The new 4-series column is 1.6 metres tall and made of steel. "We've made it extra-spacious," Gentili says, "so there's room for all the accessories the customer wants, such as heaters, coolers, additional control panels, you name it. The extra space also means maximum accessibility, for easy maintenance." The cabinet comes with a flashing light on the outside as standard, and optionally an anemometer, which measures wind direction and wind speed. "We're now able to supply that on all models. If the anemometer measures a strong wind, the gate closes – or stays closed – to prevent damage."



RESIDENTIAL

The new 4.x Avantgates for residential driveways have a maximum passage width of 4.5 to 5.75 metres, depending on the type of infill. They are available with a high or a low beam. "We use the high beam for infills that fold together, like a grille hanging from the boom gate at a level railway crossing," Gentili says. "The low beam is for the rigid varieties of infill. With the low gate, a rectangular gate frame simply stands upright next to the gateway. In this case you do need to allow for clearance where the gate extends backwards, but then you get extra passage width in return."

INDUSTRIAL

The industrial version of the new 4 series has a maximum opening width of 7.5 metres, or up to 6 metres in case of a closed infill. It is supplied with a larger cylinder as standard, but the smaller versions can also be fitted with the small cylinder used in the residential gate. "That small cylinder – when it's combined with an optional, larger oil tank – can bring the opening speed down to 15 seconds," Gentili says. "That's incredibly fast for a vertical gate; the standard opening speed is around 45 seconds."



PEDESTRIAN GATE

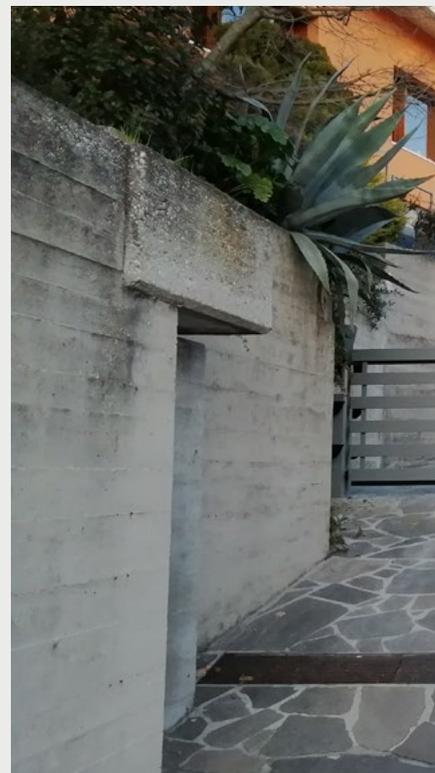
Just like the existing series, the new 4 series is available in single and double versions. In addition, it can be combined with a swing gate. The swing gate is powered by an underground gate drive, operated by the controls for the vertical gate. "That ensures that the different wings close neatly, one after the other," Gentili says. "The pedestrian gate means that businesses are always able to let customers in on foot, while keeping the driveway closed to vehicle traffic."

OPTIONS

The new gate is supplied with a remote control as a standard and optionally via an app. "But naturally it can be fitted with all sorts of signalling equipment including card readers, keypads and so forth," Gentili says, "It can also be fitted with various types of LED lighting: there is a lighting system that illuminates the gateway in the open position, but also a system that lights up the gate itself, either in the open or closed position, or both. ■



The residential version of the new 4 series can be supplied with a low gate and an empty frame. The fencing installer can screw infill into the frame himself. This allows the gate to be combined with any type of fencing.





The low-gate version raises the gate leaf to stand upright next to the gateway when open.



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Six winners presented with Fencing Awards at Twickenham Stadium

In mid-October, former rugby player Kyran Bracken presented six newly-created Fencing Awards, on behalf of the UK's Association of Fencing Industries (AFI). The awards honour fencers for their professionalism and craftsmanship.



Mike Mander and Sam Murphy of Topan Fencing accepting the Project of the Year Award.



Topan Fencing won the Award for Project of the Year, with a project of 300,000 pounds sterling for a large school for children of all ages in need of special education, and for children with disabilities. It ranged from park fencing through football cages to highway noise barrier fencing and anti-ram fencing that keeps vehicles out.

The awards ceremony was held at Twickenham Stadium in London, the UK's second-largest stadium (after Wembley) and home of the English rugby team. All finalists and sponsors were invited to attend a celebratory luncheon at the stadium, and we were there too.

AWARDS

The AFI created the UK Fencing Awards as part of an extensive project to raise the profile of the fencing industry, while making fencers more aware of just how good they really are. "Everyone encounters fencing on a daily basis," AFI director Pete Clark says, "but they rarely see the training and skills involved. With the Fencing Awards, we wanted to encourage fencing installers to do their absolute best work."

CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

In the runup to the grand final, installers had the opportunity to submit three projects per business to demonstrate their thorough knowledge of the profession. Photos of each project were required, along with a detailed description of what the client expected when commissioning the project – and how these requirements were met. Clients' contact details had to be provided too, so that judges could verify that the respective clients really were happy with the work. The Contractor of the Year Award was presented in four categories, according to revenue.



Jon Hobden of Littlewood Fencing receives the Contractor of the Year Award in the Tango category, for fencers with a turnover of more than 3 million pounds sterling. Also pictured: Russell Wells of sponsor CLD Fencing Systems.

Littlewood Fencing won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Tango category (for installers with a turnover of more than 3 million pounds sterling) for installing hoardings at Euston Station in London. The station is currently undergoing major renovations as it will be the terminus of HS2, the new high-speed line from London to the North-West.





ADDITIONAL AWARDS

In addition to the four awards for the best fencing installer, there were two more awards to be won. The Project of the Year Award is presented for a project that is complex, innovative and challenging. All fencing installers were eligible to compete, including those who are not AFI members. Here, too, entrants were required to supply large amounts of information. The ceremony finished with the Richard Corrie Lifetime Contribution Award. Nominees were required to have worked in the industry for at least 20 years, and to have made a significant contribution to the industry in some way during that time.

