

FENCING TIMES

2023, Issue 2



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UK Fencing Industry

Awards



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CONSTRUCTION



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Association of Fencing Industries

Delivering Excellence for All in Fencing

2023 AWARDS



Contractor of the Year Categories



Entries open 1st April 2023 on www.afiorg.uk

Time for Fencing Times

When the first issue of the Fencing Times appeared last month we had quite a few questions come in about what was happening with FOBS, so I'd like to return briefly to that topic. Was that the end of FOBS, people wanted to know? We'd assumed this would be obvious but yes, it's true: Fobs Magazine is no more. After 139 issues the owners – of whom I was one – ended their partnership and dissolved the FOBS company.

And then it was time for something new... with almost the same editorial team and the same translation team, but with a fresh layout and a new name. It didn't take long to get the new layout worked out, but coming up with a new name was a bit of a challenge. Ideally we wanted a play on words. The American trade association AFA publishes a magazine called Fence Post, which is clearly a brilliant name for a fencing magazine! We have given this name to our readers' letters section in its honour. Then in New Zealand there's a magazine called Wired which is another great name, with the double meaning of fencing wire and also of being connected – to information, in this case. But we also wanted a name that makes it instantly obvious that we're a magazine for fencing installers, and

on top of that, something that sounds good and is easy to pronounce in various languages. There was only one option: Only Fence. No, all jokes aside: we considered The Fencer, Fence Builder, Fencing Gazette, and Fencing Telegraph. In the end we chose Fencing Times.

Our aim with the Fencing Times is to keep all fencing installers up to date on all available news, in a way that interests and appeals to them. We have two calls for contributions that will help us to do this. The first one is for everyone on the supply side of the market. If you have any news, current affairs or another development that's of interest to fencing installers, please let us know and we'll write an item on it. We never charge for this, because our aim is to present independent news. And the second call is the reverse: if you're a fencing installer and there are any topics you'd like to learn (more) about, don't hesitate to let us know! We'll look into them.

Photos of your projects and any nice or crazy fences you happen to come across are very welcome too. Have another scroll through the photos on your phone and send us your favourites – we can never get enough. ■

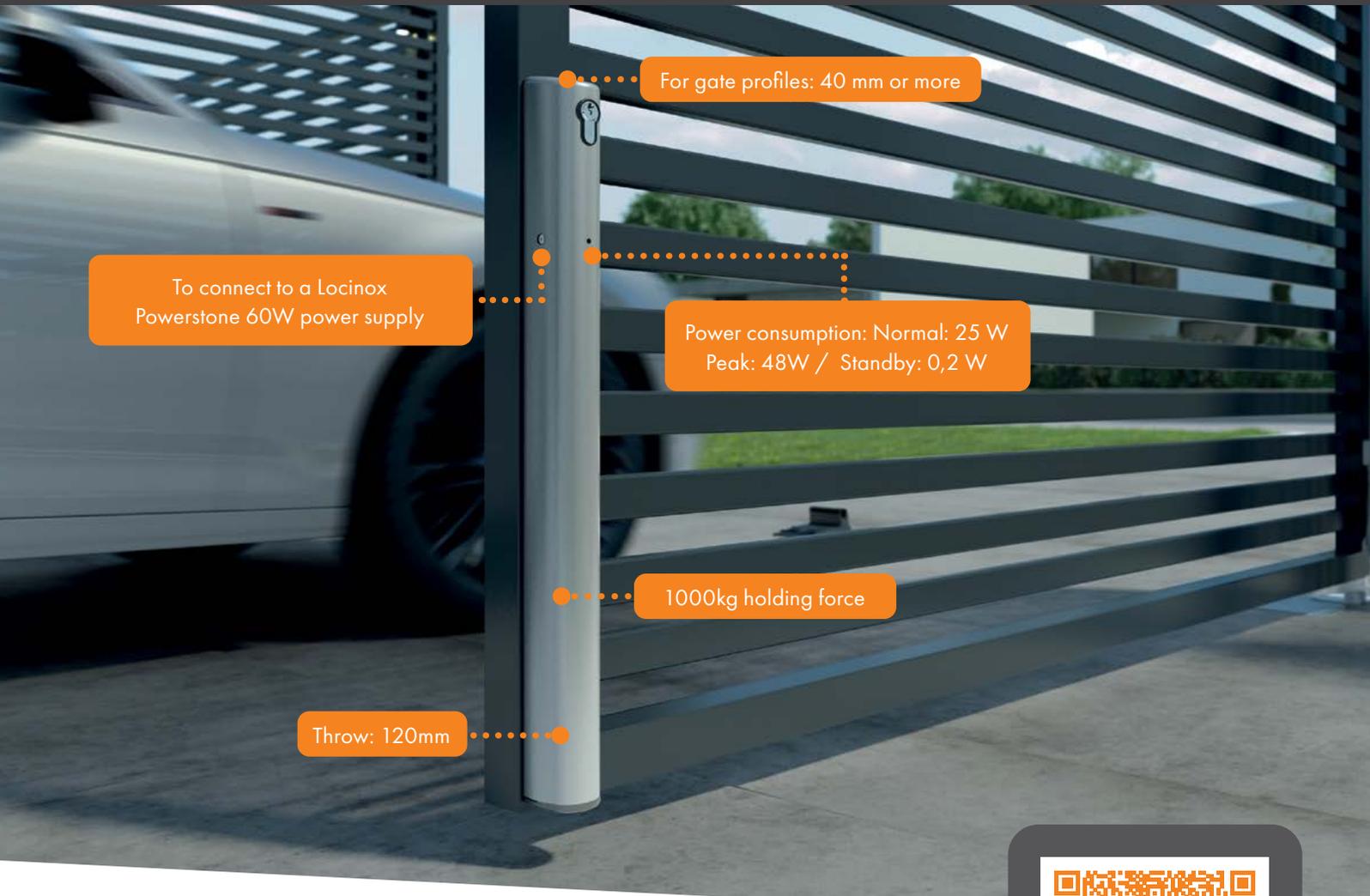


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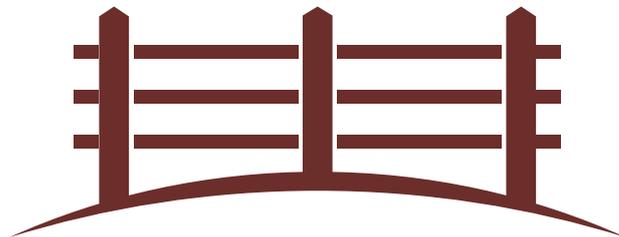
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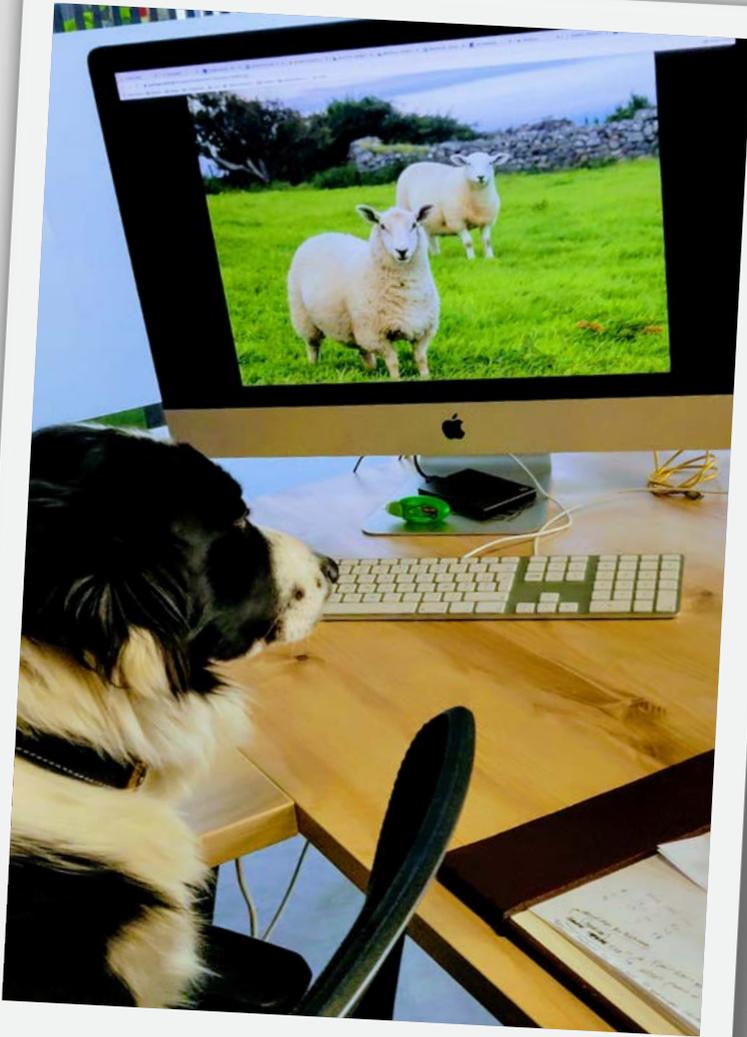


Tsvetomir @Rossima

Tsvetomir Stoynev, an ex-salesman for the Rossima fencing company in Sofia, Bulgaria, who it seems cannot tear himself away from the fencing business, sent us these photos of a gate on the driveway of the Rohzen monastery, high up in the Pirin Mountains. You can't have a monastery gate without a cross, that's obvious.



Tsvetomir also sent us this great looking fence made from perforated and profiled sheet. It's certainly different from your usual fence. Thanks for the images, Tsvetomir!



Rudolf @Retic

Rudolf Opáth from the Slovakian fencing wholesaler Retic in Nové Sady sent us this photograph. He got the photo from a customer, a fencing installer who was asked to come and install this gate leaf somewhere. "We've installed the hardware ourselves already," said the client. "All you need to do is hang it!" Well now, we bet that worked well, haha. Many thanks for the photo, Rudolf!



Frauck @Jardin Design

Rather than send us a picture of a fence this time, Franck Walravens at Jardin Design in Chastrès, Belgium, came up with a picture of his most trusted worker: his border collie who accompanies him to every project, either to record the number of metres or encourage the installers. "You should see what happens if I leave him on his own," he wrote. Yes, indeed Franck. In addition to all websites for 18+, it looks like you'll have to block sheep websites in your browser from now on, if you want your colleagues to get on with their work. Thanks for the photo!



Lars @Herling

This photo arrived from Van Lars Hohmann of Herling Tortechnik und Zaunbau, based in Siegen, Germany. It had the caption "Fence at an angle!" A strange sight for those with OCD, when the horizontal wires of a wire panel no longer run horizontally - but then again mounting the panels stepwise wasn't really an option here either. Nicely done, Lars!





Frank @Draht Mayr

Frank Schmidt of Draht Mayr in Altena was on holiday in South Tyrol. That is a province of Italy, high in the Alps, which isn't exactly Italian nor is it exactly Austrian (with apologies to our South Tyrolean readers). Here, Frank came across what the locals call Speltenzäune: fencing made of wood woven together in a special way. There are only a few South Tyroleans left who still know how to do this. Many thanks for the photo, Frank! Special fence, nice background. The Locinox Construction Radio is coming to Altena!

Keep sending us your photos!

Would you also like to share a fun photo with your colleagues in the sector? Scroll through the photos on your phone and send the best looking or most amusing ones to fencepost@fencingtimes.com. You can send several if you want, we can't get enough of them! Whoever sends the best looking or most amusing photo each month will win a Locinox radio for their workplace.



AFI and WPA collaborate on fence post performance investigation

The Association of Fencing Industries (AFI) and the Wood Protection Association (WPA) are conducting a joint investigation into reports from AFI members about the poor performance of recently-installed treated wood fence posts.

At last year's AFI Timber in Ground Contact Conference in Newark, at which the WPA were guest speakers, fencing contractors voiced concerns that the service life of some treated fence posts is not meeting expectations. The British Standard for preservative-impregnated wood, BS8417, sets the

desired service life for treated wood in direct contact with the ground at 15 years. AFI members told WPA representatives that the premature failure of posts was affecting their confidence in the use of treated wood.

Both the AFI and the WPA recognise the importance of establishing the facts surrounding contractors' experiences. They have reached an agreement to investigate treated posts that have not met the service life expectations, in order to identify the root causes and help prevent a recurrence. Both organisations are urging contractors to send samples for this investigation.



Neil Ryan, WPA director, explained: “We have had an ongoing dialogue with the AFI and recognise that action is required. We need an evidence-based, fuller understanding of why some AFI contractors are experiencing premature failures of fence posts. With the help of AFI members, we are collating information and collecting post samples to investigate and establish the cause of the reduced service life. We’re committed to raising the quality and performance bar for treated wood. Building buyer confidence in the life expectancy of timber products in ground contact is a strategic priority for the WPA and its members.”

Pete Clark, CEO of the AFI, confirmed: “The AFI is not anti-timber, but we want timber to last the required years and deliver sufficient service life in ground contact for it to be sustainable. We have seen the massive uptake in other materials by members, driven by the lack of confidence in timber. By working together, we are much better placed to agree on a viable resolution to take us forward with renewed confidence. This study aims to get results – not just data – as we need to resolve the issue fast with a confident supplier route from forest to fence.”

