

FENCING TIMES

XL Edition

2023, Issue 8

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From fencing worker to super-installer

In the previous issue, I wrote about the super-installer - and that it would be a nice objective to see whether you could double the number of metres you currently erect in a single day. This provoked a lot of reactions. Like whether I realised how much hard work goes into installing a fence? Or did I think that most fencing installers stand around doing nothing half the time?

And, of course, those readers had a valid point. If tomorrow you can simply double the number of metres, then there's something not right with the way you're working now and you must always have been going about it in the wrong way. And it also depends on how many metres you currently manage. It's easier to double 20 metres than 200 metres.

Nonetheless, we do see big differences in the market. I recently enquired on Facebook about how many metres fencing installers can do. The question asked was based on a twin wire fence, 1.4 metres in height, with all the posts in their own concrete foundation. Also on the assumption that there were no access problems at all along the entire fence line and all other conditions were ideal. How many metres can you install with a team of two persons? The answers varied between 40 and 100 metres.

The latter was for installing metres for large industrial projects. It's easier to get the metres done for these than it is for a

fencing installer who mainly gets jobs for 40 metres here and 120 metres there. The industrial fencing installer is also under more pressure to be quick, because the competition for these big projects is tougher and the installation price is lower.

But it's true for both of them that it could still be done faster. And both of them would earn more if they were faster. Assuming they wanted to, that is. Because that's where it all begins, of course. If you're an average fencing installer, erecting an average number of metres for an average wage, but that wage is enough for you to get by on and live a happy life - then there's no need to get any faster. In that case, carry on as you are and don't let me get under your skin.

Alternatively: if you do want to become a super-installer and do want to earn more than all your former classmates, who went and learned a 'real' trade: it can be done. I'm certain that any installer can become a super-installer, provided he wants to. It's common in our industry to hear people say that they're 'just' a simple fence worker, or that a fence is 'just' a fence.

They're made to feel insecure by all those people who declare that you'll end up in the gutter if you don't do well in school. Or they feel that the electricians, bricklayers, decorators and all the people on the construction site look down on them because the latter went and learned a recognised trade. At a college.





Or they allow themselves to be pressured by customers, who at the very end of their construction project, when the building has already been handed over, the garden already landscaped and the driveway already paved, forgot that they needed a fence as well – and no longer have a budget for it. Those are the people who state that a fence is ‘just’ a fence. Because they need it done on the cheap.

But it’s a load of nonsense. A fence is a useful thing and customers benefit if it is properly and solidly installed. Fencing is in demand throughout the world and that demand is only going to get bigger. The fencing industry is an industry like any other and there is just as much money to be earned. We know a lot of fencing installers who’ve done very well by installing fences. And if they could do that, without fencing school, without help from someone who took them by the hand – then why can’t you?

You have to want it. You have to be prepared to invest in yourself. You also need to persevere and be disciplined – two characteristics you can train yourself for if you think they’re not currently your strong points. If you have the willpower, you’re bound to be successful. Because the basic circumstances are perfect for any fencing installer. You can train every day. Had a bad day? Tomorrow you have an immediate new opportunity. We’ve created a small roadmap to help you on your way. Good luck! ■

Roadmap to become a super-installer

Step 1

Make up your mind that you're going to become a super-installer. Right now, while you're reading this. Because you think it would be great if you were one of the best installers in the industry. Because you want to be rich. Because you want to drive the smartest car in town – in itself the reason is unimportant, as long as you take the decision. Say it out loud.

Step 2

Set yourself a big goal. A goal that makes your heart beat considerably faster, but is still realistic. You could declare that you want to be able to put up 6 kilometres of chain-link fencing in a day, but then you're not being serious. Twice as many metres as you currently achieve would be a great start, but any other goal is also good as long as you feel that achieving it will make you really proud of yourself.

Step 3

Set a deadline for when you want to have achieved the goal from step 2. A goal with no deadline isn't a real goal but merely a dream or fantasy. Just like the goal, the deadline has to be realistic. Doubling the metres tomorrow is not going to happen of course. But what if you take a year in which to train yourself? To think up things that will make you quicker? To try out tools, that could help? Would it then be possible?