Gary Wood of QAB Systems accepted the Richard Corrie Award on behalf of Chris Johnstone. Also pictured: John Corrie.



Louise and Charlie Wright of Front Row Fencing, with Chris Hambridge of sponsor McVeigh Parker behind them to the right. Front Row Fencing won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Bravo category (for installers with a turnover of up to 750,000 pounds sterling) with this project, for which livestock fencing or agricultural mesh needed to be installed in artificial dunes.

WINNERS

After lunch, Kyran Bracken took the stage. He began by sharing some interesting and funny anecdotes about his rugby career. He then presented the Awards to the winners. In the Bravo category, for installers with a turnover of up to 750,000 pounds sterling, the Award went to Front Row Fencing from the town of Market Rasen in Lincolnshire. In the Echo category, for installers with a turnover of up to 1.5 million pounds sterling, the Award went to Tomley Projects of Faringdon, between Oxford and Swindon. Coventry-based Harper Chalice won the Contractor of the Year Award in the Sierra category, for installers with turnover of up to 3 million pounds sterling. Finally, the Award in the Tango category, for installers with more than 3 million pounds sterling in turnover, went to Littlewood Fencing near Hastings on the south coast.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR

The Project of the Year award went to Topan Fencing from Liskeard in Cornwall. The Richard Corrie Lifetime Contribution Award was presented to Chris Johnstone of QAB Systems. He received the award for inventing a tool that allows you to easily lift and transport panels of 358 on site. Unfortunately Johnstone was unable to accept the award in person; he was represented by Gary Wood. ■



Tomley Projects won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Echo category (for an installer with a turnover of up to 1.5 million pounds sterling). "This was a very exciting project," owner Tom Bowlby says. "We did all the groundwork, construction and fencing for this equestrian build. There's privacy fencing made of creosoted timber for a separate quarantine carrel, with Duralock fencing made of PVC and post and rail for the tracks to the arena and the paddocks. We also made another retaining wall and clad it with wood. While this may sound like a lot of variations in fencing, each served a purpose and we managed to blend the different types, creating a flow in the fence lines."





Harper Chalice won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Sierra category (for installers with a turnover between 1.5 and 3 million pounds sterling) with this project for British energy company Sembcorp. Here, a battery site was fenced off with wire panels topped with an electric fence with detection function, and a separate detection system on the fence. Both detection systems are connected to cameras, which send images of the alarm location to the control room immediately if the alarm sounds.



Adam O'Reilly of Harper Chalice, with Alistair Henman from sponsor Zaun Limited on the right

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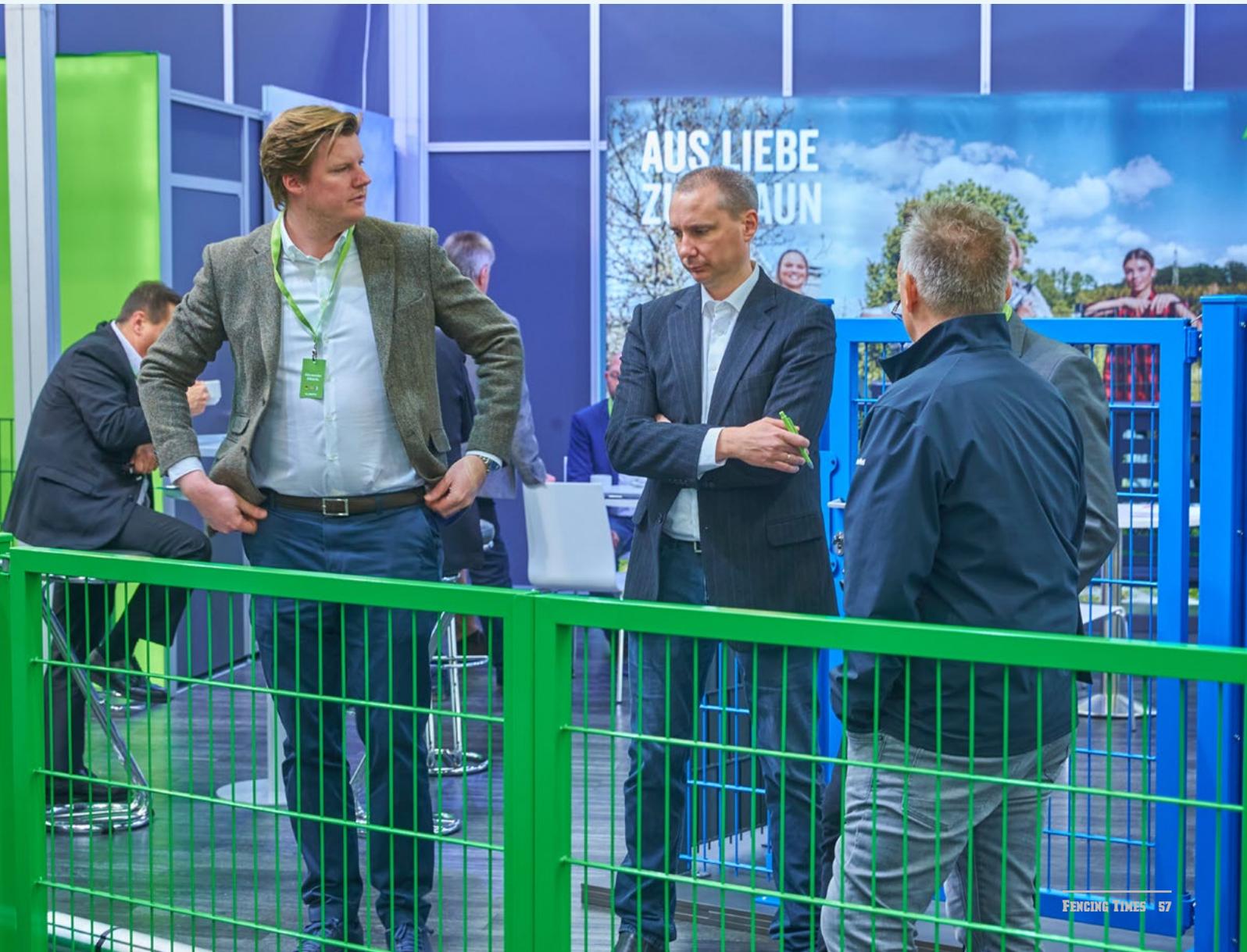
The seventh edition of Perimeter Protection was extremely well attended. Held in Nuremberg in January, the trade show attracted 5389 visitors, over a thousand more than came to the 2020 edition.