AFI members who wish to help with this initiative can visit the AFI website for a full explanation of what is required and where to send their samples for investigation, or contact either the AFI or the WPA. ■



Pete
Clark





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Fens kicks off in Istanbul

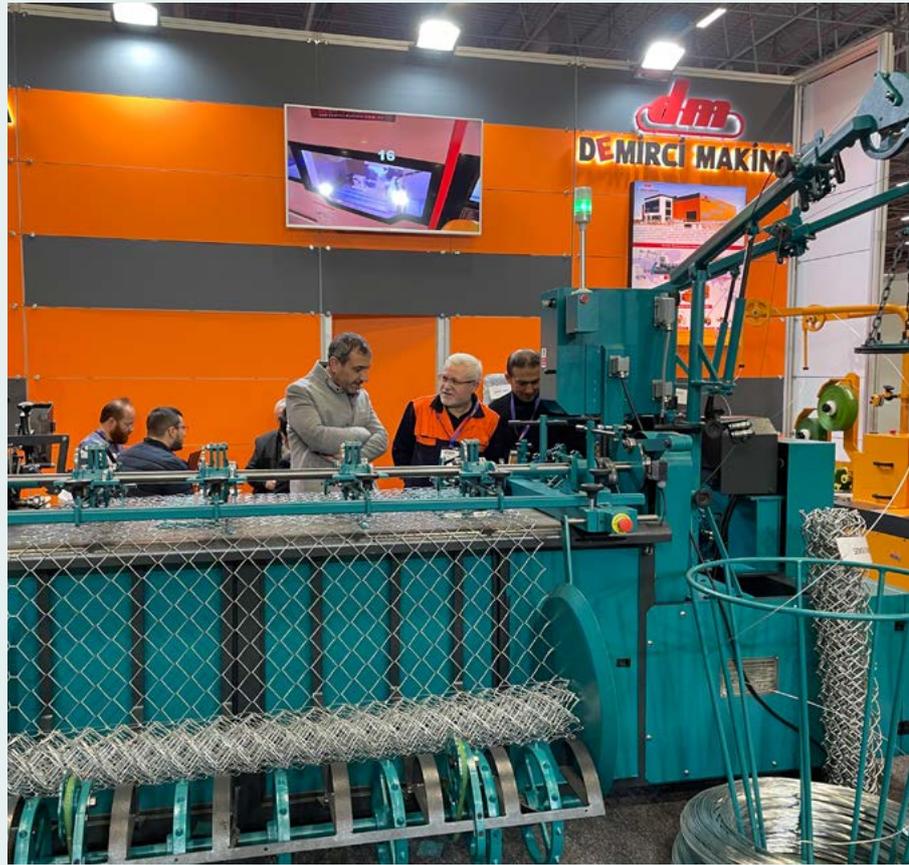
In January all fencing eyes in Western Europe were on Perimeter Protection in Nuremberg, but that wasn't the only trade show of interest to our industry: in Istanbul, Fens was held from 12 to 14 January. Alongside Fencetech in America and Fencex in England, this is one of the few trade shows in the world focusing purely on the fencing market.



Fens has its origins in Atrax, a trade show for the attractions, parks, games and sports fields industry. “A lot of attractions need fencing too,” says Nergis Aslan of organiser Tureks, “but there’s not really an answer to this within the attraction industry itself – and until now it hasn’t had anywhere to go for that, because there’s no specific trade show for fencing. Then one of the members of Atrax’s organisational team came up with the idea of organising a trade show for fences and gates.”

FIRST EDITION

“The fencing market has grown rapidly over the past few years,” Aslan continues. “The sector has strong manufacturers and buyers in Turkey and the neighbouring countries. At the time we made the initial announcements, the interest was greater than we’d expected. Unfortunately there was a major trade show in Germany at almost exactly the same time, meaning that a number of exhibitors postponed their participation until next year. Even so, we took an important step in the first year and planted healthy seeds. Exhibitors gave high marks to Fens, thanks to our offering exciting national and international collaborations. The product groups were of interest to the visitors, too.”



VISITORS

With Fens, organiser Tureks isn't just targeting Turkish fencing installers and manufacturers: "Istanbul's strategic location makes the trade show particularly interesting for the international fencing industry as well," Aslan says. "We've seen visitors from Europe, the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, Russia, the Arab Emirates, and even further afield. Since Corona, international trade has been booming – and the fencing market is no exception. There's a great need for opportunities to make new contacts, amongst both exhibitors and visitors. We're responding to that with Fens." Fens and Atrax together attracted more than 22,000 visitors during the most recent edition, including more than 6,000 from abroad.

2024

The next edition of Fens will be held in 2024. "That's straight away, next year. There's no trade show in Germany that year," Aslan says. "After 2024 we want to go on to hold Fens every two years, so the trade shows don't interfere with each other. That will mean that international players who want to seek new customers in Western Europe, as well as in Central Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East, are able to take part in both trade shows." The second edition of Fens will take place from 11 to 13 January 2024, once again in Istanbul. ■



Comlink update their Cloud Unit W5

Swedish company Comlink, a company that enables gates to be controlled remotely, has released an update to the Cloud Unit W5. The device is now able to tell whether a gate's safety edges are working properly, pressed, or broken.

“There used to be two statuses,” founder Johan Borg says. “Either everything was ok, or it wasn't. If it wasn't ok, you didn't know whether that was due to an obstacle on the driveway, or because the edge was broken. Now there are three statuses and you do know what's going on.”

REMOTE MANAGEMENT

This extra information is useful because the Comlink Cloud Unit W5 has been developed to enable you to be able to tell, remotely, what's happening with a gate. For the owner, this is useful as he'll be able to see whether the gate is open or closed. For the installer this is even more useful, as he'll be able to see the status of the drive and the safety accessories, remotely. “How often does it happen that a customer calls you and says that you need to get there right away, because the gate won't close behind him and he absolutely has to go out? And you then find, having raced over there with your tyres screeching, that it's just that the glass on the photocell is dirty due to splashes of mud or snow. Something you can fix in two seconds and for which you can hardly send an invoice in good conscience. With our Cloud Unit that's a thing of the past. When the customer calls, you can log in to his gate while you're still on the phone with him and see that there's a problem with the photocells. Then you can tell him then and there to try cleaning the glass, and to call back if that doesn't solve the problem.”

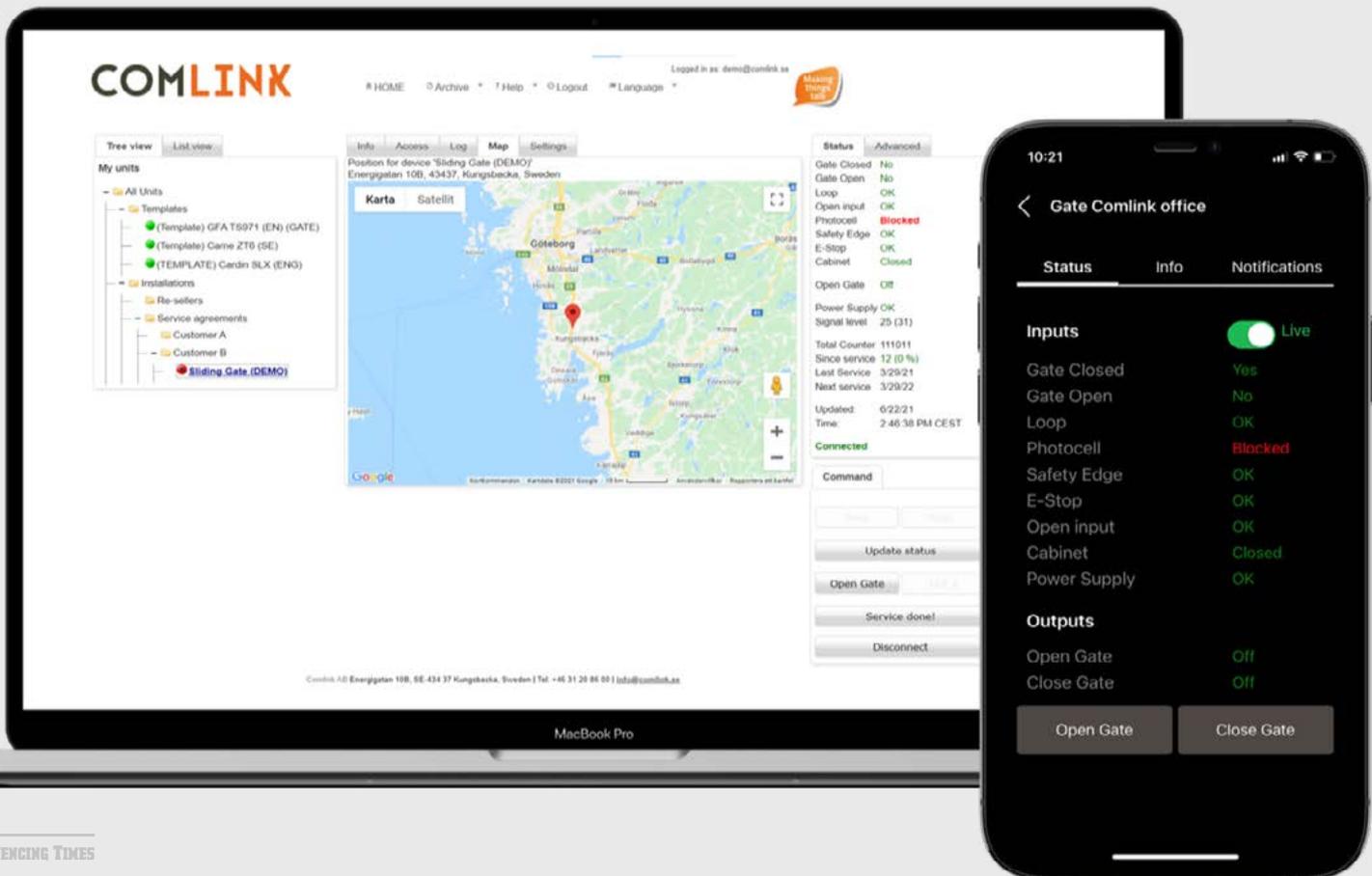




Johan Borg

SAFETY EDGES

“The new update solves the problem with monitoring safety edges with 8,2 Kiloohm resistors,” Borg goes on. “Those are the most common safety edges in the industry. Now you can tell, remotely, when the edges are pressed in and that therefore the gate is being blocked by someone or something. In that case, you send the customer out to see what’s blocking the gate. Otherwise, you can see that there’s a problem with the edges and they’re malfunctioning. Then you know right away that you’re going to need to drive out to the client – and that you should take a new set of edges along with you.” The new feature is incorporated into a firmware update, which you can easily install on the unit over the air. Customers don’t need to buy a new unit in order to use this feature. ■



Sesampoort creates vandal-proof barrier gate





slagboom
sluit



uitgezonderd
bestemmings-
verkeer

S
E
M
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R

Dutch vertical gate manufacturer Sesampoort has released a new vandal-proof arm barrier. The Sesame Boom, as the barrier is called, is based on the Sesame Gate and available in passage widths of up to 10 metres.

“Marco Mertens, one of our clients, was responsible for servicing an arm barrier for a municipality, and it kept getting damaged,” Sesampoort founder Wil Thijssen says. “The municipality wants the arm barrier in order to combat cut-through traffic – so-called ‘rat running’, but the drivers aren’t really on board with that idea. The barrier frequently gets knocked down. With the standard arm barrier models this is very easy to do – you just lift the lightweight aluminium barrier boom up a little and push against it, until it snaps off its mounting. After that you won’t need to take a detour for a while, until the barrier is fixed. Obviously these sorts of lightweight barriers aren’t intended to make access impossible; they’re more for regulating the traffic. But anyway, the municipality was sick of the constant damage to the barrier and so Marco asked me whether I could make an arm barrier out of a Sesame Gate. Sesame Gates have a steel support beam of 160 by 80 by 4 millimetres, so it’s not something you can just push out of the way.”

SESAME BOOM

The new Sesame Boom is constructed in the same way as a Sesame Gate but the support beam is lower, located 1 metre above the ground. In place of infill tubes, the beam is fitted with reflective tape, flashing lights, or both. The hydraulic cylinder on the Sesame Boom is shorter than that of the standard Sesame Gate, because the barrier itself is closer to the ground. “The cylinder is

double-acting,” Thijssen says, “meaning that it both pushes and pulls. The advantage of this is that both the opening and closing motions are very smooth, but on top of that – and this is very useful for this arm barrier – it means that you can’t lift the barrier up when it’s closed. And furthermore, the Sesamboom’s design obviously makes it much more sturdy than a standard barrier gate. You’d really need a tractor to push it out of the way.”

ACCESSORIES

The new Sesame Boom is secured by an arm barrier laser from Bea, and can be fitted with various types of LED lighting. “For the municipality that we made the first model for, we fitted the barrier boom with red flashing lights like the ones used on railway crossings,” Thijssen says. “The municipality wanted those because the barrier was across a road. But we’re also able to install continuous LED strips, or in fact any other type of lighting. In addition, this barrier has a GSM module – residents have the barrier’s phone number and can call it to open it – but obviously we can install any type of signal transmitter. The cabinet is the same one used in the Sesame Gate, and has plenty of room.” The new Sesame Boom is available in passage widths of up to 10 metres. ■



NEW

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Example: warmwhite



Example: red



Example: blue



Example: green



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information

Wiśniowski introduces the Multibox

Fence manufacturer Wiśniowski, from Wielogłowy, has launched a new parcel box with built-in intercom. Known as the Multibox, it is a pillar that does double duty as both a letterbox and a parcel box. Its big advantage: The pillar is integrated into the fence.





“Demand for parcel boxes has been increasing for years, with COVID-19 giving it an additional boost,” product manager Dawid Pietruch says. “And the demand will keep on growing: experts say that by 2040, 95 per cent of all purchases will be made online. For that reason, we wanted to create a smart and handy package box, which you can easily integrate into your customer’s fencing line.”

MULTIBOX

The new Multibox is half a metre wide and 300 millimetres deep. The height can be chosen between 1400 and 2050 millimetres, depending on the height of the fence. The pillar can fit packages of up to 190 by 380 by 640 millimetres. “We chose the sizes to ensure that the majority of packages will fit into the box,” Pietruch says. Wiśniowski works with Polish intercom manufacturer Vidos for the electronics; they supply two different intercoms for the parcel pillar: Duo and One.



DUO

The Multibox is supplied with Vidos's Duo video intercom as standard. The Duo is a two-wire intercom module with an indoor unit. "When the bell rings, the customer can see on the indoor unit that it's a courier," Pietruch says. "They press a button indoors, which unlocks the parcel box so the courier can put the parcel in. If the customer is not at home, at time of delivery, he can provide a one-time code for the courier at the time of ordering or delivery. The courier enters the code and is able to deliver the package, with no need for the customer to be home or to have access to the internet. If there is a gate fitted with an electric opener or a wicket equipped with an electric strike next to the pillar, the customer can use the indoor unit to operate that opener too. This is handy if they regularly receive large parcels that are too big for the box, or if they want to use the intercom for their general visitors too."

