

FENCING TIMES

XL Edition

2023, Issue 10



**FAC celebrates
50th anniversary**

**New vehicle
sensor by Optex**

**Game launches
BVX Plus drive**

NEW

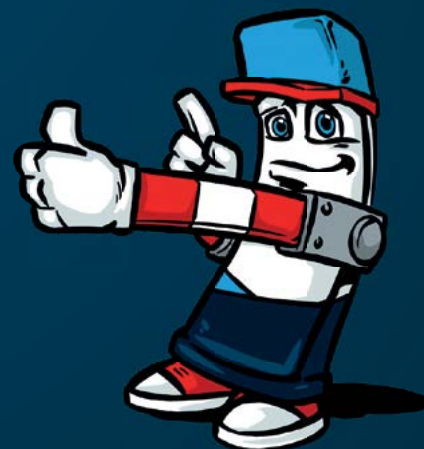
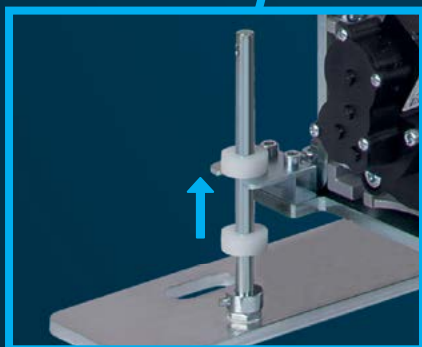
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That playground has to be fenced

In a previous column I wrote about super-installers, and all the things you can do to become one. One thing I didn't mention – because it really should go without saying – is the importance of a pleasant, healthy working atmosphere.

It's something that's easily forgotten amid the hustle and bustle of daily life. The council's amenities manager wants that playground fenced tomorrow because the day after tomorrow it's going to be officially opened by the mayor, and on top of that Mrs Johnson has assured us most emphatically that she's going to give us a bad review on Google if that stupid blue fence of hers isn't installed tomorrow.

On top of that, a healthy working environment is a bit of a vague concept. It's not something you can measure. It doesn't boost your Google rating, and the accountant isn't bothered about it either. These factors mean that improving the work environment is never at the top of your to-do list. But that's the danger right there.

Because a healthy working atmosphere is a bit like a flower bed full of bright and fragrant blooms. You have to tend them carefully as they grow, over time, bit by bit, and give them a little water every day. If you don't water them for a few days, they'll start to droop. Leave them for a few weeks, you'll end up with a whole lot of weeds. Because weeds will grow no matter what.

And weeds choke out all the flowers. It's incredibly demotivating. Everyone in the company becomes more unproductive, slowly but surely, until eventually no one really cares about how many metres are put in the ground or how many Google stars you get from Mrs Johnson.

There are hundreds of things you can do to create a good working atmosphere in your company, if you don't have one already – and to make sure it stays that way. Most of them are only small; things that you can fairly easily introduce into the way you manage your business.

For example, as the boss, make sure that you're always approachable. Be there on the job when your installers arrive. Ask questions, and show interest in the answers. 'How did the job go?' But also: 'Got anything nice planned for the weekend?'


This makes your people feel like you take them seriously. That they can share things with you, can trust you. And when you know what's going on behind the scenes, you can take action accordingly.

Always set a good example, and never make jokes at other people's expense. Fencing installers are not overly sensitive souls and can put up with a fair amount of banter (certainly from each other). But if you, the boss, join in, then you're giving it the OK and the gloves are off. Then the jokes can get out of hand, which in turn leads to unhappy colleagues.

Another important point: be clear about your expectations. The clearer, the better. It makes it easier for your staff to meet those expectations. On top of that, it means there's less discussion afterwards – and therefore less dissatisfaction.

The list is endless – just take a look on Google. You'll find a hundred sites full of tips, and those tips are different on every site. Most of them can be implemented in your business right away without much effort or expense; all you need to do is take a moment or two to think about it.





There is one, though, that takes a bit of time and effort: throw a party for your staff now and then. Take everyone out to dinner or to the pub, or get a few crates of beer and some sausages and fire up the barbecue.

Now, as we head towards the end of the year, is an especially good moment. Even if you don't actually have time for it, because you've just had another call from Mrs Johnson. Her stupid blue fence can always be installed next week. If the restaurants are all fully booked for Christmas already, then make it a party to celebrate the New Year. Just organise something.

It's important to celebrate together now and then. Not only does it send the message that you appreciate everyone's hard work, but it also gives colleagues the opportunity to relax and have a laugh together without having to think about work. Without feeling stressed about that playground, which has to be fenced today.

People place more value on it than you might think. Sometimes they look forward to Christmas all year. The lights and decorations come out sometime in mid-November and the house is decorated, in the leadup to two or three days of enjoyment with the family. A time when everyone comes together. Laughs at each other's jokes, but also listens to each other's problems.

And if it's important for families to spend time together, then it's even more important for colleagues to spend time together. Your colleagues are your second family – you often spend more time with them than you do with your own family. You have a lot more experiences together, too. You have to solve more problems together and you're constantly under time pressure, because that council

playground has to be fenced this week. And all of that with no family bond with your colleagues to fall back on.

Enjoying a pleasant evening at the pub or in a restaurant gives you a chance to laugh together. Employees can whinge about that time (or times!) you pushed them too hard in the past year. And you yourself can complain about annoying customers and the invoices they haven't paid. You can put all the irritations behind you and start again with a clean slate. And you can get to know your colleagues better, meaning that it will be even easier to get along with them next year.

So: if you haven't yet got together with your team: choose a date, and book somewhere now. If the boss doesn't do it, then go ahead and book it with your colleagues, simply because you've earned it. And then invite your boss as well, because he's earned it too after a year of being your boss.

We on the editorial team wish you a very happy festive season – both with your colleagues and your family – and then a good start to a fresh new year. May 2024 be a year full of joy and happiness, with lots of super-straight fences, super-satisfied customers, and supersized tips. A year of good health, with no illness and, especially, no industrial accidents. Preferably also a year of financial prosperity, with more profit and with big bonuses for all colleagues.

Until next year!

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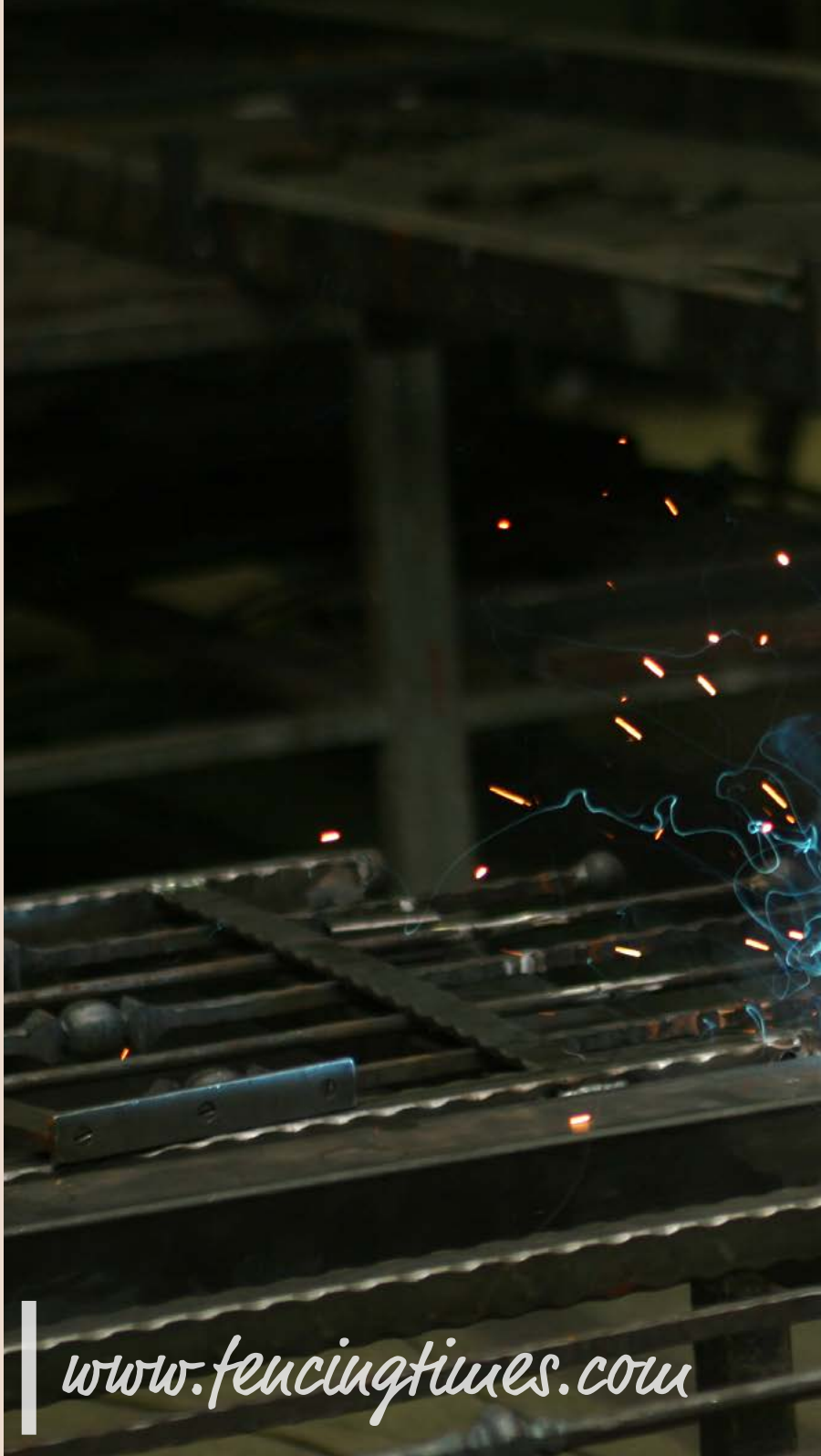
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CIRCULATION:

Fencing Times is published in both print and digital editions. More than 17,000 readers in 7000 businesses across Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK read Fencing Times in their own language. An additional international edition in English is sent to readers throughout Europe.

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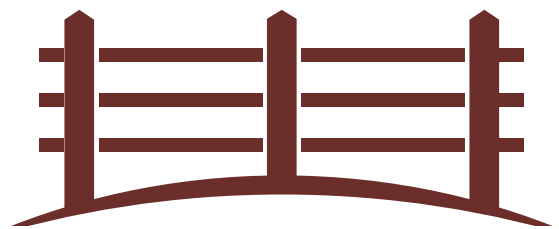
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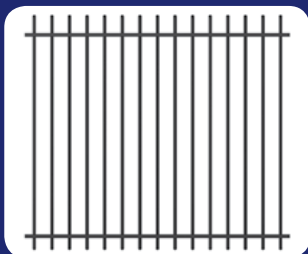
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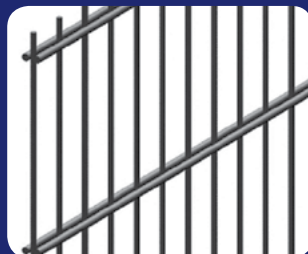
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FENCE POST



Michael @ Voerde

Michael Margciok of Zaunelemente Voerde in Voerde, near Oberhausen, sent us these photos. "Check this out, I've found the world's smallest fence," he wrote. And he's absolutely right - this tiny fence wouldn't be out of place at Bekonscot in the UK, Madurodam in The Hague or Hamburg's Miniatur Wunderland - except for the fact that it's not actually a fence; it's a boot scraper. Back in the days before cities had paved roads, when horses were the most common form of transportation, you'd find a boot scraper like this out the front of every grand house in the city for visitors to scrape the mud and manure off their shoes. Over time, as the dirt roads were paved and motor cars replaced horses, boot scrapers disappeared from the cities, but you still come across them in the countryside - especially in areas where there are dirt roads or lots of horses. Boot scrapers come in all sorts of shapes, and this one does look an awful lot like a fence. Thanks for the photo, Michael!



fencepost@fencingtimes.com

Have you got a tip for us? Or taken part in something great that you want to share with the market? Spotted a beautiful fence or a beautiful gate? Or perhaps a really ugly fence, which you turned into a great photo? Let us know and share it with your colleagues in the sector.



Marco @ Hadra

Marco Herzog from the Hadra branch in Philippsburg, between Mannheim and Karlsruhe, sent us this photo of a typical Italian ornamental gate. The gate is in Laveno on Lake Maggiore, in front of an - abandoned - mansion. Take particular note of the defence against climbers; the gate clearly dates from a time when homeowners didn't have to worry about any potential injury that might be caused to intruders. Thanks for the photo, Marco!



Reinhard @ Bauwauu

Reinhard Just, of Lüdenscheid-based parts manufacturer and wholesaler Fritz Baumann, has built a special Christmas tree for this year's celebrations. "This tree won't lose its needles and is 100 percent recyclable," he laughs, before wishing all readers a very happy festive season and lots of jobs in the new year. The same to you, Reinhard!



Ali @ Duruishi

This photo comes from Ali Durmishi of Durmishi Garten & Zaunbau of Homburg, in Saarland. The fence that he and his team installed looks like a simple twin wire fence, but it's on a slope and has double panels in some parts, so it can serve as a gabion. Nice job, Ali! Thanks for sending us the photo.



Mirelle @ Hofman

Mirelle Hofman of Hofman Hekwerken in Zoetermeer was on holiday in Scotland with her husband Michel when she came across this fence in Edinburgh. "It's always a wonder, the way something like this comes to be," she writes. "How long has it taken this tree to swallow that fence whole?" We have no idea, Mirelle. Perhaps one of our readers knows a bit about trees and can tell us? It's nice to see the stereotype reinforced yet again: fencing installers can't go on holiday without checking out fences. Thanks for your submission!



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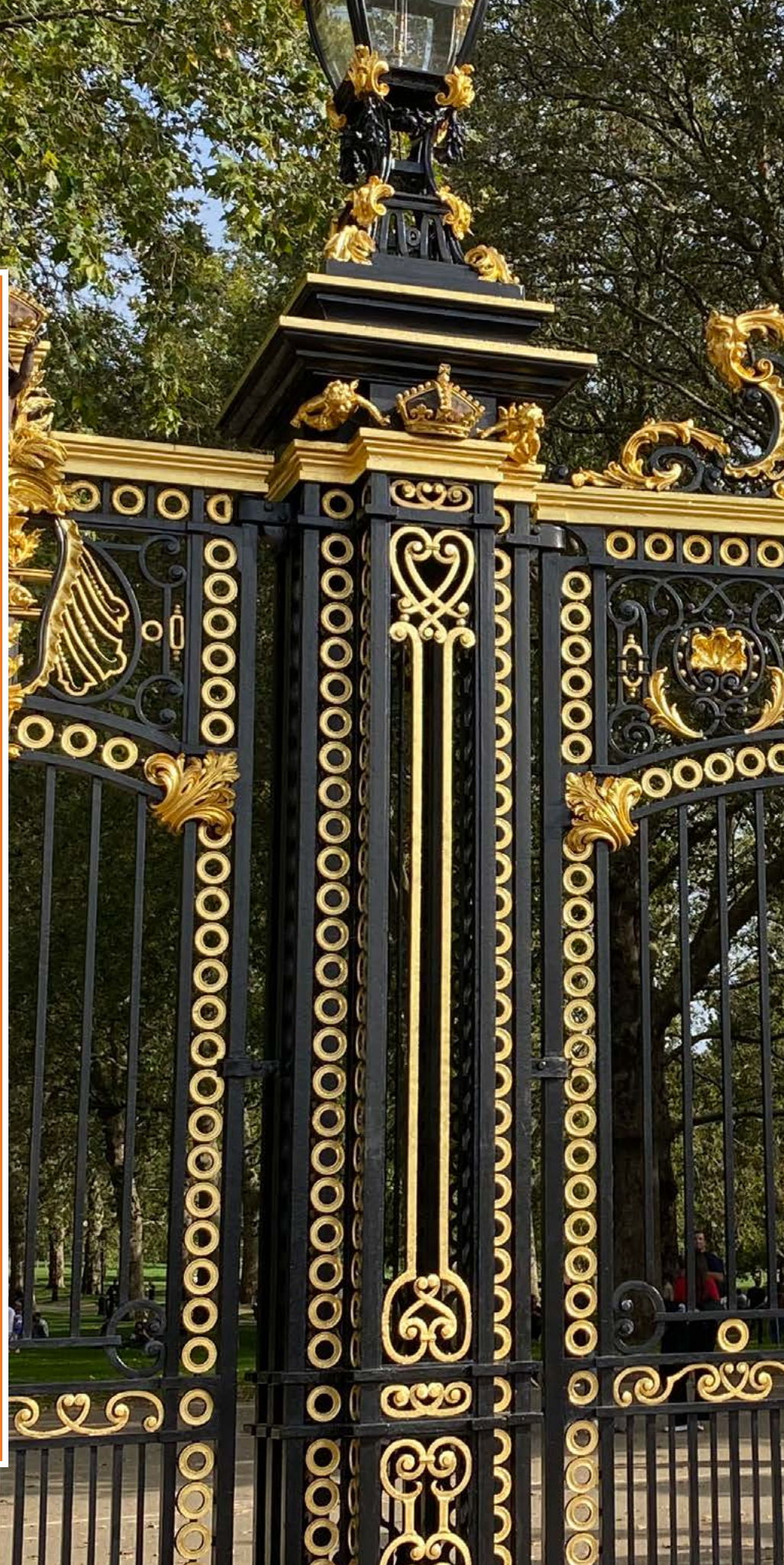
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Photo of the month



This issue's photo of the month comes from us, just for a change. Because what does the editor of a fencing industry trade magazine do when he's in London for a weekend? Does he do the tour of Buckingham Palace? Does he go to watch the Changing of the Guard out the front? No, nothing like that at all. Naturally he checks out the fences and gates around the forecourt. Yes, fences, because there are another two or three fences like that there. There's been a bit of fuss in the UK recently over how much the Royal Family costs. The official cost is 86 million pounds sterling, but estimates of the actual cost to the British taxpayer range from 300 to 500 million pounds. When we saw this fence, we could see why. It looks like the entire annual yield of an African gold mine has been smeared on these fences. It must have been an incredible project for the fencing installer who made these. How long would they have taken to weld and forge?