With 198 stands, half of which were from other countries, there was more for the visitors to see than ever before. The majority of the exhibitors were showing fences, gates and gate drives, but also making their presence felt were suppliers of detection systems, access control and anti-terror products. Also in attendance were some mechanical engineering companies and suppliers of components and semi-manufactures to cater for those who prefer to make everything themselves.

THE SHOW ITSELF

As well as showing off new and improved products, for which a trade show is of course the perfect medium, Perimeter Protection was as usual the place at which to make personal contacts. With suppliers, fellow fence installers and others involved in the sector. Compared to previous editions, more of the fencing installers to whom we spoke said they would be in Nuremberg for several days because they wanted to stop and talk at so many stands and because the number of stands is too large to visit them all in a single day. Kai-Uwe Grögor, director of the German industry association Gütegemeinschaft Metallzauntechnik, says: *"We are hearing from both visitors and exhibitors that it's an extremely lively show. It's undoubtedly an event that has made its mark in the sector."*







SOCIAL EVENT

There was also plenty to do outside of the show's regular opening hours. On Tuesday evening, after the opening day of the show, Nürnbergmesse, the show's promoter, organised a party for the exhibitors, to give them an opportunity to chat to each other. Van Merksteijn's and Hadra's stands were also being sociable until late in the evening on Tuesday evening, with them putting on music for an exhibitors' party immediately after closing time. It was party night at the stands again on Wednesday evening, with the WDI following up with another exhibitors' party. As well as all that, Flo Effertz from purchasing organisation Zaunfachmann organised this year's Night of the Fence Installer again – an enjoyable evening at a restaurant for fencing installers as a group. ■



PERIMETER PROTECTION IN NUMBERS

	2020	2023
Number of visitors	4227	5389
Number of visitor countries	48	55
Exhibitors	166	198



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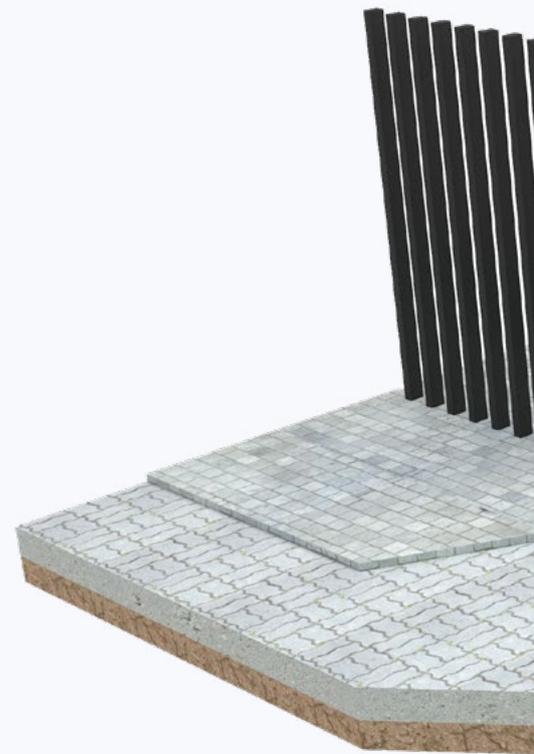
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Fancy Fence presents Banana Gate



David Stott, owner of Fancy Fence Australia, with his son Jack, and co-worker Michael

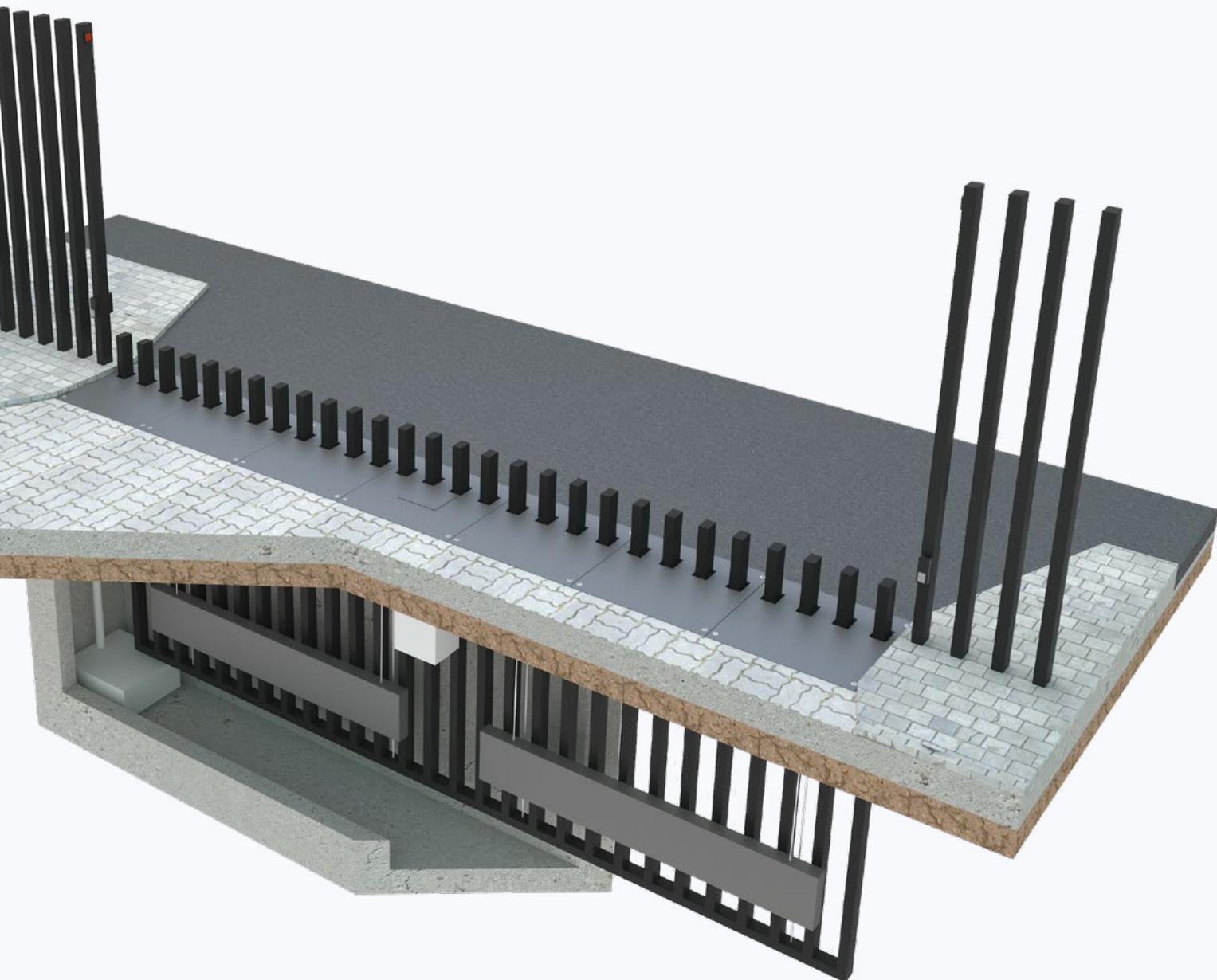
Fancy Fence, a vertical gate manufacturer from Lublin in eastern Poland, is expanding its range with a curved version of its vertical gate system. The curved gate can follow almost any form the property boundary takes.