ONE

The second option is the Vidos One intercom. "It's connected to the internet and works not only with an indoor unit, but also with an app," Pietruch explains. "When the courier rings the bell, the app triggers an alert on the customer's phone. Then they can see on the screen that there's a courier at the door. It doesn't matter where in the world they are – as long as there's an internet connection, they can unlock the box for the courier and accept the package." The One can also be supplied with a code panel, to have similar functionality as the Duo intercom.

MULTI

The new Multibox is named for its versatility. "You can configure it as an end post or intermediate post, so it can be integrated into the fence," Pietruch says, "but it can also be ordered as a locking post for swing or sliding gates. It can also be ordered with a laser-cut house number. The Multibox really is multi-purpose, haha." ■



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Ebbe und Flut now the German importer for Kokille aluminium post caps

Ebbe und Flut, based in the town of Sönnebüll in Nordfriesland, is a manufacturer of Frisian-style fencing types. As of this year, the company is also the German importer for Kokille, a Danish aluminium post cap manufacturer.





“The previous German importer wasn’t getting any younger,” says owner and managing director Jan Christiansen, “so he looked for someone to take over. We’ve been using Kokille caps on our fences for years, so were very familiar with that company and were the first candidate.”

RANGE

Kokille’s range consists of cast-aluminium caps for posts made of wood, plastic or aluminium. “The caps for wooden posts have a nail that’s cast into them,” Christiansen says. “You can bang them onto the pole with a rubber hammer. The caps that don’t have a nail can be glued or welded on.” The shape of the cap comes in various designs and is available with spheres, pyramids, and decorative points.

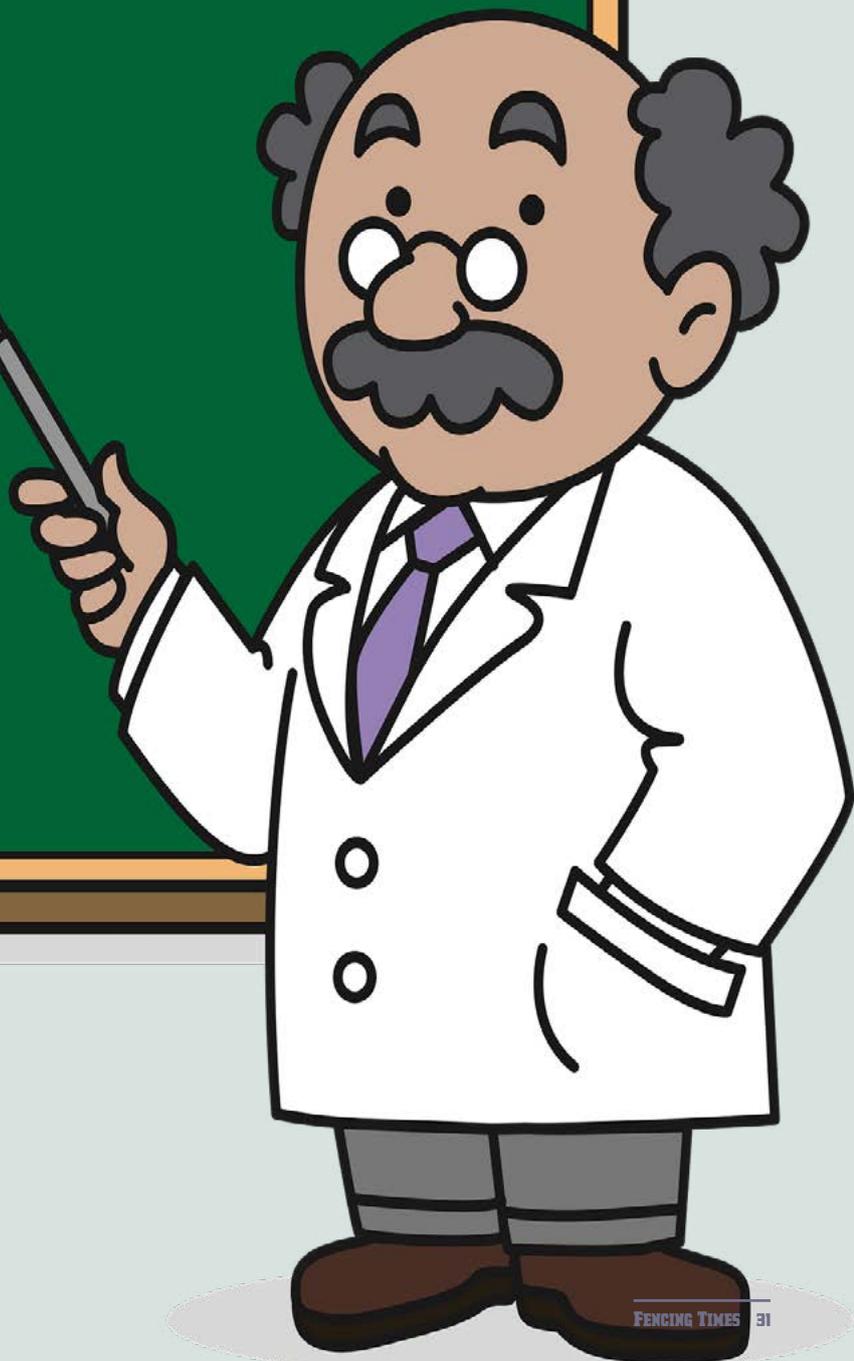
IMPORTER

Ebbe und Flut acquired both the stock and the customer base. “We’ve now got a truckload of caps in our warehouse,” Christiansen says. “We’re able to deliver all of the most commonly requested dimensions immediately. There’s also a powder-coating business nearby that specialises in small parts, so if customers want the caps coloured we’re able to organise that quickly too. The caps look amazing, especially with fine structure powder coating.” ■

Did you know?

Permanent mould casting

The Danish manufacturer of the aluminium caps is known as Tåsinge Kokillestøberi, meaning 'Tåsinge Permanent Mould Foundry' (Tåsinge is a Danish island). In Danish and many other languages, the name of the process translates literally as 'shell moulding', from the French 'coquille', or shell. In permanent mould casting, the molten metal is poured into a metal mould. The mould usually consists of two (sometimes more) metal mould halves. Permanent mould casting is primarily used to produce simple pieces in large numbers.



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Fencing Times is looking to boost its editorial team

If a company in the sector tells us it's growing fast and thus on the lookout for more staff, that information on its own is never enough to write an article about it. In recent years what company hasn't been short of staff. Nonetheless, for ourselves we're going to make an exception. Because we would like to grow, but we can't do it without help from the industry. In order to grow, we need additional editors, ones who understand fencing. Indeed, in the 12 years (at a different company and for a different magazine) we've spent writing about fencing we've endeavoured to strengthen ourselves in all kinds of different ways. First we thought: 'we know all about fencing so let's look for people who are good at writing.' We started off with journalists but they didn't have the faintest idea about business life. Then we

had marketers. They copied and pasted each press release without staying neutral or objective. Neither category was particularly interested in technique. After that we had an engineer who readily understood the most complex technologies but was incapable of explaining what it was all about in plain English. There was a huge drawback shared by all these editors from all these different categories: they didn't have the least clue about the fencing industry. They knew nothing about our culture and they had no idea what information is or isn't interesting to a fence installer. We thought we'd be able to teach them that but it turned out to be impossible in every case. With hindsight, we should have realised that sooner actually. Fencing is what it is... fencing. Well, never mind.





Have you got as much passion for
fencing as these two? So join our team!
(PHOTO: CHESTER)

For that reason we are now going about it the other way round and looking within the industry itself for someone who lives and breathes fencing. Someone who, as soon as he or she got involved with the industry, never wanted to leave it. Someone who knows their way around a fence installation site and understands fencing culture. Someone who will get pleasure from informing fence installers about what fences and gates are for sale in Europe, beyond the 100-mile radius of their own company where they already know all the manufacturers and dealers. About all the trade fairs, courses, open days and other events that they will be able to attend. About the problems you regularly encounter as a fence installer – and more importantly, how you can solve them. Someone who enjoys hunting for this information because he or she has a genuine interest in it as well. That's a must.

Naturally, we have a long wish list in addition. For example, sales experience would be a nice to have. Because sometimes we need to be persuasive to get cooperation on releasing information. Many companies in our market lack a marketing department or any experience with PR whatsoever. PR can be quite daunting for those who then end up needing it. Since we cover news from all over Europe, it would be really useful if our new editor speaks several languages. You definitely won't get very far without English. And German, French, Italian and Polish would also be handy. It doesn't have to be word perfect, we have proofreaders for that. You should also have some insight and feeling for technique of course. That doesn't mean you have to be able to explain in detail how a brushless motor works, but if a drive manufacturer explains why it's better than a regular motor and describes the differences, you should understand what he's talking about. And finally, it would also be an advantage if you can write a bit – or would enjoy learning to do so. But that's not a firm requirement and if you can explain to a copywriter what to write in a well structured manner, that's also fine.

We want to use this extra capacity to make Fencing Times not only thicker, but also more varied. At the moment we hardly write anything about tools and machinery, about what workwear is best suited for fence workers, or about which trucks and vans can withstand the rough handling of the average fence installer. The legal and regulatory side of things is also

under-represented so far. And finally, we think it would be nice to hear what fencing installers have to say more often.

So here's the deal: if you're the person, or you know someone for whom this job would fit like a glove, please let us know. If you've ever thought of blogging about fencing, really enjoy creating the monthly newsletter at the company you currently work for, or if you've always wanted to start up a YouTube channel entitled Fencing TV, then don't hesitate to get in touch with us. As long as you're a go-getter, can handle deadlines and don't have a 9-to-5 mentality, because we're still fence workers at heart: metres have to be produced. Further on in this issue there is a job advertisement. We look forward to every call - don't be shy! ■



The editorship at Fencing Times is on the lookout for a

Fencing Editor

to reinforce our editorial team.

THE JOB

You will actively seek out information of interest to fence installers. You will contact producers, wholesalers, trade show organisers and industry associations on the phone. You will scour their websites, follow them on social media and look for them at trade shows and other events and quiz them about developments in their company or organisation. Then you will sieve this information for newsworthiness and write an article about it – or deliver the information to a copywriter.

YOU THE PERSON

- You have a permanent passion for fencing. As soon as you got involved with the industry, you never wanted to leave it
- You are familiar with construction culture and the mentality of fencing installers
- You work in an accurate manner with an eye for detail and you enjoy immersing yourself in a subject
- You speak at least German and English. Other languages such as French, Italian, Polish and Dutch are a nice-to-have
- Preferably, you have the ability to write well or would enjoy learning to do so, but this is not a firm requirement
- You are a great communicator with an easy manner, young at heart, a bit of a rebel and above all not woke

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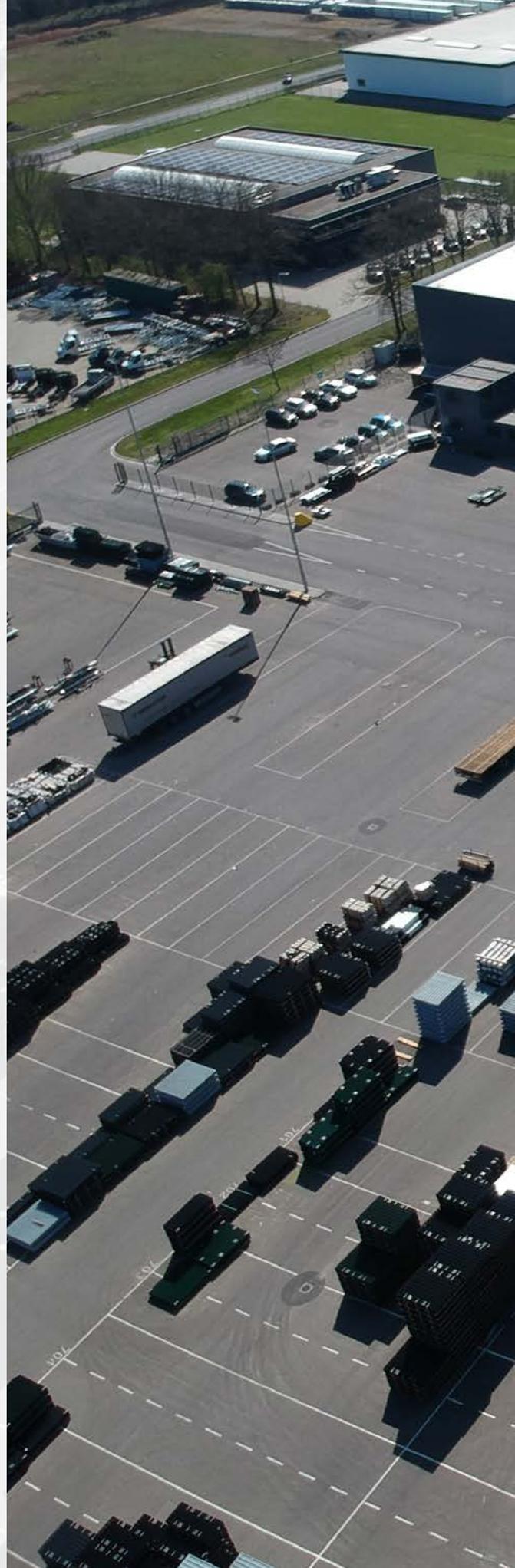
FENCING TIMES

10 years of Van Merksteijn Fencing Systems Netherlands

Van Merksteijn Fencing Systems Netherlands, based in Almelo, is turning 10. VMFSN is fencing manufacturer Van Merksteijn's wholesale business for the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia. Back in April 2013, the first shipment of panels and posts was delivered from Hengelo directly to a fencing business.

“Van Merksteijn was traditionally known as a full load supplier,” account manager Kenneth Rikkert says. “In Germany that changed in 2007, when the company acquired Bläser. The direct contact with the installers there turned out to be really good; you can help customers more quickly and it's easier to respond to market requirements. For that reason, a wholesale company was established in the Netherlands too a few years later.”