Have you seen a great fence or gate somewhere? Send it to fencepost@fencingtimes.com for the chance to win a builders' radio from Locinox.





Del Ponti takes over Polyval's fencing business

In September, Del Ponti, a Belgian manufacturer of fencing parts that is based in Hechtel-Eksel in Limburg, took over the fencing division of Polyval, a mould-making and injection moulding company from Balen, in the Belgian Kempen region. In exchange, the companies will work more closely together in the development of new products in the future. From now on, Polyval wants to focus more on mould-making for various sectors outside the fencing industry.

“Over the years, both companies have been working together more often,” says Del Ponti co-owner, Luc Witters. *“Polyval had a number of products in its range that we were still lacking. But in the main, the company sold these regionally, to a small group of customers.*

By adding those products to the Del Ponti range, we will make them available to many more customers thanks to our large distribution network, while Polyval can now focus itself fully on design and mould-making – something where Polyval was already very strong.”

As part of the agreement, Del Ponti can also outsource injection-moulding work to Polyval, if the company itself is short of capacity. “This agreement enables both companies to complement each other even better than was already the case,” Witters continues. *“With this takeover, Del-Ponti strengthens its portfolio and its position in the world of fencing, while Polyval can now fully concentrate on design and production. It’s a classic win-win situation.”* ■

Del Ponti owners Luc Witters and Geert Camps



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Optex produces new vehicle sensor

Japanese sensor manufacturer Optex has launched a new vehicle sensor. The OVS-02GT detects vehicles from a distance of 8 metres and with an approach speed of up to 35 kilometres per hour. *“Our first vehicle sensor was in response to the demand for an easily applied, above-ground solution for vehicle detection,”* says Toshiyasu Matsuyama, business development manager at the Japanese headquarters. *“The OVS-02GT is a further refinement to that sensor.”*

Optex’s above-ground vehicle sensor is a radar-guided detector. It was developed to provide an alternative to the induction loop, for use in situations where the latter cannot or should not be installed. *“The sensor is ideal for locations where the road surface should not be damaged, or has already been damaged,”* says Matsuyama. *“The detector is also useful even in places without any road surface such as an unpaved road or where the road floods regularly. We’re seeing the sensor deployed more and more often in locations where an induction loop would have been quite possible but the sensor wins out because it’s really simple to install, with no need to dig or cut trenches in the asphalt. You can simply fix the sensor to a post, wall or barrier housing and the total installation time is up to three times faster.”*





The new OVS-02GT joins the range alongside the existing OVS-01GT. Both vehicle sensors are designed to detect vehicles but ignore pedestrians. *“The new sensor has a bigger range,”* says Lucien Blom, sales manager at Optex Technologies’ European headquarters in The Hague. *“Rather than 5 metres, we can now detect vehicles as soon as they are 8 metres away. Furthermore, the detection speed has been increased to 35 kilometres per hour and the opening angle widened to 96 degrees. Finally, the OVS-02GT can be easily configured using an app. The app also allows you to save settings – if you want to install several units with the same settings, you can reuse the same settings each time.”* The sensor works on 12 and 24 volts, so you can power it from the gate’s or barrier’s control board. An additional output allows the sensor to be coupled with warning lighting, for example. There is a built-in heating element that keeps the electronics warm under frost conditions and the sensor is water-resistant in accordance with IP66. ■

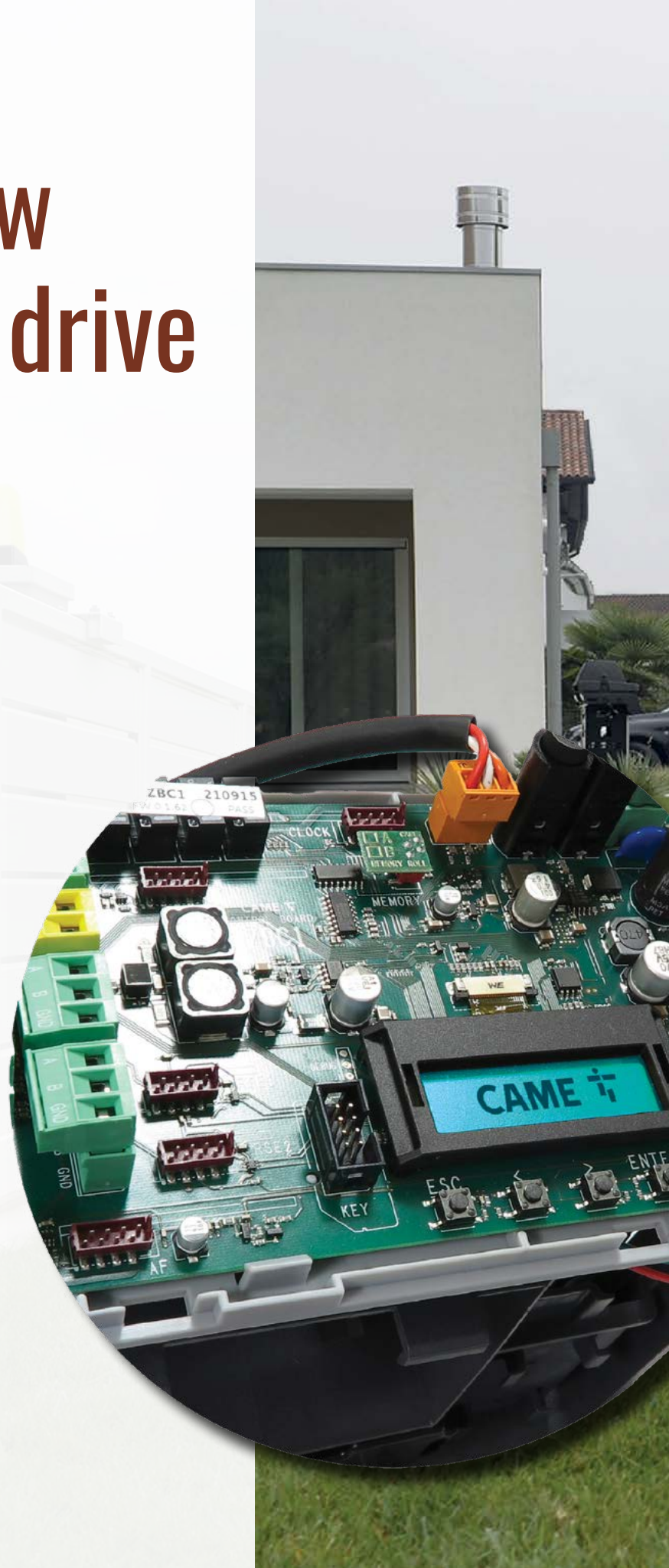


BXV Plus new sliding-gate drive from Came

Came, an Italian manufacturer of access control systems launched a new sliding-gate drive this summer. It's an extended version of the existing BXV drive, named BXV-Plus. *"The Plus variant makes it easier for the installer to fit the drive and connect accessories,"* says Marc Daub, marketing manager at Came's German branch in Stuttgart.