The Banana version of Fancy Fence's vertical gate was developed for a customer in Australia. "The customer lives at the end of a cul-de-sac," Fancy Fence CEO Jacek Kühnl-Kinel says. "The end of it is rounded, and he wanted a gate that followed that curve. He couldn't find anyone who was able to provide him with what he wanted, but he eventually found his way to Fancy Fence Australia."

PROJECT

"We'd never made a curved gate either," Kühnl-Kinel goes on. "But when the enquiry came in, we weren't able to think of a reason why it couldn't be done, so we started work on development. There were plenty of calculations and drawings involved, to give the correct curvature to the underground structure and the foundations. And it then presented quite a technical challenge to get all the parts curved in precisely the way it was set out in the drawings. But there are some projects you don't do for the money; you do them for the challenge, and to demonstrate what can be done. In the end, all the hard work, mainly of our Australian team, produced an amazing end result. And now that we know how to do it, we can obviously do it more often."

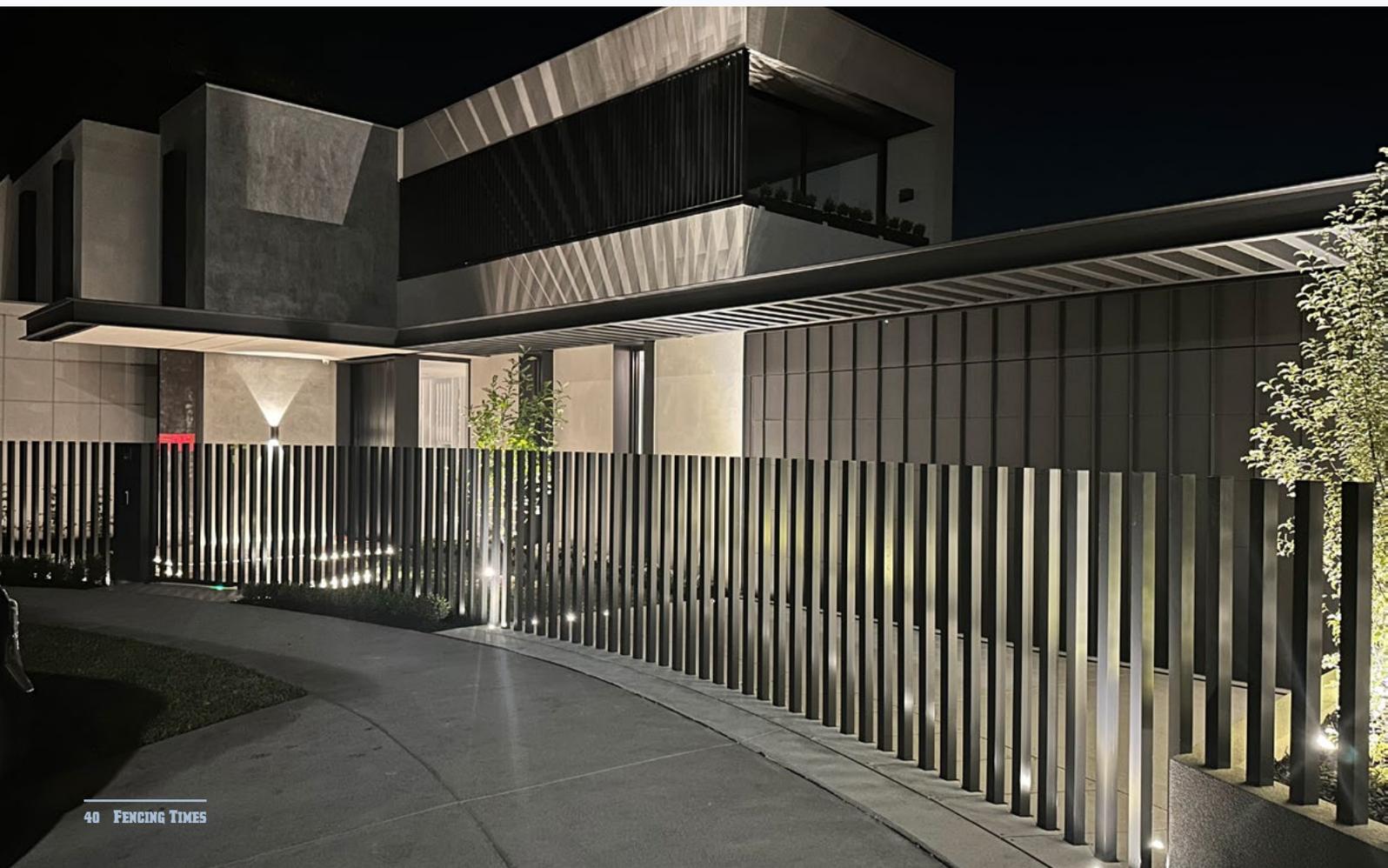


FANCY FENCE

Fancy Fences are gates, which look like fixed palisade fencing. As they open they sink into a concrete recess in the ground, which also serves as the foundation. They are operated by a sliding gate motor. An underground counterweight of the same weight as the gate leaf ensures that the sliding gate drive is never subject to a heavy load, and allows the gate leaf to be moved easily by hand in the event of power failure. According to Kühnl-Kinell, a Fancy Fence retractable gate system has two major advantages over swing and sliding gates: "The first one is that you don't lose any space for a sliding gate to pull back," he says. "And you don't need to leave any space free for a swinging gate leaf either. You can use all the available space for other things. And secondly, the gate opens much faster: a 2-metre-high gate opens just as quickly as a sliding gate with a 2-metre passage: within 8 to 10 seconds."

BANANA

The new Banana Gate can be produced to fit almost any curve. "The upright palisades are joined together under the ground using long steel profiles," Kühnl-Kinell explains. "These are screwed to both sides of the palisades. For the Banana version of the gate, we had to have those profiles rolled into a curve. The concrete box that the entire structure sinks into also had to be adapted to the curve of the gate. Then to finish up we had to adapt the shape of the cover plates. And the biggest challenge of all was that we had to get it all right the first time. If we had miscalculated and it wasn't noticed until the installation stage, we would have had to have shipped new materials to Australia, or else come up with some very creative improvisations there on the site. Obviously that was something we wanted to avoid."



SPECIFICATIONS

Just like its straight-line brother, the gate is supplied as standard with an infill of hollow sections measuring 60 by 40 by 3 millimetres, with a height of 1.8 metres and passage width of up to 6 metres. “But those are really just measurements for the leaflet,” Kühnl-Kinzel says. “They’re the dimensions we used for type approval, to comply with the machinery directive, because we had to use something for the test. In practice every gate is custom-made, and is fully adapted to the situation on the site. From a technical viewpoint we’re able to make the gate up to 2.7 metres high, with a passage width of up to 8 metres. Then you get infill profiles of 100 by 100 millimetres. In theory the opening width is unlimited, because you can always put multiple gates next to each other. They fit together seamlessly. We recently installed 120 metres of Fancy Fence for a project in Quebec, Canada, consisting of 25 gates. That can be done with the new Banana Gate too – and you can combine straight and curved gates as well.”