The new Van Merksteijn
Logistics Center at Twente
Noord Business Park







Van Merksteijn Fencing Systems
Netherlands' first location in Hengelo

Van Merksteijn Fencing Systems Netherlands started out in a rented space in Hengelo, but before long that became too small. In 2017 the company moved to Vriezenveen where there was more space, and in 2020 the company moved again, this time to a newly-built logistics centre at Twente Noord Business Park, 3 kilometres from Van Merksteijn's production site. The wholesale company supplies mesh panels, various types of fence posts and gates manufactured by its parent company or by manufacturers in the same group. That range is complemented by mesh fencing components, tubing and accessories. Customers don't need to order full loads from the wholesale business; they can have the materials picked up one order at a time.

"It means that we're a total supplier that can offer installers everything they need," Rikkert says. "Since the start of this year we've had complete plug-and-play sliding gates in the range too, which we're able to deliver from stock."

Van Merksteijn Fencing Systems Netherlands serves the Dutch, Belgian and Scandinavian markets. Alongside the German Bläser, it now has sister companies in the UK, France, Spain and Poland, and official importers in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia.

The anniversary was celebrated with a Friday afternoon drinks session that was a bit more elaborate than usual. *"We raised a glass and had a joyful toast, along with our colleagues," Rikkert says. ■*

The Vriezenveen site



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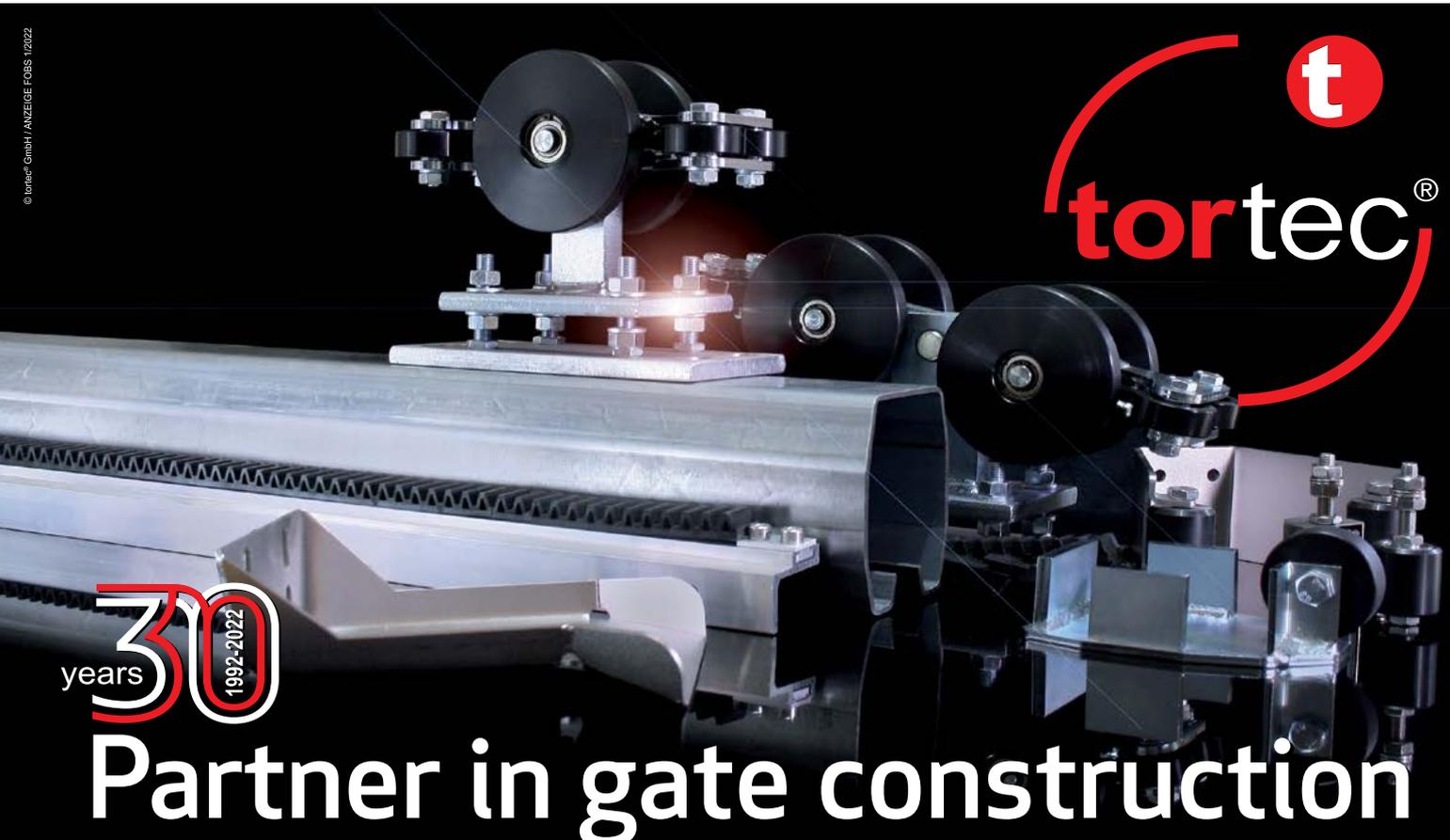


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Fence 4 Solar presents its first solar fence

In January, newly incorporated company Fence 4 Solar introduced the first version of its new Solar-Fence at Perimeter Protection in Nürnberg. Or more accurately: A fence that is suitable for the installation of solar panels.







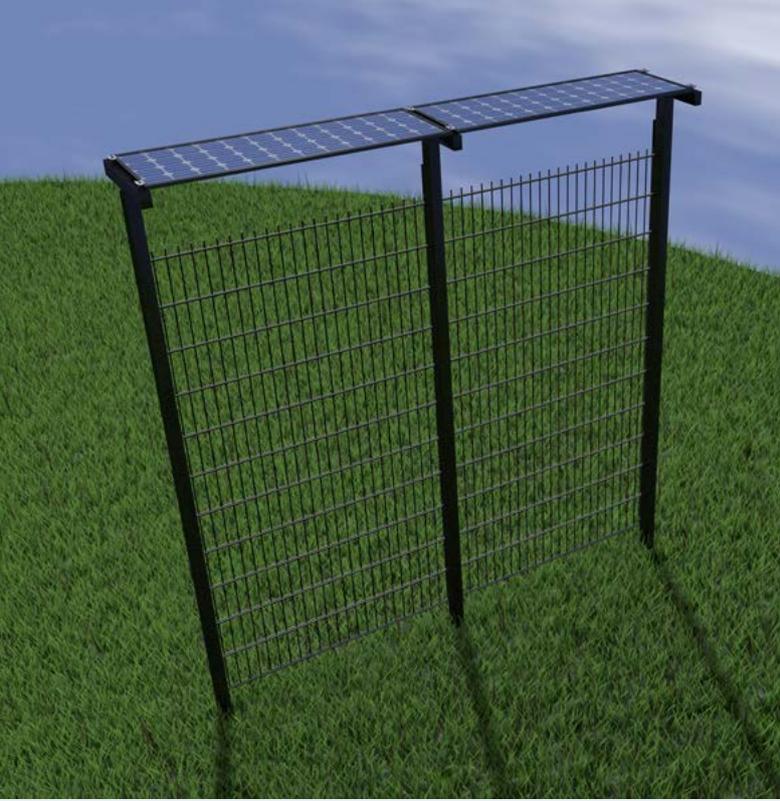
Fence 4 Solar was set up by fencing installer Thomas Bockmeyer from Lingen and the owners of TKA, Jurgen Schroyen and Markus Tillmann. At his fencing business, Bockmeyer was increasingly getting requests for fences with solar panels – requests he was not able to deal with satisfactorily. *“The providers of solar panels – often roofing or specialist solar companies – do not have any fences in their programmes,”* he says. *“And the converse is true, with the various fencing manufacturers not providing solar solutions. Companies that want to use a property’s boundary fence as a support for solar panels experience considerable difficulty in finding professional solutions for that.”*

FENCE 4 SOLAR

Bockmeyer got talking about the issue with Tillmann and Schroyen, business partners with whom he also owns Capra, a manufacturer of mobile security fencing. The result was that the three of them decided to develop a professional solution themselves and they set up a separate company for that purpose. That company was Fence 4 Solar. Christian Kersch was appointed as director. *“Fence 4 Solar does exactly what the name says,”* the latter tells us. *“We make fences for solar panels. Fence 4 Solar’s product comprises fencing posts to which you can fit the same rails that solar builders normally use on the roof. The system is universal, being suitable for most brands and dimensions of solar panels.”*

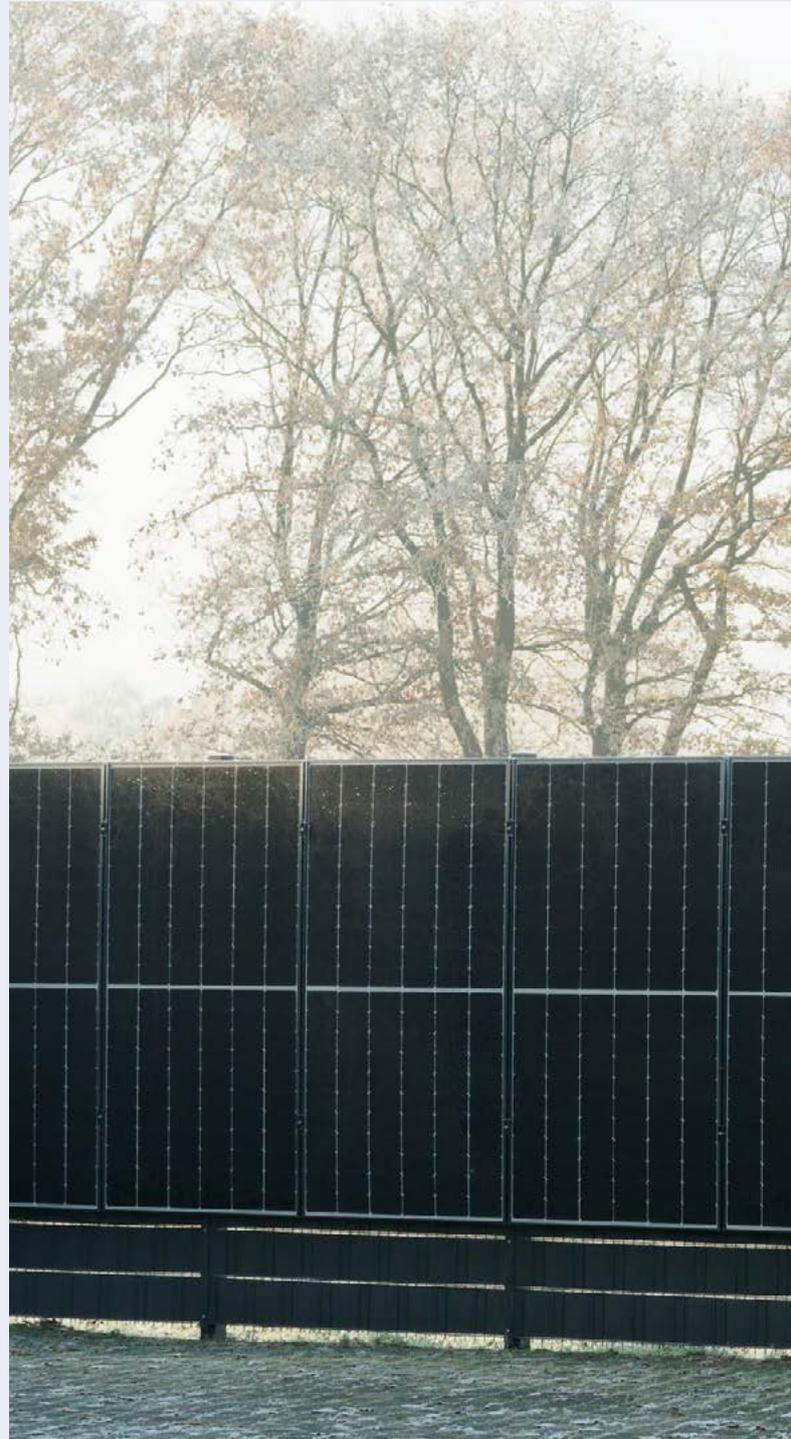
SPECIFICATIONS

The Fence 4 Solar fence has a post every 1.25 metres so it can withstand heavy wind loads. These posts are prepared at the bottom for a 60-centimetre twin wire panel. *“It makes no sense to mount the solar panels to the ground,”* says Kersch. *“Low to the ground is where you get weeds growing, lawnmowers buzzing around and the nuisance of rainwater splashes or a thick layer of snow.”* Up to a height of 2.4 metres, the fence has a static load rating for application in areas up to and including wind zone 4. There is a Mono System and a Dual System. *“If the fence goes in a straight line from North to South, it’s worth adding solar panels to it from two sides. The panels on the western side are shaded until the sun reaches its highest point and then it’s the turn of the panels on the eastern side to be in the shade. For fence installations that are oriented more East-West, we have the mono system with which only the southern side of the fence is covered with solar panels.”*



FORMULA

"The beauty of this system," Kersch goes on, "is that it's attractive to both fencers and solar builders. Solar panel providers are keen to sell solar panels. For them the supporting structure is an annoying complication. From now on, they can just order that supporting structure from a local fencing installer. At the same time, this system does not require the fencing installer to become a solar builder, something he knows nothing about. If someone requests a solar fence from him, he can supply the supporting structure and refer to a local solar builder for the rest. In this way everyone helps each other and everyone can earn something."



ADAPTERS

In addition to the Solar 4 Fence substructure, the new company also supplies special solar adapters. These are attachments for existing fencing, to which a horizontal solar panel is attached. "It works differently in this case," says Kersch. "Here, the fencing installer immediately becomes the provider of the solar system as well because we have had panels made specially for these adapters with dimensions matched to an existing fence. So far there's nothing similar on the market and we have applied to patent it. Incidentally, the same applies to the Fence 4 Solar fence, as this is also a gap in the market and we have taken out product protection for that as well. The adapters are more in mind for smaller projects that any electrician can connect up." The adapter panels are 1.25 metres by 400 millimetres in size. They can be mounted on 60 by 40 tubular posts.