The BXV Plus makes use of the ZBC1 controller. It features a connector for the Came Key, a Wi-Fi dongle that provides a local connection between the controller and the installer's phone. The installer can then use an app on his phone to carry out the installation. *"This is done using a handy wizard,"* says Daub. *"The wizard ensures you don't accidentally overlook a setting and makes the configuration process faster and easier."*

The BXV Plus controller also features BUS connectivity. *"Each accessory can configure itself with the CXN BUS and give feedback,"* says Daub. *"Moreover, BUS technology simplifies the installation of accessories as you can connect them to each other and not necessarily each one individually to the control unit. The new control unit's electronics are also able to continuously analyse the forces acting on the gate. What is referred to as Adaptive Speed and Torque Technology enables the BXV Plus – depending on the parameters specified during installation – to adjust the motor speed and torque."*







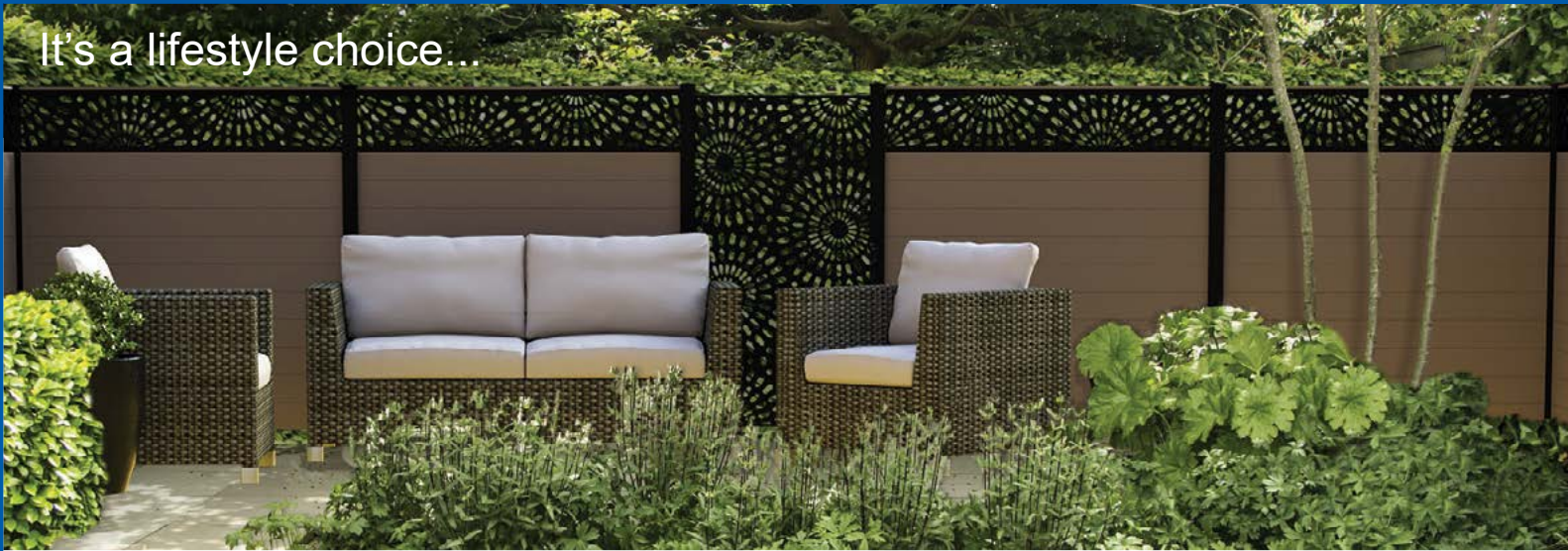
This allows the controller to ensure that the gate leaves always open and close at the same speed, even in different weather conditions – or if the environmental conditions change over time.” Moreover, the controller operates at a low speed when opening and closing. “That preserves the drive and is quiet.”

The controller has four separate safety inputs to which safety contact strips with 8.2 kilo-ohm can be directly connected. “This saves on external switching modules and simplifies the installation.” For integration into a smart home, the drives can also be connected to the internet using an optional Connect Gateway. This allows the gate to then be opened via Alexa with a voice command or via an app. The new BXV Plus is designed for the residential market. Three versions are available: for sliding-gate leaves weighing up to 400, 600 or 1000 kilograms. ■





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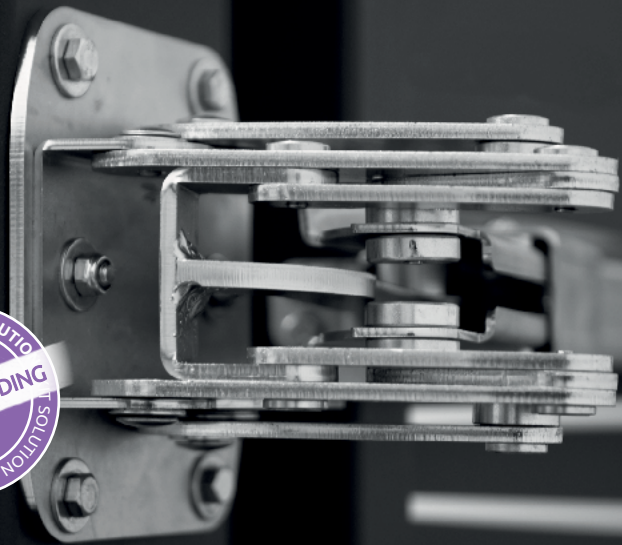
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Automatic Systems launches barrier with folding skirt

Automatic Systems, a Belgian manufacturer of products such as barriers and turnstiles, is based in Wavre near Brussels and launched a new barrier with a folding skirt earlier this year. The BL46 has a passage width of up to 7 metres, and is intended as an alternative to swing and sliding gates.

“With the classic solution that combines a gate with a barrier, during the day intruders can simply walk past the barrier,” says Stephan Stephani, manager of the Automatic Systems branch in Unna, Germany. “For this reason, we’ve now launched a barrier with a sturdy skirt. It’s so strong that you can use the barrier as an alternative to a gate.”



Stephan Stephani



FOLDING SKIRT

The BL46's folding skirt is made of aluminium strips. There are two horizontal strips the same width as the barrier that serve as upper and lower beams. Then there are vertical strips stapled to these, as well as being mounted to the barrier itself. "We assemble the folding skirt at our factory," Stephani says. "It's not a kit. In the factory we can customise the shape of the lower beam so it matches the curve of the road or the kerb. We can mount razor comb security spikes to the top and, if required, we can extend the folding skirt to above the housing as well. This creates a secure blockade that keeps all unauthorised persons out."

APPLICATIONS

Stephani says that the folding skirt barrier is suitable for all locations in which not only vehicles but also people need to be kept out. "The barrier is an alternative to a gate," he says, "but then we're talking about a gate that doesn't need any extra space on either side, because the barrier opens upwards – and on top of that, a gate that opens quickly. The BL46 is especially useful in the logistics sector, where there's a lot of traffic and there are strict requirements that have to be met in order to be considered a secure shipper."

SPECIFICATIONS

The BL46's housing is made of folded and welded steel sheeting of 3 to 8 millimetres thick. The axle is exactly in the middle, and the boom holder is U-shaped. "The holder is attached to the axle on two sides," Stephani says. "The advantage of this is that not only can you have the boom open to the left or to the right, but you can also decide whether you want to mount it to the inside or the outside. It means that you can adjust the barrier and the folding skirt to suit any situation."

For security, the BL46 is equipped with a laser scanner on both sides. This scanner can also be used as an intruder-detection scanner. The controller has a built-in weekly timer, and you can use it to set separate speeds for opening and closing. You can also connect the controller to the internet, enabling the boom status and any error messages to be read remotely. The BL46 has been calibrated and tested for continuous operation. ■



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Condor, new budget-friendly sliding gate from Heras

Heras, which originated in the Netherlands, is adding a new sliding gate to its range: the Condor. It's a budget-friendly, steel gate with which Heras is aiming to target mainly the entrances of small and medium-sized companies.



“**T**he Condor sliding gate represents an expansion to our range,” says product manager Harrie van Heeswijk. “This gate offers smaller companies in particular an affordable solution for optimal access control, with the same reliability as our larger gates.”

BUDGET-FRIENDLY

Because the Condor is in a more affordable price range than the other gates in the Heras range, this sliding gate is the solution for small and medium-sized businesses. “We wanted to market the gate at a competitive price so we made it as efficient as possible in all respects,” says Van Heeswijk. “Not only in the choice of materials, but also in the manufacturing method. For that reason, we have organised a separate production line, in which we make the gates in series. That has a positive impact not just on the price, but also on deliveries. The lead time is a mere 4 weeks.”

RAPID INSTALLATION

The gate’s efficient features also come into their own during installation. “We paid extra attention during development to facilitating rapid installation of the gate,” says van Heeswijk. “Condor is a modular design. We deliver it on a steel transport frame, completely mechanically and electrically assembled and with all cables already concealed. You can take it straight off the frame and onto its anchors. The base plates have notches so you can also quickly align the gate. In addition, you can adjust the height of the catch fork on the closure post. So you can set up the post first and then easily align the height of the gate and then mount the meeting point. After you’ve done it a couple of times, it won’t take you more than an hour to commission the gate.”