CONFORMITY

The first Fancy Fence gate was installed in 2015. “Since then, the system has been continuously improved and refined,” Kühnl-Kinzel says. “We used climate chambers to simulate aggressive environments, such as coastal areas. Today, we can confidently say that the gates perform flawlessly even in extreme temperatures from -30 to even +50 degrees Celsius. And the gates comply to all European regulations too – they have passed all the necessary tests required for certification in accordance with the European Construction Products Directive and the Machinery Directive.”



PUBLIC SPACE

Kühnl-Kinel wants to create even more variants of his Fancy Fence in the future. *“In the future we want to focus more on gates for public spaces,”* he says. *“In these spaces there is often a call for gates that hermetically seal a site at night, but are barely visible during the day. Two years back we made a gate for the railway station in Annemasse, in the French Alps. It’s been such a success that we now need to make gates for the Paris metro and for other metropolises. These clients asked us whether they needed to install bollards in addition to our Fancy Fences, or whether our gates were also able to stop vehicles (whether or not the drivers had malicious intent). This gave us the idea of having our gates crash-tested against IWA 14 and American ASTM F2656 standards, at CTS in Münster. We believe we can achieve quite a high rating. Then we can combine the functionality of a gate, a fence and a row of bollards, all in a single product.”*

FULL FRAME

As well as that, there is a gate with a full frame in the pipeline. Like the palisades, it disappears completely into the ground. *“We’ve already completed all tests and received a positive compliance report from the notified body who did the certification process. We’re working on a gabion gate too, which presents completely new challenges. For starters obviously due to the heavy weight, but also because of the wide slot at the opening. If you drive a car over a 60-millimetre slot, you hardly notice it. But if the slot gets bigger, you end up with a dent in your wheel rim. So we’re currently working on making some kind of cover for that. But we love our technical challenges here – the Banana Gate is a good example of that. When someone comes to us with a special request it makes our hearts beat that much faster, and right away we start trying to figure out whether we can fulfil it. So there will definitely be more variants on their way!”* ■





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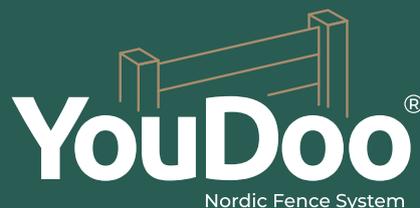
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Perimeter security using cameras

In addition to all the detection systems featured in the previous columns, the perimeter can also be secured using cameras. And what I have in mind is not your traditional CCTV system where images are displayed on a monitor with a security guard sitting and watching it, ready to intervene in the event of some kind of trouble. Indeed no, the advent of the modern, digital IP camera and the internet has been a game changer. Nowadays, everyone has their own doorbell camera with amazingly sharp images, even in the dark. And they can view these images from anywhere in the world on their mobile phone. It's even possible to tell the postman where to put the parcel he is delivering. This is now the simplest thing in the world.

But since the camera is there anyway, wouldn't it be useful to be informed when there are visitors who don't ring the bell? Several techniques for this have been devised. For example, my camera at home has so-called video motion technology. Based on pixel changes in the image, video motion technology determines whether movement is taking place. Tech enthusiast as I am, I've set this up for my camera. I

selected the path to my front door for this. Each pixel change in that part of the image generates an alarm and an automatic message on my phone.