GROWTH MARKET

"Although the interest in supplying solar power to the grid is tapering off, the demand for solar panels is undiminished," says Kersch. "Both in the case of private individuals, who are now investing heavily in heat pumps due to high oil and gas prices, and in industry. Companies are increasingly obliged to demonstrate that they are sustainable producers and vehicle fleets increasingly feature electric cars. All of this requires electricity. And the nice thing about it is: there is plenty of room for kilometres of solar fences on industrial estates. But fences with solar panels also sell well to private individuals as there they can simultaneously serve as fences for privacy." ■



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Van de Wetering is now a Schnabel dealer for the Netherlands

Since the start of this year, Van de Wetering Hekwerk from IJsselmuiden has been the Dutch distributor for sliding gate manufacturer Schnabel Einfahrtstore from Wassertrüdingen in southern Germany. All lines from the Schnabel range have been available to purchase through Van de Wetering since January.



It all started when we were looking for a sliding gate line for our own fencing company,' says co-owner Berth van de Wetering. "We wanted a robust sliding gate with the right drive and a completely different appearance from what is already on today's market. We explored various options before coming across Schnabel Einfahrtstore in southern Germany."

IMPORT DEALERSHIP

"That prompted us to drive to Bavaria with a set of critical questions," Van de Wetering continues, "because as you know pretty pictures don't tell the whole story. But the gates turned out to be even nicer and better in real life than they appeared in the photos. They are high quality and extremely robust. That makes them a good fit with our operating principles and so it didn't take us long to decide that we wanted to have these gates in our own range. We very soon concluded that these gates would be a good addition to the range for many more fencing companies in the Netherlands. Then we entered into an agreement with Schnabel to become an importer for the Netherlands and supply its sliding gates to other fencing companies here. These gates are a great option for any fencing installer who is asked to supply a quality gate, with a large opening width or a nice pillar with a laser-cut company logo. Schnabel is keen to enter the Dutch market and has given us competitive prices. This means we can afford to let interested fencing companies earn a respectable margin."

RANGE

The sliding gate range consists of four models. At Van de Wetering, the first of these is called the Aluline Basic. This is a manually operated gate. The second model is called the Aluline Economic. "It's slim, has a good price-quality ratio and a sleek pillar with a concealed drive unit," says Van de Wetering. "These gates have a 24 volt motor and can be used for up to 50 cycles per day. The third model is the one that attracted us: the Aluline Prestige. It's a great all-rounder with a 230 volt motor for up to 300 cycles per day and it comes in widths of up to 14 metres. You can fit this gate with a so-called Style pillar complete with your own company name and logo and you can have the portals coated in a different colour or have a smooth, imprinted aluminium sheet infill fitted to it. The Aluline Prestige also comes in an XXL version, with an opening width of up to 20 metres. The following applies to all gates: all of the joints are welded – there are no screws, they stand on robust wheel sets, come with widely expandable controls and are made entirely of aluminium. This makes for very light ground pressure in larger openings, plus the thick-walled design of the lower beams makes internal tension cables a thing of the past."





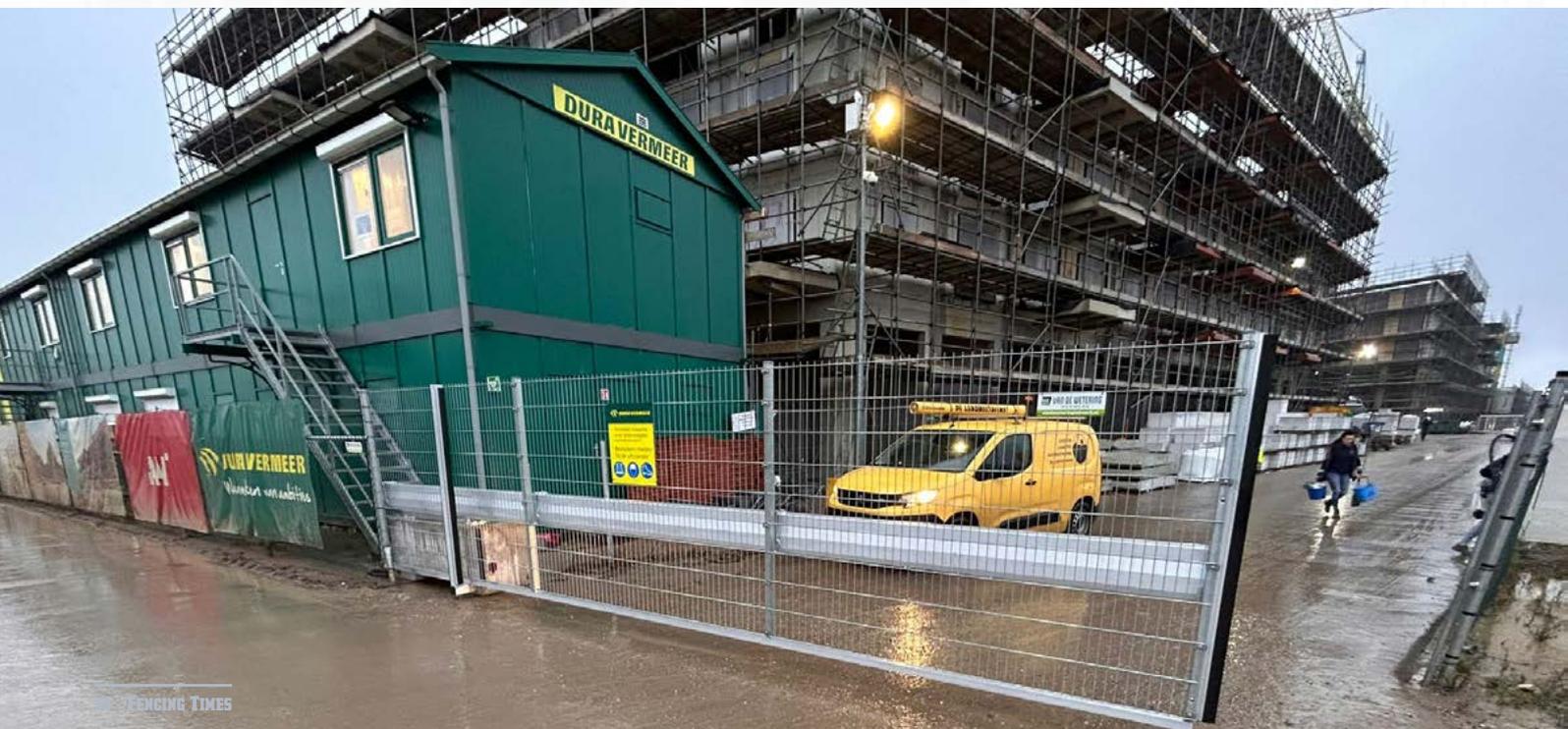
Berth van de Wetering





MOBILINE

"We definitely see a market in the Netherlands for the Mobiline series as well," Van de Wetering continues. "This range consists of prefabricated sliding gates, with the lower beam at hip height and an above-ground foundation. This sliding gate is delivered as ready to install. It's designed for temporary uses such as at building sites and event areas. The structure is fitted with mesh panels screwed to an aluminium frame. Even if there is no power on site, the gate will still work as it can be supplied with a solar panel and a battery. The Mobiline gates are also available to hire."



RESIDENTIAL GATES

Finally, there is also a line of particularly exclusive gates for private owners. Both swing gates and sliding gates are included in this line. "The sky's the limit for this range," says Van de Wetering. "All kinds of looks are possible, from classic to modern. You can have it with corten steel infills, or aluminium infills with a wood look – whatever you fancy, we can supply it."

SERVICE

In addition to supplying, Van de Wetering also takes care of all servicing, spares orders and warranty. "Our import dealership provides fencing installers with a point of contact for incredibly beautiful and robust gates in the Netherlands," says Berth van de Wetering. "Apart from transport, we also provide support and service. Our electricians have received extensive training from Schnabel and can advise the customer's electrician on what to do in Dutch. Usually by phone, but also on-site if needed. The fact that Schnabel gates can be equipped with a communication module comes in very handy here as it often allows you to see what the issue is remotely. All things considered, we have a lot to offer our fellow fence installers, we think. We are really looking forward to building up and greatly expanding this import dealership" ■



According to a survey of 100 installers:

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ZZW Zauntechnik launches coloured screws

ZZW Zauntechnik, a German fencing wholesaler from Bendorf, near Koblenz, launched a range of coloured hardware – primarily screws – this winter. Its purpose is to give installers the option of making the fence look just that little bit better for the end customer.

“The idea came from my father's fencing business,” says Stefan Zimmer, ZZW's co-founder. “One customer wasn't impressed by the way the shiny metallic heads of the screws looked against the dark-coated cover strips of his fence. My father just laughed at him, saying, ‘Screws are made from stainless steel, and stainless steel is shiny.’ But later on my business partner Peter and I were talking about it and realised that there were apparently customers who didn't want shiny screws. We thought we'd see if we could produce an alternative. That's what started the ball rolling.”







COATING

ZZW's two owners looked for a way to colour the screw heads. "Just spraying them with a spray can obviously doesn't work," Zimmer says. "You need to coat them, but it's not as simple as that. We haven't reinvented the wheel, but with the assistance of various powder coaters we've developed a method of manufacturing our products efficiently and at a high level of quality. For example, we needed to make a special suspension system for the screws, because obviously only the heads of the screws have to be coated, not the threads. We use special, extra-robust powder, and the pre-treatment and baking processes had to be adapted too. But in the end it produced screws with high-quality heads. In addition to all RAL colours, we're even able to make them in fine-texture DB 703 now."

SALES

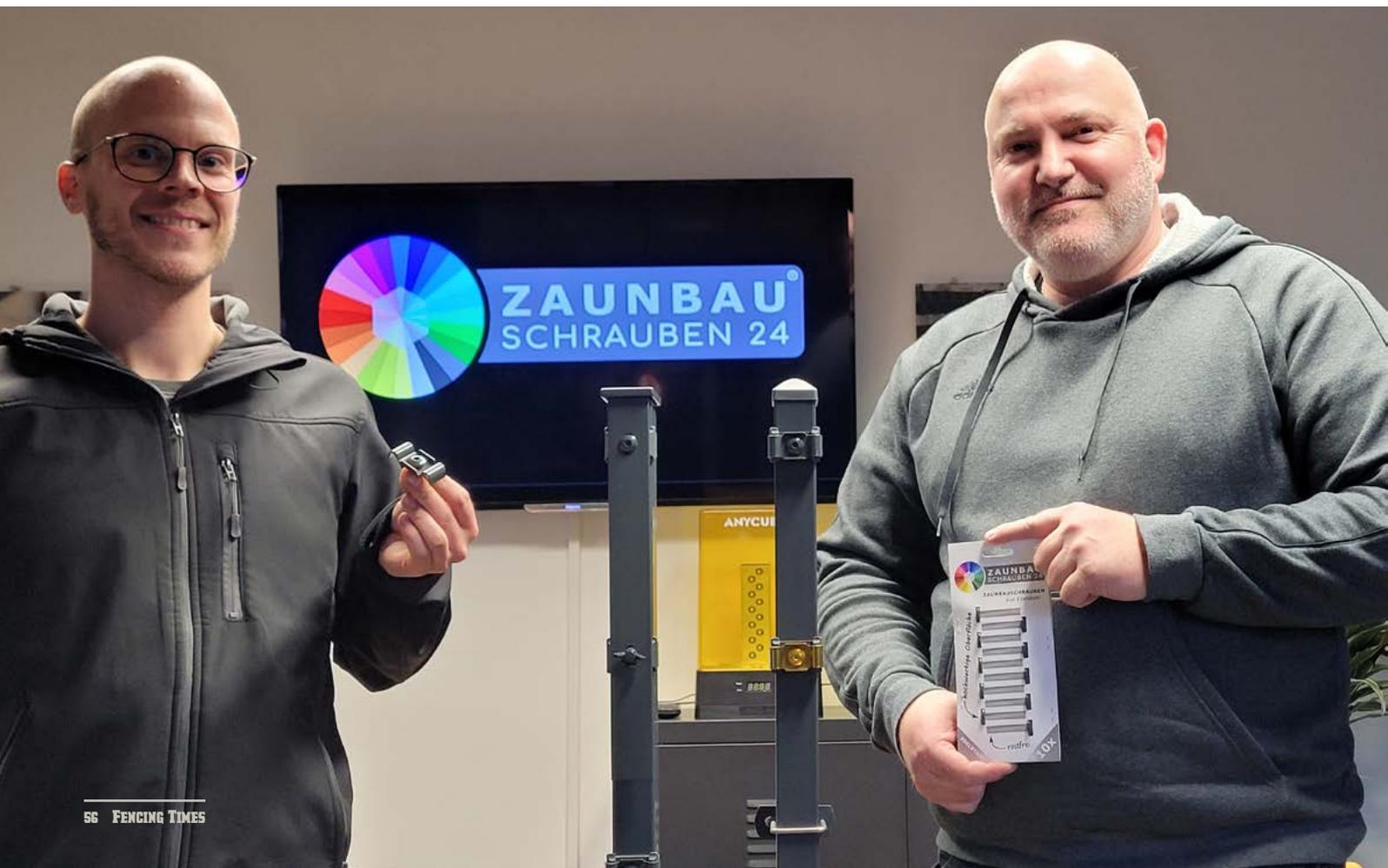
"Once we'd produced the first screws, we naturally wanted to know how they would sell," Zimmer goes on, "so for a while we offered them as standard in every quote made by my father's company – which my cousin now runs. The outcome? The customers love them. After all, they're spending a whole lot of money on a fence, so they figure they want to do it properly. When it comes to private customers, roughly one in two are willing to pay the extra money. That's much more than we had ever dared imagine."