CONDOR

The Condor sliding gate is powered by Heras' own HMD-Basic drive unit and features active safety bars. The drive opens – and closes – the gate at 20 centimetres per second, which according to Van Heeswijk is fast for this price class. The gate has a steel leaf frame with a steel mesh filling, so this installation is a perfect match for steel panel fencing or mesh fencing. Finally, the gate has been extensively tested and comes with a CE mark, a Declaration of Performance (DoP) and a Declaration of Conformity (DoC).

SPECIFICATIONS

The frame of the new Condor is welded from 60 by 40 millimetre rectangular sections. The infill consists of heavy-duty (8-6-8) twin-wire panels and the guide post is a rectangular, 80 by 80 mil section. All the steel used is galvanised before welding and then powder-coated. The Condor comes in four sizes between 3 and 6 metres opening width, in heights of 1.8 and 2 metres and in four colours: moss green, pine green, anthracite and deep black.

OPTIONS

Optional extras for the Condor are a security strip, remote controls, an emergency stop, an aerial, a strobe light and a key switch. Furthermore, the gate can be equipped with a mobile phone module or with Connect. Connect is a system that allows the customer to operate the gate from the Cloud and allows the installer to manage the gate remotely. *“You can read off failures remotely, as well as the number of openings made and all sorts of other useful information. That makes maintenance scheduling and responding to breakdowns, a good deal easier,”* according to Heeswijk. *“All in all, the Condor is without question an attractive sliding gate for dealers and fencing installers, with a good price, quick and easy assembly and the renowned Heras quality.”* The Condor has been available since the summer. ■



Zquare creates lighting for 80 mil gate posts

Zquare, a brand that belongs to ZN Systems based in Neuenrade, Germany, is launching an 80 millimetre version of its Move LED post cap this autumn. The Move 80 is suitable for gate posts with a tube profile of 80 by 80 millimetre.

The LED post caps in the Move series feature built-in LED lights, which apart from emitting white light like Zquare's standard post caps, can also pulse red light. They are designed for electrically driven gates and can be connected to the pulsing light contact of an electric drive control. *"We opted for red rather than orange because that colour stands out more, especially during the day,"* says director Vastian Henry.





Previously, the Move LED caps were available for gate posts having dimensions of 100, 120 and 150 millimetre. *“The electronics we used for the Move series before were too big for an 80 millimetre post,”* says Henry. *“That’s why the series initially began at 100 millimetres. But we received so many enquiries about 80 mil post caps that we looked hard for ways to reduce the size of the electronics. And we’ve managed to do that now.”*

Just like the caps in the standard series, Zquare's Move post caps are made of transparent plastic, under a top cover made of milled aluminium. They run on 24 volts so you can connect several pole caps to a single power supply. The lighting can be dimmed or scheduled using a free app that is compatible with Alexa and Google Home. The lamps are sold through various wholesalers and system suppliers, inside and outside Germany. ■





B&G celebrates 60 years in business

It has been 60 years since the founding of B&G Hekwerk, a Dutch fencing company from Veldhoven that does its own manufacturing. What started out as a fencing repair service has grown to be the second-biggest fencing company in the Netherlands – and for many fencing installers, not only in the Netherlands but in Belgium and Germany too, it's their usual supplier of railings and sliding gates. The anniversary was celebrated in September with a big party.

"It's been quite a year," commercial director Ron Bakker says. "In January we were taken over by French company Picot, which owns Vandeloo and Hekbouw in the Netherlands, as well as all sorts of other fencing companies and manufacturers in Europe. But while we're just starting out on a whole new era with Picot, we're also reflecting on a very rich history. Over the years B&G has seen enormous peaks and some deep valleys, and the whole team is enormously proud of where we are today. That's why we really wanted to have a big celebration for this anniversary, with a huge party for staff, family and friends." B&G's grounds were transformed into a festival site, with entertainment for young and old. "We called it the 'B&G Family & Friends Festival'. We had various fairground attractions, like a Ferris wheel and a caterpillar ride, and food trucks with really good food. Great artists like BenR, Xander de Buissonjé and Ruth Jacott created a lively atmosphere with their performances. I saw lots of happy faces around me; it was a party to remember." ■





The birth of B&G

Theo Bossers, a salesman for Heras, founded B&G in 1963. Bossers didn't get along with Heras's sales manager at that time, Herman Wijn, and sometimes arguments flared up. *"If you don't like it here, then why don't you bugger off?"* Wijn said at one point – and that's exactly what Bossers did. Instead of going to work for another boss, at 27 – and with a pregnant wife at home – he started up his own fencing repair business from his living room in Eindhoven. In the evenings he walked around different neighbourhoods and whenever he saw a rusty fence, he'd knock on the front door and ask if he could do repairs. Then during the day he would scrub the rust off and treat the fences with tar paint. Business increased steadily, and before long he was asked to replace an old fence completely. Bossers found a construction company for the manufacturing, installed the new fence himself, and continued to refurbish old fences in the meantime. Little by little, more customers came along. He took on some staff, and B&G was born.





The name B&G

The name B&G doesn't have any particular meaning. It includes a B for founder Theo Bossers, but that's pure coincidence. When Bossers was trying to come up with a name, he wanted something that sounded large-scale and, above all, important. He thought a combination of letters like V&D or C&A – major companies at the time – would be a good idea. His wife was a teacher and, at the start of a lesson, wrote a line of random letter combinations on the blackboard and then wiped them off again. At the end of the lesson she asked the children which combination they remembered best. It was the letters B&G, and thus the company name was born.



According to a survey of 100 installers:

84% reported unsafe design to be the most common cause for automated gate accidents in the last 10 years

Overwhelming majority advised that well over half of gates checked / maintained were 'unsafe by design'

62% believed the design errors are the responsibility of inappropriately trained installers



Do you understand the design requirements to deliver a safe gate?



Visit www.gate-safe.org for more info / book a space on our distance learning training www.gate-safe.org/training

Open day and Holler Roadshow at Hadra

German fencing wholesaler Hadra, from Winsen an der Luhe near Hamburg, held open days at four of its seven branches in September. Each of the branches was open for several days in a specific week, four weeks in a row, to enable clients to take a closer look at the company.





It all started at Perimeter Protection in Nuremberg, when we saw the new Holler Showtruck out the front,” sales director Sven Möller says. “Straight away we said to each other that it would be great to have that truck pay a visit to the different branches. When you’re actually standing in front of a gate with a client, then lots more details come up and you can discuss the technology and options in much more depth than when you’re trying to explain something over the phone.”

OPEN DAYS

“Once we’d agreed the dates with Holler,” Möller goes on, “we decided it was a good opportunity to turn the events into some open days, to give office staff and clients the opportunity to chat together in a relaxed atmosphere. Sometimes they talk to each other on the phone multiple times a day, but they almost never meet in person. On top of that, in recent years we’ve invested a lot of money and time in our inventory software. Order-picking is primarily digital these days, so the entire process is faster and there’s less chance of mistakes. The system works really well and it’s very advanced; it’s nice to be able to show it to others. And finally, as of this summer we’re the importer of Irish brand AES, so with the open days we immediately had the opportunity to introduce AES’s range of intercoms to our clients.”

WELL-ATTENDED

The open days took place in four consecutive weeks, always from Monday through Wednesday. The Holler Roadshow Truck drove first to Philipsburg, then to Teterow and Wildeshausen, and lastly to the company headquarters in Winsen an der Luhe. There were food trucks with pizza and currywurst to make sure no one went hungry. “It was very busy almost every day,” Möller says. “We had five hundred visitors across the four locations, and everyone I spoke to was very positive. We’re definitely going to hold these kinds of events more often in the future.” ■



AUTOMATION
CYLLER H008

Balu Premium Gate now TÜV-certified

German sliding gate supplier BALU Tore has taken its Premium gate through a successful year-long TÜV testing process, and can now officially label it with 'TÜV Certified' stickers.

"It's a bigger deal than it might appear," BALU director Christofer Schnoeing says.

"You might think that there are plenty of gates with TÜV certification, but unfortunately that's a misconception. There's a big difference between type-approved gates and TÜV-approved gates. Our Premium gate has now passed both certification processes."

TYPE APPROVAL

"There are a lot of documents circulating on the market that use the TÜV logo, without actually having the right to," Schnoeing explains. "The type approval process – even if it's conducted by the TÜV – only considers whether a gate meets European standards, so that it can be sold on the European market. If a gate is type-approved, then that's the only thing that you can put on your gate and the only thing you can advertise, even if that type approval was conducted by the TÜV. You don't have the right to put a TÜV sticker on the gate, and you can't use the TÜV logo in your advertising. We didn't realise this either until the TÜV pointed it out to us."