OK, I knew that was the idea. The camera does indeed warn me about every pixel that changes. Including from light to dark and vice versa. Including when clouds cover the sun or when car headlights illuminate the path. The situation at night is the best of all. The camera then switches over to black-and-white and the infrared LED comes on to facilitate sharp images. But that light, invisible to us, attracts certain insects that flap around next to the lens. Then alarms come pouring in. It was apparently to good to be true. Video motion was actually developed to save on storage capacity. All images involving movement are then stored so that the hard disk or SD card doesn't end up written full of images where nothing happens. Presumably it works better indoors, but outside with all the changing light conditions it's not a success. In my particular case, every movement of the postman got detected. In other words, the system does what it's designed to do but there were too many unnecessary alarms to call it a reliable system. It would drive security guards crazy and after the umpteenth alarm they wouldn't bother looking up from their hand of cards. Because that's the way it is with modern perimeter security using cameras. There isn't anybody sitting and watching the camera 24 hours a day any more. No, the camera has to generate an automatic alarm when it detects the movement of intruders and only then will action be taken by a guard or the owner of the property.

Raijmond Roudeel

Raijmond Roudeel has worked in perimeter security for many years. For Fencing Times, he writes about securing outdoor areas with detection systems. Do you have questions? Or a practical example - and are curious what Raijmond would have offered here? Send him an email at rajmond@fencingtimes.com.



VIDEO CONTENT ANALYSIS

So we can forget cameras or systems with so-called video motion detection. A nice idea, but not suitable for perimeter security. More suitable cameras are those that feature Video Content Analysis. Or VCA for short. This is where the camera's software or the video management system automatically analyses images. The images are classified. They are assigned a particular value. Not dissimilar actually to how the human brain does this. The software can compare the current images with a wealth of images it holds in memory. This enables the software to determine whether the movement is being made by a person, an animal or a vehicle. It can also establish the speed, direction of movement and the colour of the object. When all this matches certain set conditions, the system generates an alarm and displays the images on the monitor.

This classifying of images can be subject to yet further refinement. An example could be displaying or registering only vehicles with a certain registration, i.e. number plate recognition. Or where you want to know via facial recognition that a football hooligan is trying to get into a stadium. The more in depth the client wants to classify, the more computer power will be needed for the camera or management system. And the conditions under which the camera has to work then become increasingly important. There will have to be sufficient light, even at night, and a wobble-free image. Additionally, the choice of lens and angle of aperture will need to be adapted to the purpose of the camera: namely the observation or detection of an intruder. The use of cameras with Video Content Analysis for perimeter detection is restricted to those with so-called fixed lenses. Lenses with a fixed focal length where the image remains unchanged. It rules out cameras with a rotate or zoom function that show different images at different times.

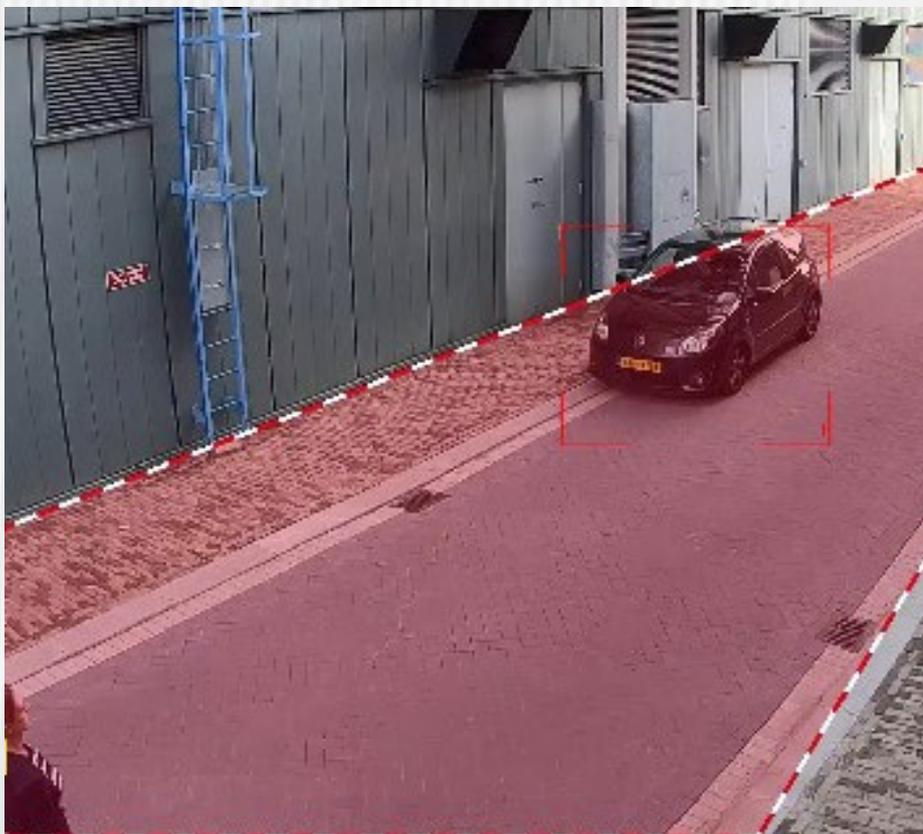
But if you adhere to all these conditions then there are interesting things you can do with them. You can draw a virtual line through the image, which no one is supposed to cross. Anyone who is still standing on the good side of the fence is ignored but as soon as they attempt to climb over and thus cross this line, an alarm is given. You could also detect when a vehicle is stationary for too long, or remains stationary at a place where waiting is not allowed. It could also be used, for example, to notice that

someone has left an object at a busy metro station, or conversely removed a valuable item in a museum. Any abnormal behaviour can be detected and generate an automatic alarm signal.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This is going to get even better in the future. Because 'deep learning' technology is also making inroads into the security sector: artificial intelligence. The software behind the camera is beginning to learn from its own mistakes and thus becoming more and more smart. Just like a child who scalds themselves on a hot kettle is more careful next time. Cameras are actually going to take over the security guard's function to a large extent thus making their work a good deal easier and more efficient. This enables some security guards to supervise hundreds of cameras simultaneously. All images are subjected to live analysis and only the relevant ones are displayed. I recently attended a demonstration of deep learning cameras deployed for so-called crowd management in entertainment areas or at a festival. These cameras are capable of recognising the difference between people dangling around