PACKAGING

"So anyway, that meant we needed to approach the project on a much bigger scale," Zimmer says. "Then came the next challenge: the packaging. You can't just throw coated screws into a big box or bag; the threads of one screw will scratch the head of another one. So for small quantities we have little pieces of cardboard that hold the screws, spaced out, in groups of ten. That makes it easy to send them. For larger quantities we now have special cardboard boxes. The screws are packed into them very tightly, so they don't rattle around while in transit."



Stefan Zimmer and Peter Wahlers





INSTALLATION

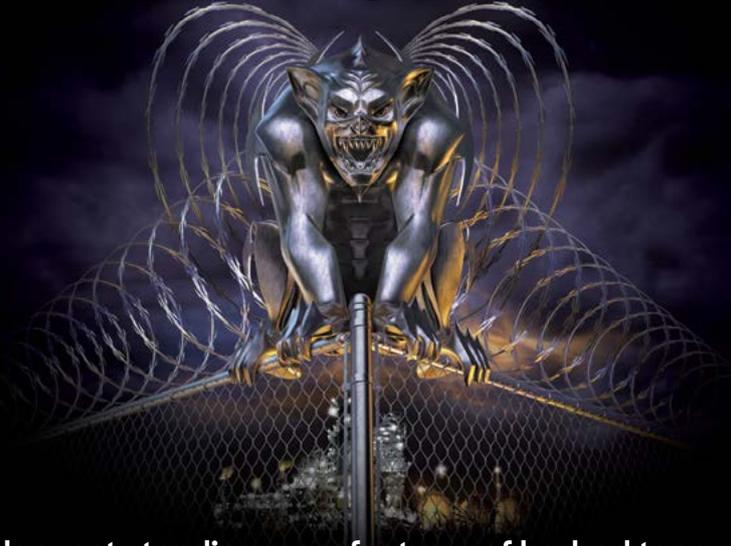
When we heard about the new ZZW range, we on the editorial team were especially curious to know how you would install the screws without scraping the coating off with your allen bit. However, Zimmer says it's not an issue. "Naturally that was our first concern too," he says, "so during the development phase we worked on the principle that we didn't want to have a single screw returned due to damage. It was also the reason why we put so much energy into determining the best powder, suspension, pre-treatment, and the baking process. Industrial installers, who want to get metres into the ground and just ram things in with the rattle gun without even looking, will break just about anything. But if you use a bit of caution and don't put your drill driver on the highest setting, you can install the screws correctly without scratching them. The coating stays put."

THE RANGE

The most important component in ZZW's new range is the fencing screw: an Allen screw measuring 8 by 40 millimetres, with a 5.5-millimetre socket. It can be used on posts with cover strips as well as posts with clamping plates. "For the latter, there's an exceptional contrast on an otherwise dark post because the clamping plates are made of stainless steel too," Zimmer says, "so we also supply coated clamping plates. It means that people can still give their cheaper post a luxurious finish." The range also includes carriage bolts, corner connectors, U-bolts, corner profiles, wing nuts, one-way screws, and other components. "Obviously we're going to continue to expand it. We want installers to be able to buy whatever they need from us, in colour." ■



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Hoffmeister expands production

German sliding gate manufacturer Hoffmeister Industrietore from Brakel-Gehrden, located more or less between Hanover and Kassel, has expanded its second site in Peckelsheim with four new manufacturing halls and an office building. This will more than double the production space.

“We didn’t have enough room,” says managing director Marius Hoffmeister, who runs the company along with his brother Jonas. “We hadn’t been able to grow any further for a couple of years, because there was no space for it. On top of that, our internal logistics sometimes slowed us down because we were manufacturing some of our gates in two locations. In that respect, the new halls are a major step forward.”





HISTORY

Hoffmeister was originally launched in 1955 and was a forge for the first decades of its existence. Marius Hoffmeister and his brother Jonas are the third generation to run the company. *“When our father joined our grandfather’s business in the eighties, he began to specialise in gates,”* Marius continues. *“Back then it was all sorts of gates. From 2006, we moved our focus entirely to sliding gates. But sliding gates are big, and by 2010 we were already very short of space. We then built two manufacturing halls in Peckelsheim, the first town down the road where we were able to get a building permit. We’ve been manufacturing the guide pillars and the gateposts there since that time; we have a spray booth there too. But we’ve continued to grow rapidly in the years since then, so in 2020 we started work on the next expansion. That’s now complete.”*

NEW BUILDING

The new building, completed late last year, consists of four manufacturing halls with a total of 5000 square metres of production space and an office building for the planners and production managers. This more than doubles Hoffmeister’s total number of square metres. *“We now have 120 per cent more space,”* says Marius, *“which is a huge step.”* The first part of that extra space will be used to manufacture the gate leaves for the aluminium sliding gates of up to 12 metres passage width. *“We’ll then be manufacturing almost all of the aluminium sliding gates at a single location. In addition, we now have our own coating facility in which we’re able to pre-treat and powder-coat all gates up to 16.7 metres in a fully automated process. The various steps in the process all flow nicely now. The components can be transported to the next station by forklift or gantry crane, with no need for trucks. That’s an enormous relief.”*





SUSTAINABLE

Not only are the logistics more efficient now, but energy consumption has also fallen dramatically at the new location. *“Just like the original buildings in Peckelsheim, the roofs of the new manufacturing halls are covered in solar panels,”* Marius says. *“We purchase the remaining electricity required from renewable sources. In addition, we installed good isolation during construction and the halls are heated with the residual heat from a biogas plant nearby. These things mean that we’re already carbon neutral to the greatest possible extent.”*

HEADQUARTERS

Because a large portion of production was moved to the new building, space became available at the headquarters in Brakel. *“Relocating our manufacturing means that the Gehrden site will naturally lose some of its importance in the short term,”* Marius says, *“but it remains the headquarters, and sales, administration and the construction workshop will remain there. Production of our FSI product line – steel sliding gates of up to 20 metres passage width – and aluminium gates from 12 to 19 metres passage width will also remain in Gehrden, as will the manufacture of all special made-to-measure projects. The space that has been freed up will enable us to further expand these production lines and we can grow here once again.”*

GROWTH

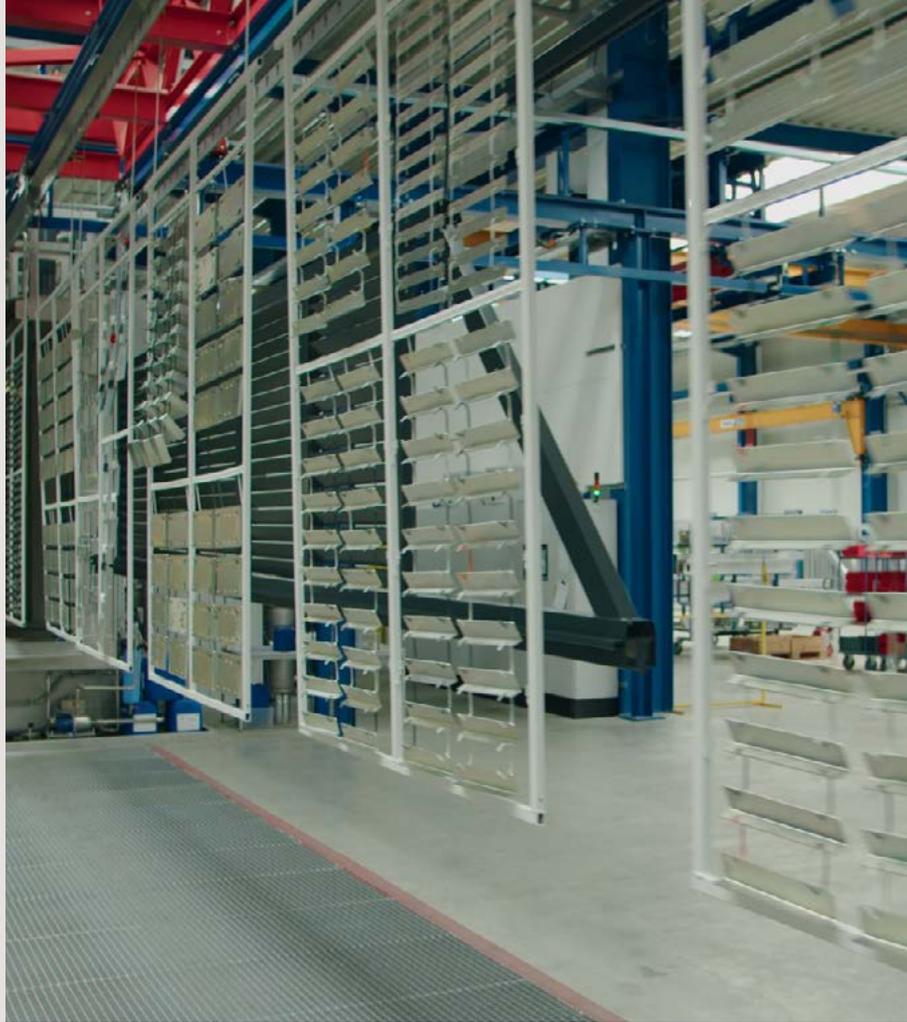
The planned growth got underway even during the construction phase. “Our goal,” says Jonas, taking up the discussion, “was to ensure that, by the middle of last year, we had completed the relocation of the new production lines and put them into use, with our monthly production output at around 20 per cent higher than the previous year. We far exceeded that target: in the last months of 2022, our final assembly was at between 20 and 30 per cent higher on a number of occasions. There’s an even bigger difference in gate leaf production: a couple of times we were at 30 per cent higher than the previous year. We now need to stabilise this growth and deal with the remaining teething problems, which are only to be expected with such a major change to the operating processes. But our customers are already benefiting from the additional production capacity: processing more orders per week also reduces our delivery time by several weeks.”

PROUD

The brothers are keen to emphasise that they couldn’t have done it without their team of colleagues. “Prior to the expansion we were making about 1000 gates a year here, with 60 colleagues – of whom 12 were apprentices,” Jonas says. “Then the work of the new construction was added. Whether it was assembling the powder coating line or building new warehouse racks, there has been an awful lot of extra work over the past two years. This meant that the individual teams were often understaffed, because the work of the colleagues on the construction site had to be divided amongst other colleagues. An enormous effort was required from everyone. We’re incredibly proud of the whole team – they really have moved mountains.”

THE FUTURE

“We may have completed the official construction project,” Jonas adds, “but that doesn’t mean we’ve achieved all our goals now. We have a lot of projects underway, both big and small, that will ensure further optimisation and growth in the medium term. Something that plays a big part in this is the initiative and willingness to help that has been displayed by our colleagues for months now. Many of the best ideas in recent months have come from staff, particularly when it comes to workplace design and work processes. Not only is this truly inspiring to see, but it’s also a huge motivation for me and for my brother.” ■

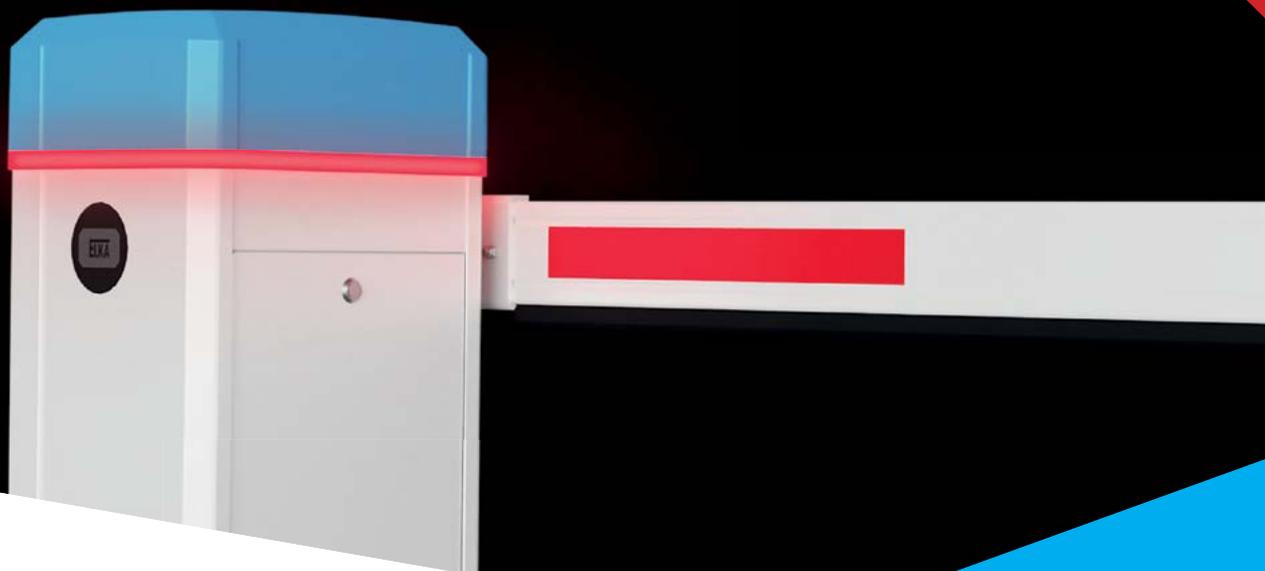




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YouDoo: new privacy fencing startup

YouDoo is a new Danish startup for slot-in privacy fencing. The company aims to make privacy fencing accessible to the general public thanks to low prices, fast delivery times and a new sales model.





Martin Hestnes

“In recent years, slot-in fencing has greatly increased in popularity across the whole of Europe,” says CEO Martin Hestnes. “But at the same time the price point is still a lot higher than for, say, twin wire fencing with plastic privacy slats. With YouDoo we’re changing all that by making privacy fencing affordable for everyone.”

RANGE

The YouDoo range consists of a single slotted aluminium post, which can be used as an intermediate, end or corner post, plus six infill profiles: two made of wood, two of wood-plastic composite (WPC), and two of aluminium. “And that’s it,” Hestnes says. “We have oil-impregnated wood and black-painted wood, composite profiles in anthracite and brown, and aluminium profiles in anthracite, black, and self-colour mill finish. We’re already working on a gate system, which will be very easy to assemble and install thanks to an innovative click system. That will be launched very soon. In the future we’ll expand the range even further, but for now we’re focused on the most popular materials and colours. It means that we can turn over large quantities and keep prices low.”