PRODUCT CERTIFICATION

"After that, we looked into what we needed to do in order to use the TÜV logo on our Premium Gate," Schnoeing goes on. "We then started on the product certification process, in conjunction with TÜV SÜD. Product certification is the highest level of certification that the TÜV provides; higher than type approval, and far higher than simple force testing. The process started with a three-month-long workshop, in which all the gate's risks were identified during regular meetings with people from TÜV SÜD. This resulted in the production of a Risk Assessment Report. In mapping the risks, the TÜV went as far as even looking into how much force is required to push the gate open manually, and whether someone could pull a muscle in the process."

TESTING

The outcome of the risk assessment was that BALU was required to implement a safety measure for each risk identified in the analysis, if it had not already done so. "Or else we had to make changes to the construction so that the risk could be classified as 'low,'" Schnoeing says. "The TÜV then conducted further extensive testing – we had a team from TÜV SÜD with us for almost a week. They checked whether the safety features in the sliding gate did actually comply with the results of the risk assessment. For example in the 'pulled muscles' example, the inspectors checked multiple times, from various positions, to determine how high the forces are when you push the sliding gate. On top of that, all electronic components were checked a number of times and the inspectors applied 500 volts to the electrical system to document the effects."

TÜV CERTIFIED

Once the gate had passed all the tests, TÜV SÜD produced a report of more than 200 pages and BALU was presented with a certificate. "Since October, we've been able to call our Premium gate 'TÜV Certified' again," Schnoeing says. "And even though it's a voluntary certification, not something that a standards body or a government says we have to do, it's still incredibly important to us. It shows that not only do we comply with all applicable laws and regulations, but that our gates are safe and of technically high quality in all respects. This is exactly where we want to distinguish ourselves from the competition. We were already certain that we provide our customers with an absolutely high-quality, safe and reliable product, but now the TÜV has confirmed that for us." ■



FAC celebrates 50 years

Italian gate component manufacturer FAC is 50 years old. Bruno De Marchi founded the business in 1973 in Isola Vicentina, a small town north of Vicenza. The anniversary was celebrated in October with a big party.

FAC stands for Fabbrica Accessori Cancelli. De Marchi started out in a small workshop, manufacturing mechanical components like centre stops for double swing gates on rails. “Our father was a true developer,” says Maria De Marchi, who now heads up the company alongside her sister Anna and brother Lorenzo. “The manufacturing department constantly had an atmosphere of improvement and ongoing development. Components were looked at time and time again to see whether they couldn’t be improved just a little bit more – and new parts were constantly being devised and developed too.”







GROWTH

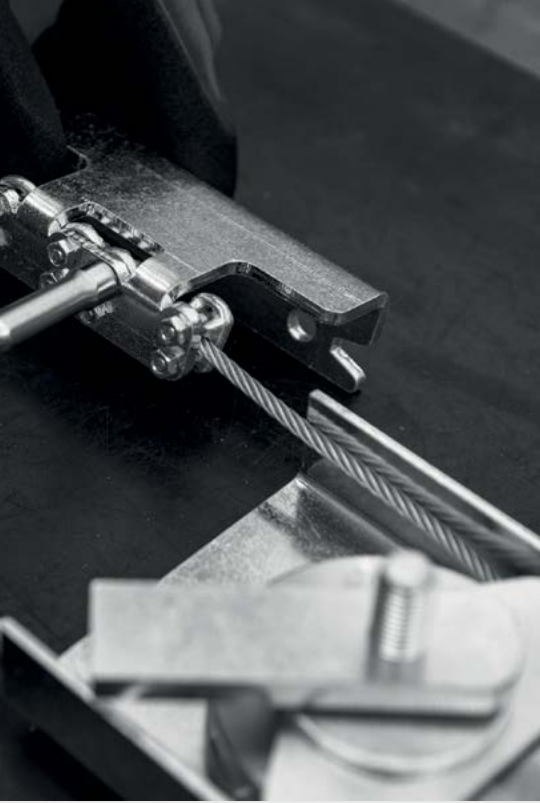
The number of clients grew over time, and the company grew with it. More and more staff joined, and the range of products constantly increased. The international breakthrough came in 1985. *“Trade fairs were popping up all over the place at that time,”* De Marchi says, *“and more and more borders were opening. My father had dreamt of being an international trailblazer in our section of the industry ever since founding the company, and now that dream was getting closer and closer.”* The Fabbrica continued to grow. In 2003 that resulted in the construction of a new 4500-square-metre factory with new manufacturing lines and a lot more space for everyone. *“It was an important step, one that created a lot of new enthusiasm and new investment,”* De Marchi says. *“Investments were made in human resources management, new machines, and of course in research and development.”*

SECOND GENERATION

In 2010, the second generation joined the company. Since that time Lorenzo has been in charge of manufacturing, Anna is the sales and marketing director, and Maria is CEO. They run the company with the same enthusiasm as their father, for example by strongly emphasising saving space on the driveway of the customers. Systems for telescopic gates were developed, followed by hardware to make a gate roll around a curve and a kit for making folding gates. *“The idea of the kit was also a new one,”* De Marchi says. *“Instead of getting customers to search through a catalogue looking for each individual component, we started packaging components for a single gate together in a kit. And development is ongoing: every day we work hard to provide our customers with even better and even more easy-to-install gate hardware.”*



Maria, Lorenzo and
Anna De Marchi

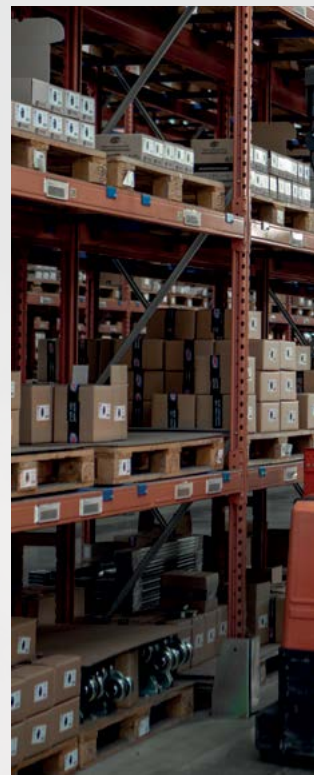




CELEBRATIONS

"All that perseverance has brought us where we are today," De Marchi goes on. "It means that 2023 is a very special year for us, one that we didn't want to let pass by without celebrating." For that reason, in October the founder's family threw a big party for everyone who has worked for or with the business over the past 50 years, including former employees, historical customers and suppliers and, of course, the company's own team. "It was an amazing event.

More than half our turnover comes from exports, so we also had guests from France, England, Romania, Spain, Portugal, and even from Canada. It was a great honour for us that so many people wanted to travel long distances to celebrate the anniversary with us. At the same time, we were very proud: it demonstrates the connection and commitment of our customers. Teamwork has always been an important aspect of everything we do."






FUTURE

For the future, De Marchi remains committed to good relationships: "On one hand the business, as a workplace, plays a social responsibility role and represents solidarity, but on the other it makes ideals and dreams possible. The business should be a place where everyone is respected: customers, suppliers and staff. The foundation of this company was laid not only by our father's technical skills, but also by his good relationships with people.

FAC is heading into the future very positively, by constantly investing in relationships – alongside technical developments. And we're always looking at the long term. We don't want to defend our existing position; we're constantly looking for new solutions, new markets, and new challenges. We set ambitious goals, but we try to achieve them by taking small steps so our growth is steady and solid. Bring on the next 50 years!" ■





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.



Fence detection with point sensors

*Everything you need to know
about perimeter detection, part
9: detection with point sensors*



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

In the previous three columns I discussed various cable sensor systems, but these are not always the ideal forms of fence detection. The perimeter to be secured might consist of several different fencing types, for example a chain-link fence and a mesh panel fence. In such cases, the sensor cable's sensitivity needs to be set to some sort of average. This doesn't provide optimal detection, because then on one type of fence the sensitivity can be too high – meaning a lot of false alarms – and on another one too low, meaning that intruders aren't reliably detected. A railing, for example, is difficult to secure with a cable system anyway. You can only install the sensor cable on the lower or the upper rails, while the cable should be installed halfway up the fence in order to achieve the same sensitivity across the entire height of the structure. In addition, in most systems that sensitivity doesn't extend

more than a metre above and below the cable. In a very high fence, such as one around a prison, multiple loops need to be installed on the fence to achieve even sensitivity over the entire height. Another situation in which cable systems are not optimal are those where the site owner wants to have a lot of different alarm zones, which for example need to be connected to a video camera system; cables are difficult to divide into zones.