and sweet talking to each other in party spirit, and a few people getting into each other's hair and arguing. Even though an altercation starts with just a mild push or slap, the camera has no problem registering this and the system sounds the alarm before you even notice it yourself. In this instance, I was actually there watching the same images. Very impressive. The same technology can also recognise the difference between someone exercising their dog on the right side of a prison wall, and someone pacing up and down nervously and then tossing a mobile phone or a packet of drugs over that wall with a throwing motion. In my previous column, I wrote that the latter example can really only be picked up with a laser detector. But actually, the deep learning camera is beginning to become a viable alternative. The camera will pick up on the difference in behaviour between a dog-walker and a drug-thrower much more quickly and generate an alarm. This gives the guards more time in which to react. There is no end to the possibilities for deep learning cameras and the more data these cameras get to learn from the better they will be. In which case these camera types could well become the error-free perimeter detectors of the future.



Does that mean alternative perimeter detection systems are obsolete? That all depends on the risks, the distances from the perimeter and the budget available. But you should also keep the following well in mind: Human beings often defer to their own eyes when it comes to perceiving danger. The human eye is actually an incredibly good recognition and sensor element. It can differentiate distant and near objects at the same time while keeping both in focus. And if necessary, the human eye can instantaneously focus on a car's numberplate, even one travelling at high speed. Our eyes adapt themselves rapidly, even in the dark. You don't even notice when they switch over to black-and-white, keeping everything sharply in focus. We can summarize this in a nutshell: such an all-singing, all-dancing camera simply does not exist. When sizing up a camera system, the number of megapixels, the sensor size of the camera and the focal length of the lens are therefore all taken into account. Using all kinds of complex formulas that I won't bore you with right now, you then arrive at a maximum distance of 35 to 50 metres from the target. As a result, and given that no other detection technology is present - and only camera VCA technology is relied upon - a camera with mast, power supply and communication needs to be placed along the perimeter every 35 to 50

metres. Moreover, this needs to cover the entire perimeter. So the cameras should mind (see) each other's backs as it were, and there should also be a degree of overlap. In the case of more extensive perimeter distances, this makes for considerable expenditure, without even taking into consideration the network, be that fibre optic or some other, to which all the cameras need connecting in order to get the images to a central location. There are fence and field detection systems such as radar or microwave detection that can fulfil this role far more economically. They are just as reliable and with just a few cameras for verification you can achieve the same objective.

That said though, cameras can still do a good job of securing a medium risk object if the lighting and mounting conditions are right and you do not exceed the distance of 50 metres as mentioned above. So, that engineering works on the edge of an industrial estate, with a perimeter of a few hundred metres can be well protected using VCA cameras, with no need for other additional detection technology. An additional advantage is that the engineering works can also use the daytime images for monitoring or looking back at situations. It goes without saying that this bonus is not something offered by the other detection systems such as radar.

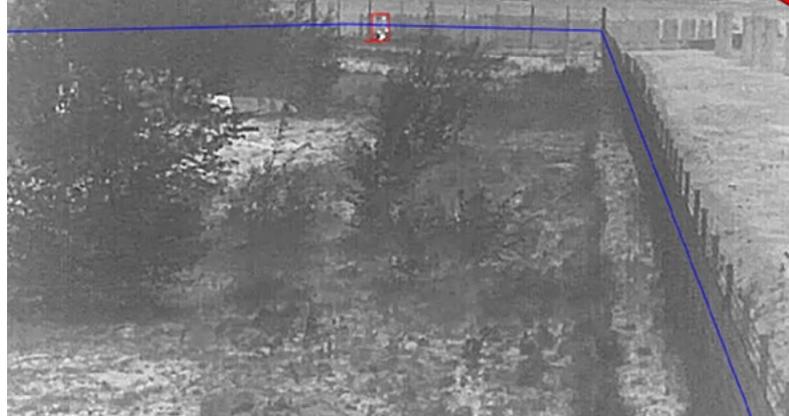
THERMAL CAMERAS

Nor is the latter bonus available when you use thermal cameras. But equally, they do have other advantages. Thermal cameras are sensitive to the infrared part of the electromagnetic spectrum, which cannot be seen by the human eye. Thermal cameras are able to measure the amount of infrared heat radiated by an object. They display this temperature on a greyscale. They enable you to display people or objects that radiate heat even in complete darkness. Rather than recognisable faces, they produce an outline of a human, an animal or a vehicle. Even from as far away as hundreds of metres. They have no problem in registering people hiding in a dark forest. Everyone has probably seen helicopter footage from a search programme on TV, where people are followed or tracked down even though they are hiding in pitch darkness. The thermal camera is relentless and will capture all living creatures. However well they try to conceal themselves. If you use thermal cameras, you can manage with fewer of them. This makes them an ideal option, especially for high-risks along extended perimeter distances. The alerting software behind this does not carry out Video Content Analysis, but is again based on video motion technology that relies on pixel changes. Just like my doorbell for example. What is different now though is the absence of unnecessary alerts due to changing



light conditions, such as clouds moving across the sun or suchlike, because thermal cameras are not sensitive to this visible light. Nor are they affected by passing car headlights. They only react to the pixel changes caused by a heat-radiating creature or object. These pixels then change from dark to light colour. The image is black-and-white in negative. You should though bear the following in mind. If you set the camera up in such a way that it can detect a human being at 500 metres, then a bird that flies past the camera at a distance of 5 metres away will be displayed in elephant proportions. Lots of pixels will change value and this will then cause unnecessary alerts. If you are happy with shorter detection distances, say 150 metres, then this problem is greatly reduced. Of course, now you will need more cameras again but superfluous alarms will also decrease proportionally.