LOW PRICE

“Obviously those low prices are good for our competitive position, but they also mean that we’re expanding the market. Customers who in the past would have grown a hedge, or used rolls of a welded mesh from the hardware store to install a simple fence, are now able to afford a real privacy fence thanks to YouDoo. A YouDoo privacy fence is cheaper than a rigid mesh fence with plastic infill slats. We’re able to achieve this by – besides keeping to a very basic range – cutting out all the overheads and automating as much of the entire sales process as we can. The materials are packed onto pallets in the factory, then delivered straight to the installer. There’s no middle man, and no intermediate storage.”

LOCAL PARTNERS

“A lot of factories skip the installer in order to drive down the price for the end customer; we’ve deliberately avoided that,” Hestnes says. “It would mean that we’d need to set up distribution centres across Europe, set up a marketing department and a call centre and whatever else, and then go into competition with the local installers. We’ve turned that around: we leave out the distribution centre and hand that final stage over to the installer. From our point of view it’s much more efficient; the installers already have contact with the local market. They already conduct marketing in their own regions, and they’re able to provide local customers with much better assistance than we can from our office in Denmark. So we ensure that local installers can provide super-fast delivery at an unbeatable price, then they do the rest. That way all of us, from customer to installer to YouDoo, benefit from it.”

MODEL

In the YouDoo model, the customer orders from the installation partner. “Either by phone, in person, or via a handy YouDoo configurator that installers can put on their websites,” Hestnes says. “As soon as the order comes in, the materials are sent from the factory in Denmark to the installer wherever they are in Europe. Customers who want to do the installation themselves can pick up the materials from the fencing installer, or the installer can deliver it. Obviously the customer can have the installation done for them if they prefer. What’s important to us is that the installer keeps in contact with the customer. He can give them advice, sell gates or accessories to go with it, and make sure that the customer’s completely happy. The installer also invoices the customer directly; we don’t get involved in that.”

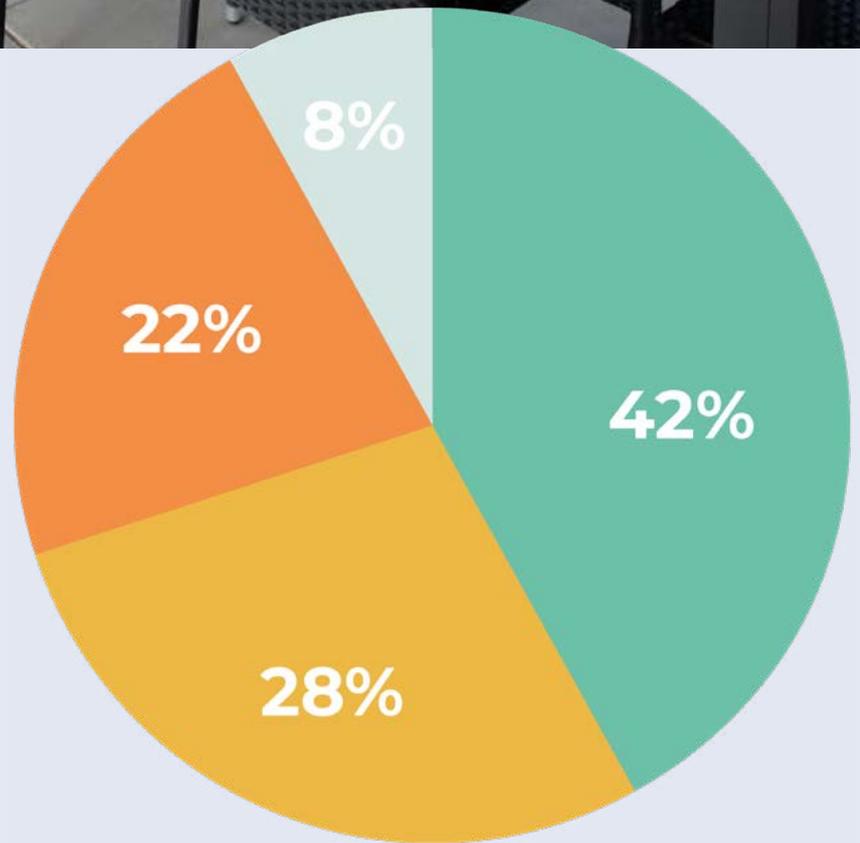


FOR FENCING INSTALLERS

“One of the additional benefits of this sales model is that we return internet customers to the installers,” Hestnes explains. “A lot of customers who plan to do the installation themselves don’t go to a fencing installer; they just disappear online and the fencing market never sees them again. That’s why we created the handy YouDoo configurator, which installers can easily add to their own websites. It allows the installers to reach internet-savvy DIYers. It’s also why we’re called YouDoo: our system is so simple and comes with such good documentation, that customers really can do it themselves. With YouDoo, fencing installers can also supply customers that they wouldn’t otherwise have reached.”

TRANSPARENT

Those who become YouDoo partners know in advance exactly what they will earn. “YouDoo products and services are available to everyone, always at the same price and with the same fast delivery, installation and service,” Hestnes says. “That price is visible to everybody, as are the margins. In addition, prices for both the materials and the installation are fixed all over Europe, but there’s a good margin built in for the installer – an amount for which he can easily deliver and install the fence. Even if the customer wants to do the installation themselves, there’s a good margin for the partner. In addition, all partners are listed on the YouDoo website and orders are passed on to them from customers in their region who have ordered through YouDoo’s own website.”



YouDoo's pricing structure. 42 per cent is for the cost of materials, packaging, and preparation for transport. 28 per cent is for YouDoo, which is responsible for transport, storage, order processing and packaging. The local fencing partner gets 22 per cent for handling the order, and if the customer wants the materials delivered there is also 8 per cent built in for transport.

SUSTAINABLE

An additional argument to convince those customers, according to Hestnes, is the sustainability of YouDoo fences. "Our products are mainly made in Scandinavia and according to the most stringent environmental requirements," he says. "For example, we work with one of the world's largest aluminium producers, which powers its smelters with electricity from hydropower plants. We've also invested heavily in a packaging line to enable us to transport very efficiently. Many metres of YouDoo fencing fit on a single truck. This is how we ensure the lowest possible carbon footprint, the highest level of recyclability, and the lowest environmental impact."

NETWORK

YouDoo will be active throughout Europe right from the start. "We aim to make YouDoo the largest privacy fencing supplier in Europe. That's the reason for our large-scale approach and for seeking out good logistics partners who are able to deliver throughout Europe. It means that we don't have to conquer countries one at a time and that any installer, anywhere in Europe, can become a partner. We have a lot to offer them: they're able to supply privacy fencing at an unbeatable price and with super-fast delivery times. They reach a whole new customer base too. Where else can you find that?" ■





In addition to being a fencing installer, Livia Graf is a photographer. Whenever her guys finish off a project, she drives to it and takes stunning fencing photos. This is one of them.





The editorship at Fencing Times is on the lookout for a

Fencing Editor

to reinforce our editorial team.

THE JOB

You will actively seek out information of interest to fence installers. You will contact producers, wholesalers, trade show organisers and industry associations on the phone. You will scour their websites, follow them on social media and look for them at trade shows and other events and quiz them about developments in their company or organisation. Then you will sieve this information for newsworthiness and write an article about it – or deliver the information to a copywriter.

YOU THE PERSON

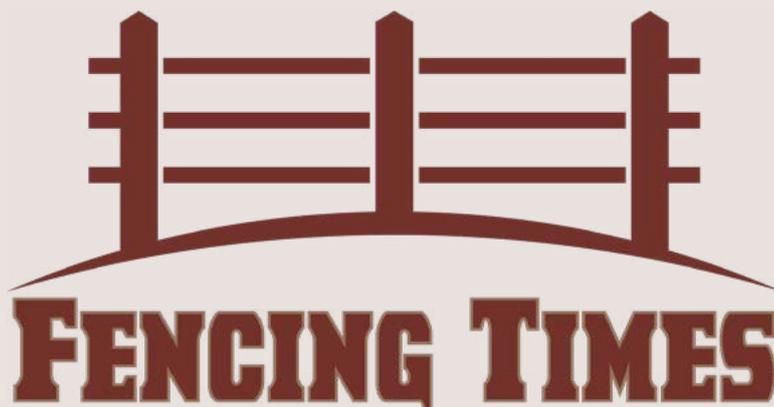
- You have a permanent passion for fencing. As soon as you got involved with the industry, you never wanted to leave it
- You are familiar with construction culture and the mentality of fencing installers
- You work in an accurate manner with an eye for detail and you enjoy immersing yourself in a subject
- You speak at least German and English. Other languages such as French, Italian, Polish and Dutch are a nice-to-have
- Preferably, you have the ability to write well or would enjoy learning to do so, but this is not a firm requirement
- You are a great communicator with an easy manner, young at heart, a bit of a rebel and above all not woke

WHAT WE OFFER

- Good salary
- MacBook and iPhone from the company
- Regular fun trips to trade shows, open days and anniversary parties
- Working with the fencing industry's nicest team (in our unbiased opinion)
- Career growth opportunity to Country Manager with responsibility for the content of one or more editions

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If interested, then call Rembrandt on +49 173 6038627. If you have any questions or want to have a no-obligation brainstorming session to see whether this job is for you, please still get in touch.

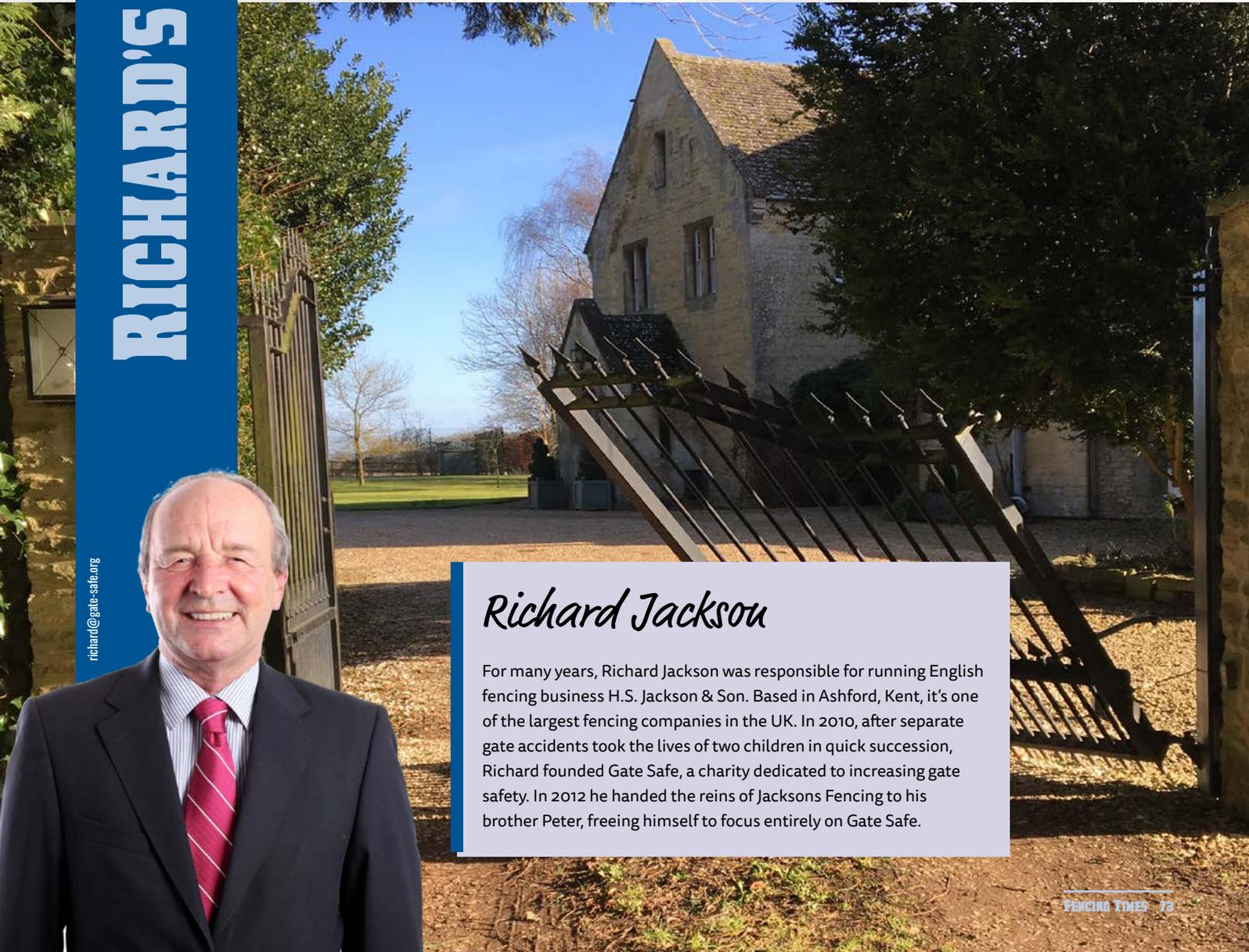


Gate Safety by Design

We at Gate Safe have always believed that every automated gate must undergo a strict risk assessment to review the key factors impacting the safety of each specific installation. We have also long advised that safety needs to be designed into the gate at the outset, rather than being tacked on as an afterthought – the latter approach is potentially dangerous, both in terms of the possibility of the gate causing

a serious accident and with regard to the additional expenditure required to make changes after the fact.

This is why we're launching a new campaign for 2023: Gate Safety by Design. Each month we will give tips for installers to ensure that the fundamental design of the gate represents a safe installation that will avoid the hazardous consequences of a single point failure. This month our focus is on three as our magic number.