In all of these examples, it's a good idea to use a fence detection system that has so-called point sensors. These are small cabinets containing electronics, installed on the fence at regular intervals. They have a range of 5 metres or more on all sides: if you install one of these sensors 1 metre high, it can protect a fence of up to 6 metres high. Then all physical attacks on the fence – such as climbing, cutting, sawing, drilling, angle-grinding, and so forth

– will be detected. You need to have a sensor every 5 metres, and given that railing and mesh panel fences usually consist of 2.5-metre-long segments, you only need a sensor for every second segment. The big advantage of this technique is that the sensitivity of each sensor can be adjusted individually, so the mesh section will be calibrated differently to the gate or the section with a wire panel or bar fence.

Point sensor systems can also be a solution for areas with a lot of vegetation. Vegetation moves in the wind, and the noise this makes can trigger false alarms. The best option is therefore always to ensure that the fence remains free of vegetation. But if this can't be done or is not permitted, a point sensor system means that you can tailor the fence protection because you can adjust the sensitivity of each individual sensor. Then the more 'difficult' parts of a fence don't lower the chance of detection in the rest of the fence.

If the detection system is connected to a video verification system, any sensor or group of sensors can be assigned to an alarm zone using the software. This is much simpler to do than with a cable sensor system, and often has many times the maximum number of alarm zones. It could be said that point sensor systems are somewhat more advanced and offer more options than sensor cable systems, particularly the microphone and induction cable types. However, it must also be said that they are more expensive, because each sensor is a tiny technological miracle. Let's take a closer look.

The technology in most point sensors can be summarised by the term MEMS, short for Micro-Electro-Mechanical System. These are very small sensors, with electronics and tiny mechanics working together. This is the same technology as that which makes your phone screen rotate when you turn it. MEMS technology is extremely sensitive and is capable of determining its precise position with respect to gravity. The main part of the technology used here is known as an accelerometer. It's capable of measuring speed based on the three physical axes X, Y and Z. These are able to measure very small vibrations, including those at a low frequency. The movements are then converted into an electrical signal. It is extremely sensitive. Just download an accelerometer app on your phone; there are a few of them around, but the 'Accelerometer Analyzer' is a good example. I have it on my own phone so I can demonstrate the sensitivity to customers if I need to. Launch



Point sensors can also be used on chain-link fences.

the app and put your phone down on the kitchen table. Then drum your fingers on the table lightly, and after that slap your hand down on the table. You'll see the signal that the accelerometer in your phone picks up. It shows you just what the point sensors on the fence actually do. With this technology, they protect all types of fences, gates or walls from all mechanical disturbance caused by cutting, climbing, angle-grinding, being lifted up, or whatever.

Just as with the cable systems, this technology uses a central unit or controller that communicates with the sensors. The systems I'm familiar with are able to monitor around 700 metres of fence. That means 140 sensors per unit. The sensors are often divided into 70 sensors to the left of the controller cabinet and 70 sensors to its right, just as with sensor cable technology. A type of network cable is used to connect the sensors with each other and the central unit for communication and power supply. This prefabricated cable is 5.5 metres long and has two connectors, so the system is very easy to install. You use the base plate to install the sensor on the fence, according to the manufacturer's directions. You connect the incoming patch cable and the outgoing one that runs to the next sensor, and you're done.

You protect gates with the same sensor too, by running a longer cable of, say, 10 metres through the casing and back up the other side. The central unit has relay contacts for alarm, sabotage and malfunction outputs for each zone or can communicate over the network (TCP/IP) and, for example, a fibre-optic connection to a (video) management system at the guards' station. You can then – very flexibly – link the different sensors to different alarm zones using the software. For example, you could treat sensors 5, 6, 7 and 8 as a single alarm zone because they are within the range of a single camera, but you could also treat sensor 34 as a separate zone on its own because it's installed on a gate and you want to disable this sensor during the day. You could also, as mentioned earlier, adjust the sensitivity of each sensor separately because there are different types of fences or gates, or for any reason at all.

INTELLIGENT

Point sensor systems are very intelligent and certainly the modern systems use 'fuzzy logic', a technique in which the software combines the input from different sensors and interprets this combined information. If a single sensor goes above its alarm threshold, the system sounds the alarm. Sounds logical, right? But what if multiple sensors, all installed alongside each other on the fence, receive the same signal? Will that

A wireless point sensor system from Ronyo Technologies (thanks to Vishan Debipersad of Kno-Tech, Ronyo's Benelux partner, for supplying the photos).





also mean an alarm? That would be illogical. It would mean that, for example, multiple intruders are trying to break in at the same time and in different locations. It would be much more logical to think that there is a strong wind or a storm, for example. The system understands that and doesn't react to it. However, if in this situation just 1 or 2 sensors suddenly have different signals to the rest, an alarm will be triggered. This alarm is accurate to within a few metres because you know exactly which sensor has sounded the alarm. Security guards and video cameras can then take immediate action in the relevant zone.

In point sensor systems, the installation of the sensor is very important. Install the sensor mounting plate exactly as instructed by the manufacturer. Adhere to the specified sensitivity distances – which may be different for each fencing type – and follow the instructions for the cable glands and seals provided to make the sensor watertight. I can't say it often enough: moisture and electronics don't mix. They are each other's greatest enemies, and this is often what causes malfunctions.

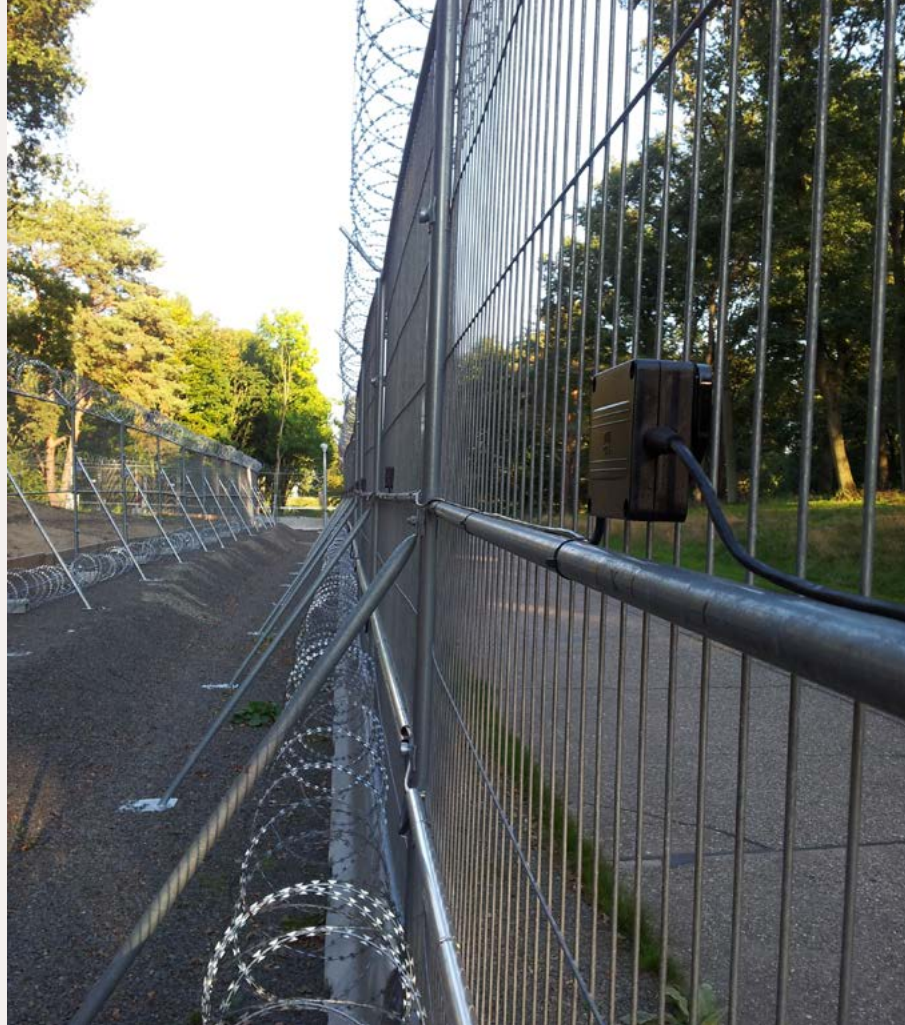
The prefabricated data cables that connect the sensors don't need to be installed right up against the fence like they do with the sensor cable system. They should in fact be lying on the ground, although obviously that doesn't look nice. I'm also curious about whether everything would still work after the grass had been mown, but in theory it could. My point is: with this system, it's not important to have the cables installed nice and flush against the fence. Using tie wraps to secure the cable here and there is enough.