Up to about 10 years ago, these types of cameras were actually unaffordable and they were only utilised for extremely high-risk locations, where the cost of reliable detection was not a consideration. Nuclear power stations and airports are examples of such locations. But thanks to economies of scale in the global production of cameras, along with innovative production techniques that facilitate the manufacture of thermal sensors, these cameras have come down in price hugely today. This means they can be deployed for all kinds of applications. E.g. for detecting issues with technical installations, such as electrical cabinets, motors, bearings and other industrial applications. Or even for checking floor and wall insulation in residential buildings. During the coronavirus epidemic, lots of these cameras were deployed to monitor visitors' body temperature at offices or conference centres. Another increasingly used application for these cameras is the early detection of smouldering fires in rubbish dumps. These cameras lend themselves to a myriad of functionalities. As a result, they are now acceptably priced and also very good for perimeter security for lesser risks on a markedly smaller budget. ■



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FENCES IN THE NEWS



15 MARCH 2023

Tourists able to hike again without falling into the South China Sea



Macao is a former Portuguese mini-state by the South China Sea, which today is a special administrative region of China. It's also the biggest gambling city in the world, boasting a casino industry that is 7 times larger than that in Las Vegas. Another attraction in Macao is the 'Long Chao Kok Coastal Trail'. This is a 1200-metre

footpath along the coast of Coloane, a former island now joined artificially to the mainland. From this you get stunning views, both of Coloane's rock formations and of the islands nearby. The path is popular with tourists and to prevent them from falling into the South China Sea, a granite fence was installed

along almost its entire length. It was weather-beaten and dilapidated in places but the fence was repaired or replaced by Macao fencing installers on behalf of the local authorities in December 2022.

Not really a report in the Breaking News category, but it was accompanied by a great

photo and we like to show fencing from all over the world in this column, so here it is.

If you ever visit the area, and you can tear yourself away from playing blackjack and roulette for an hour or so, do the Long Chao Kok Coastal Trail and recall where you read about it first – Fencing Times. ■

Australian woman gets bill for 17-year-old fence



An old and cheap fence (not the fence involved in the story). Photo: Tomas Anunziata.

An argument has erupted over a fence in Yanchep, which is a place to the north of Perth, Australia. According to the law in Western Australia, when either one of two neighbours puts up a fence on their joint boundary, the other neighbour has to bear half of the cost. A rather stupid law if you ask us.

A typical case of heavy-handed bureaucratic interference in something that two neighbours could manage only too well on their own. That said, the law is the law of course and one of its provisions says that it also works retrospectively when a neighbouring plot only becomes inhabited or developed after the fence was erected.

And this is how it came about that Shannon, a woman who was only willing to give her first name

to the newspaper, built a lovely house on an empty plot and then, when it was finished, got a bill for half the cost of the fence built by her neighbour some 17 years previously.

According to Shannon, *"The fence was old and rusty but he wanted me to pay half of what it cost originally."* She does not agree with this but is not able to do much about it. What happened eventually is not known.

The neighbour was only asking for 506 Australian Dollars, not an amount that is worth either party going to court over. Even so, we have already witnessed neighbour disputes that involved even less money, so you never can tell, there could be a further development. ■

Horse and moose play noseball



Sometimes a fence is not merely a barrier at the perimeter for keeping intruders out. It can also do service as a net so you can play ball.

That was proved by a horse and a moose at a ranch in the US state of Montana. By the way, it was the horse that was playing with the ball here.

It made twenty different attempts to get the ball over the fence, all the time under close observation

by the moose. Once the ball eventually landed on the other side of the fence, the moose then had no idea what to do next.

But in terms of the story that doesn't really matter because if you pause the video at the right moment, it looks like the two of them are enjoying playing together. And that can inspire your thinking. Next time you go camping and don't remember the badminton net, just go and look for a fence. ■

World's longest fence gets a little brother

Australians have a thing about fences. Especially dingo fences. The Australian mainland is where you'll find the world's longest fence. At 5600 km in length, the fence was built by sheep farmers to protect their flocks from dingoes – a species of wild dog. Now there is also a dingo fence on Fraser Island, off the coast of the state of Queensland. At 7 kilometres, it's somewhat shorter than the original, but the biggest contrast with the long dingo fence is that it wasn't

built to protect sheep, but people. Fraser Island features rainforest, eucalyptus woods, mangroves, peat bogs and sand dunes. Also found here are unusual bird species, reptiles and amphibians, including the saltwater crocodile. The abundance of natural scenery makes it a popular tourist destination. The new dingo fence is around Orchid Beach, a tourist village with lots of camp sites and a beach facing the ocean, where dingoes used regularly to come and disturb the tourists



Park Ranger Megan Wilson

when foraging for food. *"Here on Fraser Island, the dingoes are wild animals,"* says Park Ranger Megan Wilson. *"It's better for them to be in a natural environment and learn to find their own food. The fence allows the dingoes to use their normal hunting instincts and thus ensures*

we maintain a healthy and stable population. And at the same time, it protects visitors and island residents." Here in the editorial office, we're thinking that we would rather have a slightly sturdier fence that also protects tourists from saltwater crocodiles, shudder, shudder. ■

Texan border fence moves the Rio Grande

It's not only Australians that have issues with fences. Americans are no strangers to them either. They have their Border Fence, at the border with Mexico. Trump was

ridiculed for it, in particular by Hillary Clinton supporters, who conveniently overlooked the fact that most of the pre-existing Border Fence was commissioned

in the nineties by... Bill Clinton. In any case, there's also a problem with that Border Fence. Because, in Texas, a 3-kilometre section is on the verge of collapsing into the Rio

Grande. Something wrong with the foundations, apparently. In actual fact, it's not even part of the regular Border Fence, but a fence that had already been built on the initiative of private parties while arguments were still ongoing about the federal government's fence, which was to be built a few miles further inland. In the meantime the federal fence has now gone up, making the private fence redundant and free to fall quietly into the river – except for the fact that it could create such a blockage in the river that it would be significantly diverted. And because a treaty was concluded between Mexico and the United States that the precise midpoint of the river forms the border, the private fence might now unintentionally result in a chunk of Texas belonging to Mexico from then on. That's how a fence can come back and bite you. ■





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