Richard Jackson

For many years, Richard Jackson was responsible for running English fencing business H.S. Jackson & Son. Based in Ashford, Kent, it's one of the largest fencing companies in the UK. In 2010, after separate gate accidents took the lives of two children in quick succession, Richard founded Gate Safe, a charity dedicated to increasing gate safety. In 2012 he handed the reins of Jacksons Fencing to his brother Peter, freeing himself to focus entirely on Gate Safe.



TWO IS NEVER ENOUGH

The British and European Standard BS EN 12604 was updated in 2017 to state that all swing gates should be fitted with three hinges. However, bafflingly, we note that some gate manufacturers have still failed to address this issue – putting themselves directly in the firing line in the event of an accident and any associated claims. This matter clearly needs to be taken more seriously within the gate industry.

Installers should be aware that the simple fact that the standard has been updated does not infer that gates fitted prior to that date can be deemed safe; it merely means that the danger had not previously been recognised. When servicing any swing gate installed prior to the introduction of the new guidance, installers should protect their businesses and their reputations by fitting a third hinge or, at the very least, a tether fixed between the hang post and the gate leaf, in order to eliminate of a catastrophic gate fail.

THE UNDERGROUND OPERATOR MYTH

There also appears to be a view circulating in the field that fitting a third hinge with an underground operator is not good practice, due to the difficulty of aligning the hinges accurately. Remember, the purpose of the additional hinge is simply to prevent the gate leaf falling in the event that one of the other two hinges fails. It does not need to offer constant support. The solution to this problem is to position the third hinge with a little clearance between the pin and the eye, for example a 19 millimetre pin in a 25 millimetre eye. This is sufficient to stop the gate from toppling in the event of a hinge breaking.

INVERTED HINGE WARNING

We still come across newly-installed gates with an inverted top hinge, which is done to prevent the gate leaf being lifted from its hinges. Always remember that gates with inverted hinges – even if there are three of them – can pose even greater risks. Installations featuring inverted hinges mean that the full weight of the gate leaf is being supported by one hinge, therefore significantly increasing the possibility of failure – and thus of the gate leaf falling. ■





Missing out on a mega-job

Now and then I just have to shake my head and I feel like I don't understand the world anymore. How come? Because of the crazy way some people seem to think!

A former neighbour – and almost a friend – that I still keep in touch with, asked me to do so some fencing. For mates' rates, of course. It was just 13.3 metres, with a gate measuring 100 by 80 centimetres, to stop his dog getting into the back section of the garden. I made the measurements myself.

So I went and had a look at what I had lying around. It needed to be cheap – but I didn't want to sell old leftover rubbish to a mate, losing my good name in our circle in the process. So I took a gate from my stock, with a frame of 60 by 40 sections with 8-6-8 twin wire infill, a mortice lock, adjustable hinges, hot-dip galvanised and powder-coated in anthracite, including the posts. Then there were some 34-millimetre tubes in anthracite lying around, which are perfect as intermediate posts. There were a few metres of mesh in anthracite somewhere here too. So everything went together pretty well in terms of colour, and they were mostly materials that would have been hard to get rid of anyway. I can't even remember which project those thin round tubes were from. But anyway, I totted up the original purchase prices, all in euros:

I wanted to sell the whole lot to him, including delivery, for 270 euros. I might even have agreed to 250 or even 200 euros, if it came to that. The crews could have used the money for a few crates of beer for Friday afternoon drinks, or something along those lines.

So today I had a call from the ex-neighbour: he'd rather have a look on eBay. My quote is too expensive for him, and I shouldn't be too disappointed that I didn't get the job.

Um... what? Did I miss something? Why would I be disappointed? Because I'd missed out on a big job with mega-profit, and had to cancel that holiday to the Maldives I'd just booked?

I hadn't even included the working time for our welder, who probably would have ended up spending another hour on the gate to make it fit. All the components would have had to have been gathered together, packaged and loaded, then driven to the front door and carried to the installation site by hand.

Pff, I'm happy that I didn't get this mega-order. With a bit of luck I'll be able to sell the gate in the normal way, which will save me work and my free time.

Some people really are funny. ■



Markus Vogt

Markus Vogt, chair of the Northern Germany trade association Fachverband Drahtzaun, owns fencing company Stäblein in Hanover and is a regular reader of the Fencing Times. He often sends us photos of unusual fences he comes across on his travels, and now and then he gets an experience with an unusual client off his chest – as he does here.

Quote

Round tube posts	66.54 euros
Struts, wall connection, bolts	41.10 euros
Intermediate posts	51.24 euros
Chain-link and sundries	58.24 euros
Gate	<u>379.65 euros</u>

Total net amount	596.77 euros
Total gross amount	710,00 euros

LET'S GO HIGH-TECH

Let's go high-tech



raijmond@fencingtimes.com

Raijmond Rondeel

Raijmond Rondeel 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 raijmond@fencingtimes.com



“Raijmond, how would you like to write a column in *Fencing Times* on matters that you actually know a lot about?” That’s how Rembrandt started his text to me. “Maybe about invisible fences or something?”

A column? Well, I like the idea. So here I am, sitting at my modern-day typewriter, with a request to write something on a subject that all you fencers may not even care about, or at least consider with suspicion. Because fence workers are not great fans of electricity – let alone low voltage or data communication, right? Well, I’m going to have a go anyway.

Because let’s be honest: in areas where security really matters, areas with a high risk of intruders, a fence absolutely needs detection. Years ago, the security manager of a German chemical giant once said to me: “A fence only stops those who didn’t want to get through or over it anyway.”

And that’s exactly right. Because no matter how big or how strong the fence we put up – you can even put a wall behind it for all I care – if what’s behind it is attractive enough, and if the intruders have enough time and resources available, they always manage to overcome the barrier.

They can be attracted by all sorts of things. Of course, valuable things like copper, scrap or precious metals come to mind, but I have come across the craziest things in my career in the electronic security industry. How about cocoa beans or pistachio nuts? Are they interesting for burglars? Apparently they are... Koi carp are also popular, even if they are difficult to transport.

This attraction is subject to change, actually. Yesterday’s valuable items can be completely worthless by tomorrow – and the other way around, of course. Solar panels, for example, are on their way out. Nowadays, companies that store parts for e-bikes need to be careful – and had better have their chain-link fences replaced by a rigid mesh fence with detection on it.



A gate with plenty of high-tech security by Inova Gates (archive photo)

Just this week I visited a company that assembles e-bikes. Their chain-link fence, which had been there for 15 or 20 years, had a big hole in it. "Back then we didn't do e-bikes," the owner told me. Apart from the fence, there was also a hole in the sheet piling of the storage shed, which, as it happens, was electronically secured inside. A pallet full of electric motors was stolen in a matter of minutes. Total damage: more than 100,000 euros. The insurance covers only half of that – and has now suspended cover for the time being. The company needs to get their outdoor security in order first.

It's a tough lesson for this entrepreneur and believe me, he is going to need more than just a new fence. The investments he needs to make for his outdoor security will be close to the amount that the insurance does not currently cover. After the horse has bolted...

There is one industry where the appeal has been and always will be enormous: the prison system and any related buildings and areas. This is where intruders, or rather: extruders, have all the time in the world to come up with a plan to get past that fence or wall and back to what attracts them: freedom. Their resources may be limited, but they are guaranteed to succeed in the end. That is why this industry has been demonstrating for years how to best organise an interplay between fencing, detection, verification and action, to achieve the best security system. There is even a mathematical formula for this: the so-called security factor. This is based on the following assumptions:

- Any mechanical barrier can be overcome, as long as you have enough resources and time
- An electronic system can recognise these attempts and thus provide response time for countermeasures
- The faster the detection, the more response time you will have

The resistance time is the time it takes for intruders to get over or through the gate, calculated from the moment they are detected. The response time is the time it takes for a guard to verify the report and go to the scene to take counteraction.

The security factor is the resistance time divided by the reaction time. If the security factor is greater than 1, the protection is efficient. In plain language: the faster the detection as soon as someone tries to get past a fence, the greater the reaction time and the less (side) damage will occur. It's pretty simple, really.

My next column will be about the different types of outdoor detection systems and their different advantages and disadvantages. ■



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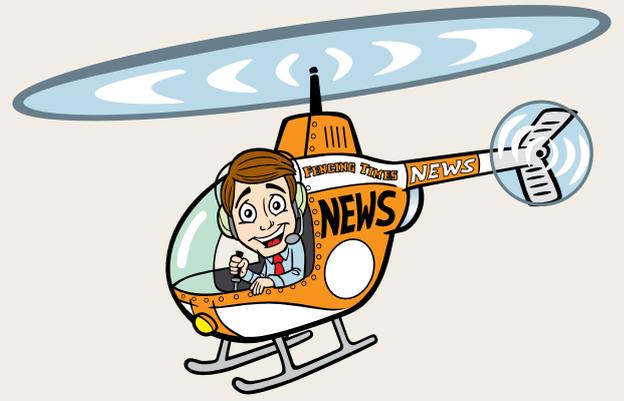
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FENCES IN THE NEWS



3 MAY 2023

Mesh fence around animal shelter makes for a warm winter for dogs



In the US state of Idaho at a place called Idaho Falls there is a 'warm fence'. A what? It's called 'Fido's Fence of Warmth' on account of the numerous dog coats hanging from it. So many dog coats were donated and sponsored this winter at Snake River Animal Shelter in Idaho Falls that the staff decided to pass on the coats to the poorer dog owners in the village who can't afford to buy coats for their dogs themselves. To that end, they hung the coats on the fence around the Shelter, so that anyone who needed a dog coat could just take it from there. Why the dog coat fence is called 'Fido's Fence of Warmth' and not simply 'Dog Coat Fence' is not revealed in the piece of quality journalism where we came across this item of news. The coats will be left hanging on the fence until they're all gone, so if you need another coat for your dog but are hard up at the moment, you could always book a return trip to Idaho Falls: the address of the Snake River Animal Shelter is 3000 Lindsay Boulevard. ■

Mexicans use fence as wall of art



In Mexico City, the municipal authorities were short of exhibition space at which the city's artists could exhibit their works.

So they converted the fence on Paseo de la Reforma, a boulevard along the Bosque de Chapultepec, or Chapultepec forest, into an exhibition space.

The gallery displays historical, ecological and multicultural exhibits.

The exhibitions are changed two to three times a year and, according to the organisation, they are always deeply informative. ■

Volunteers remove fences in Gila Wilderness

Here in the editorial office, we subscribe to the motto that there is always plenty of work in the fencing industry – whether or not the economy is in crisis – purely because the world's population is still increasing. Every year, thousands of fencing installers erect tens of thousands of kilometres of fencing to divide the available land on earth into smaller and smaller pieces, because all these new people also all want their own piece of land. But it can happen the other way round too. Every now and then, fences are removed.

And not to replace them with new fences, but to return the land to nature. Like in the Gila National Forest near Mimbres, in the state of New Mexico. There, a group comprising four volunteers and a dog from the New Mexico section of the Backcountry Hunters and

Anglers, a sports association dedicated to preserving America's wildlife, joined up with staff from the Gila National Forest to clear one-and-a-half miles of old agricultural mesh and wire fencing.

"My sincere thanks go out to the volunteers who gave up their time to help remove this outdated and unnecessary part of the fence," said Wilderness District Ranger, Henry Provencio. *"As well as stopping wildlife from getting entangled in it, removing the fence helps to improve the undeveloped character and quality of the Gila Wilderness."*

It begs the question: what do you call someone who removes a fence, instead of installing it? A fence remover? A fence deinstaller? Ideas gratefully received in our mailbox: team@fencingtimes.com. ■



Fencing not suitable for protection against crocodiles

Last month in this column, we ran a piece about a town in Australia where tourists are now protected from dingoes with a Dingo fence. Our comment on that item was that it might have been a better idea to protect the tourists from saltwater crocodiles, with which the region is awash, with a much more robust fence.

We learned this month that such a robust fence would then have to be seriously robust, and what's more contain a clever anti-climbing system, if it were to be effective. In the meantime, we actually carried

out an in-depth study (read: we watched three YouTube videos) and it shows that your average mesh fence or railing is not at all effective against crocodiles.

The first video was about mesh fencing around a US air force base near Jacksonville, Florida. A woman who drove past the base videoed an alligator crossing the road in front of her, then climbing over the fence and disappearing somewhere on the base. A second clip, from a Miami suburb, showed an alligator disappearing from a car park over a fence into a lake.



And we saw an alligator in Placida, near Fort Myers, just crash right through a railing as if it didn't exist.

As it stands, we are pretty much unaware of all the differences between the various types of alligator and crocodile and thus

we also have no idea whether one species climbs better or worse than the other, but we have definitely decided not to take any chances by staying well away from all crocodiles, even if they are on the other side of a fence. ■

American from Seattle builds Door Fence

On Vashon Island, off the coast of Seattle in the Salish Sea, there lives a certain Oz. Oz really wanted a fence around his yard but instead of getting a fence installer to come, Oz

decided to take up the hobby himself. "Aha, here's another fool who doesn't want to part with his money and has started fiddling with his neighbours' leftover interior doors,"

we thought when we first saw these photos. But then we took a closer look and what became apparent? Oz didn't use old doors for his project, but built doors

from films, series, books and games. For instance, one door has the address 221B Baker Street, which was Sherlock Holmes's address.

Another door features Kermit from the Muppet Show and we also recognise the door of Mister Sanderz, behind which Winnie the Pooh lives, but that's the limit of our knowledge of doors from series and games.

If you see any doors you recognise, please let us know via team@fencingtimes.com. The first person who sends us a complete list will be sent a cream cake and earn our lifelong respect.

If you're ever in the neighbourhood: the address for the door fence is 99th Place SW, Vashon, Washington.

Take a few extra photos for us while there because it looks like Oz is still expanding his door fence. ■



50 metres of twin wire in half an hour? Yeah right.

Delivering 50 metres of twin wire fencing, completed and ready, within half an hour's time – sound impossible? At a Zaunteam event, three installers and one Speedpiler showed that it can be done. We've got videos to prove it. We admit, the circumstances were ideal. But installing between 200 and 300 metres in a day with a single crew is business as usual with the Speedpiler. Give us a call, we'd love to tell you more.



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