WIRELESS

There are also fully wireless point sensors available. I'm aware of a perimeter system that uses RFID technology. This system came on the market about 10 years ago. In addition to the accelerometer, each sensor contains a transmitter and receiver that sends the data to the next sensor. So a train of data begins at sensor 1 and travels from sensor to sensor until the signal arrives at the central cabinet or controller at the start.

For point sector detection, the way the cable is installed on the fence isn't important – it's ok if it's sloppy. Not that I want to promote sloppy work, but it doesn't make a difference to detection reliability.

Razor wire below and above, two rows of fencing, cameras (not pictured) and point sensors as well – do you think this location has enough security measures in place?



This enables it to receive the status of all sensors every 3 seconds. One module is able to protect a total of 2000 metres of fence, with a point sensor installed on the fence every 5 metres. The sensors are battery-powered. The manufacturer says that these batteries last for 8 years before requiring replacement. Obviously this is ideal from an installation point of view; all you need to do is screw a sensor to the fence every 5 metres and on any gates there might be, and you're done. No messing around with cables and connectors, casings and power cables. The wireless sensors are a bit more expensive, but this is offset by much lower installation costs. In addition, the wireless system does not require separate central units on the fence. One central unit is enough, and it can be placed 125 metres from the first sensor. This means big savings on cables, as the cables from the building to the fence (which you need for other systems) are no longer needed. An added benefit is that you create an ongoing customer relationship. In any case they'll need you again in 8 years to change the batteries. All the same, it remains a wireless system, which some buyers simply rule out in advance. However, I can definitely recommend the wireless system to fencing installers who are ready to cautiously explore detection systems, largely due to the ease of installation. ■

Point sensors can be used on gate leaves too – you will need to use different sensitivity settings.



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GATES - FENCES - AUTOMATION

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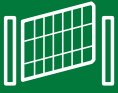
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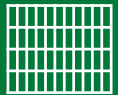
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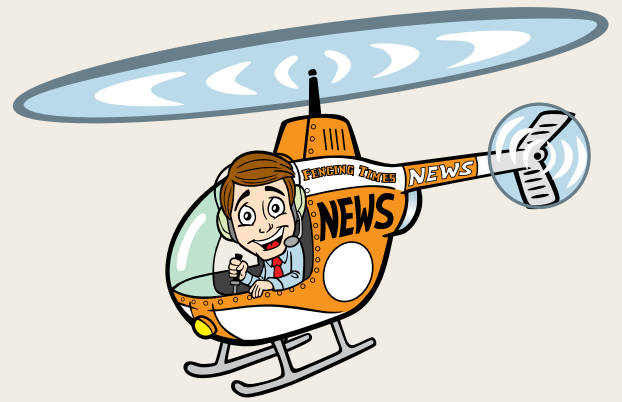
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FENCES IN THE NEWS



13 DECEMBER 2023

Car spins out of control and lands on top of fence



The Dutch are the best drivers in the world. They really are – of all the world's nations, the Dutch are the best behind the wheel. Just ask any random German or Frenchman. They will immediately confirm that when on the motorway, the

Dutch never drive in the fast lane unnecessarily; they never block the narrow streets of old village high streets with their caravans; they never try to drive up snowy slopes on summer tyres. Because they're excellent drivers. Ahem. Preconceptions

never come out of nowhere, but are reinforced time and time again, for example as seen in the following photo from the 'How On Earth Did You Manage That' category. According to the driver, he had just filled up with petrol in the town of Houten, near

Utrecht, and was reversing the car when it suddenly spun out of control. We would obviously say the same, if we'd ended up reversing onto the top of a fence. Anyway, the local fencing installer now has another half a day's work. ■

Hull City Council imprisons innocent residents twice in a row

Residents of Oaklands Drive and Beverly Road in the municipality of Hull, on the east coast of England, are angry at their local council for putting them in prison without warning. Well, figuratively speaking, but still. What's going on there? The school buildings of the local Hesse High School, which had stood empty for years, have been renovated and are now used by St Anne's School, a school for children with special needs. The school uses the adjacent Hesse Rangers football fields as its playing fields. However, there was no longer a fence around the fields, so the city council had one installed. Most residents don't have any problem with this, except for the fact that the fence is 2.4 metres high and towers above their own fences, giving them the feeling that they now reside in a prison. On top of that, the fence is so close to their own fences that there's not enough room to get between the two to remove litter or cut back vegetation. "Why can't the fence be a metre further back?" one neighbour asks. "And why

does it have to be 2.4 metres high?" another adds. "It's like we're living in a prison now." The school says that the 2.4 metre height is essential in order to ensure the children's safety. Local residents think this is a flimsy excuse, as the fence around the school itself is only 1.8 metres high and there are no indications that that fence will be made higher any time soon. A funny detail of the situation is that the city council had forgotten to apply (to itself) for a permit for the fence. As soon as this became clear (during the neighbourhood outcry), the city

council naturally had no option but to have the fence taken down again. But the permit will be granted before long, and once that happens the city council wants to reinstall the same fence in the same place, despite residents' objections. Probably only to move it another half a metre after 6 or 12 months and 14 additional discussions. And with that, the award for Europe's most pro-fencing-installer municipality goes to Hull City Council. The more municipalities like this, the better it is for us fencing installers. ■



Sheep farmers in Lower Saxony left in the lurch by environment minister

No money, no fence, no sheep

More political misconduct in the German state of Lower Saxony. The wolf is returning to this state – as it is to other parts of Europe – because politicians are simply unable to think logically and have nothing better to do all day than make stupid decisions. Allow us to explain: the wolf was once the most common land mammal on Earth, found in Europe, America, and large parts of Asia. But then humans came along. With more and more of the available land needed for arable and livestock farming, the wolf was driven out to more sparsely-populated areas. This was very much a deliberate expulsion, with major hunts organised for the purpose. This eradication was a smart move as well, because not only did the wolf compete with humans – who hunted the same prey – but also posed a threat to them. As early as 1197 there were reports of a wolf plague on the Moselle, claiming several human lives. Across the centuries, the wolf has consistently been described as an extremely gluttonous, cruel and cunning beast, the most dangerous enemy of both wild and domestic animals as well as being God's most harmful creature, one that attacks people, tears them up and eats them. There are countless (news) articles showing that wolves, before their expulsion, attacked people and seriously injured or killed them.

By around the 1960s, the wolf had been completely driven out of Europe's densely-populated regions. Unlike what some environmental groups would have you believe, wolves were

far from facing extinction; there were just fewer wolves than before. There were still large numbers of wolves in sparsely-populated areas of Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Iran and Turkey. Since 1970, however, people have been working hard to return wolves to the now densely-populated areas where there's really no place for them. This has primarily happened thanks to lobbying by all kinds of environmental groups – with the World Wildlife Fund at the forefront – who then receive support from politicians who have no understanding of the matter, but are eager to be liked in the hope of generating votes or popularity. Really, how stupid can you be as a politician if your aim is to have the wolf, an enemy of humans, return to live in densely-populated areas? Surely that can only go wrong?

But anyway, back to Lower Saxony. The sheep farmers of that state, who of course are the ones on the front line to witness the first casualties, have been protesting against the backwards wolf policy for years. Their flocks are a paradise for the wolves. To keep them on side, they were promised extra money to install fences. But you guessed it: that money never materialised, because the subsidy coffers are empty and there's no one who wants to fill them. The Ministry for the Environment in Hanover points the finger at Berlin and Berlin points at Brussels... and meanwhile the farmers are left out in the cold. Along with the fencing installers who'll need to put up the fences, of course. ■



Scot builds fence around land he doesn't own, without a permit



A man in Edinburgh, Scotland, has been ordered to remove a fence – because he installed it without a permit. The funny thing about the case: the man quite simply did not own the land around which he had installed the fence. The Scot had added an area of community land to his own garden by enclosing it with a wooden fence. Neighbourhood residents, who used the woodland area to play with their children, made a complaint to the municipality, which in turn

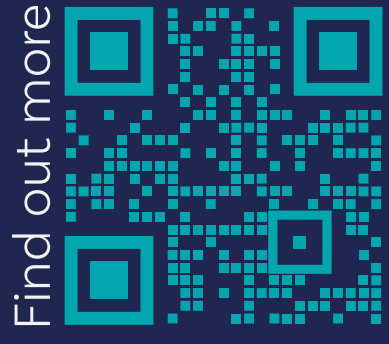
ruled that the man should not have installed the fence without a permit. It seems that in Scotland, installing a fence without a permit is a more serious offence than appropriating community land. So what did the man do? He lodged a request for a permit. At that point the municipality's Planning Commission investigated the matter, realised the absurdity of the case, and naturally refused to grant the permit. The man now has to remove the fence and will be fined if he fails to do so. ■



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