Step 4

Draw up a list of things you can do to become better and quicker. I had a few examples in the previous column: Make a plan for each project first, so you spend the least time walking around empty-handed. Set a goal for where you want to get to each day. A couple of metres more every day. It forces you to think during the day about how you're going to achieve that. Dare to improvise a bit more. Dare to ask for good tools – and then take good care of them. Above all though, make your own list instead of copying mine. If you're a good fencing installer, you know it all better than I do anyway, ha-ha. Take a notepad and create a list of at least 20 different things you can do.

Step 5

Sort the list into order of importance. Choose the items on the list that will help you get ahead the most. Not the ones that are the easiest, or the most fun, but those that help you to achieve the biggest leaps. Write those at the top of a new sheet of paper and start carrying out your top point today. Work on it a bit every day until you get the hang of it.



Step 6

Think about whose help you need. From now on, ask your wife to kick you out of bed an hour earlier so you beat the traffic jams. Then you'll have the first win under your belt. Above all, talk to your boss about your goals and ask for his support. It's also to his advantage, so he'd be foolish not to help you. Ask the salesperson who measures up your jobs to take a good number of photos of each project from now on. Of the fence line and of the environment. So that on the way back from today's job, while your colleague is driving, you can preview tomorrow's job and think about how to set out the material the fastest.

Step 7

Make a list of any obstacles, the things that are preventing you from achieving your goals. Does the jack hammer keep cutting out because there's a break in the cable somewhere? Make sure it gets repaired. Are your work shoes uncomfortable?

Lash out 200 euros and treat yourself to some really good shoes that you can walk in all day with no discomfort. Does your colleague keep on about wanting to go and get a can of Red Bull or a Twix bar from the petrol station? Ask your boss for a different colleague.

Step 8

Think about additional skills and knowledge that can help you to advance. You might want to be able to dig holes faster, or to improve your ability to read technical drawings. Put every skill down on paper in a list. And when you're sitting on the sofa in the evening, don't watch some dumb Netflix series, but go to YouTube and look up videos on how to dig post holes quickly, or on understanding technical drawings. Each evening you can find something that you can then try out in practice the very next day.

Step 9

Combine all the points from the previous steps into a single overall plan. Get an unused school notebook from your son or niece, write Super-Installer on the cover and write down in detail how you're going to make yourself a Super-Installer. Writing it all down will make it real for you. It will take up your Sunday afternoon, but it will be time well spent.

Step 10

Keep at it until you've reached your goal. Never give up. Every time you take two steps forward, something will happen to push you back one step. Sometimes you even have to go back two or three steps yourself. But that's not a bad thing. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day. A setback is more of a lesson than a failure. You wanted to become a super-installer, one who is twice as fast as other installers and you're still on your way to achieving that goal. You'll get there if you just persevere.



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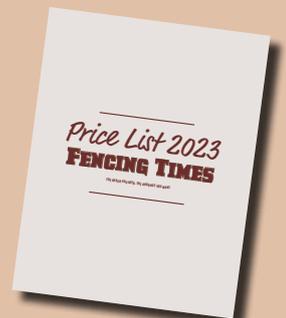
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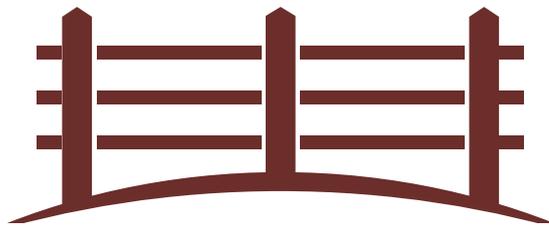
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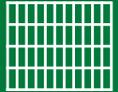
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FENCE POST



Geert @ Noyez

Geert Spenninck of Afsluitingen Noyez in Zonnebeke, Belgium (near Kortrijk) came across this sliding gate in Kallo near Antwerp. "Did the stock of reflective tape run out?" he wonders. "Whatever the reason, they came up with a creative solution." They did indeed. Beautiful it isn't, but it should show up well in the dark. Thanks for sending it Geert!

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.



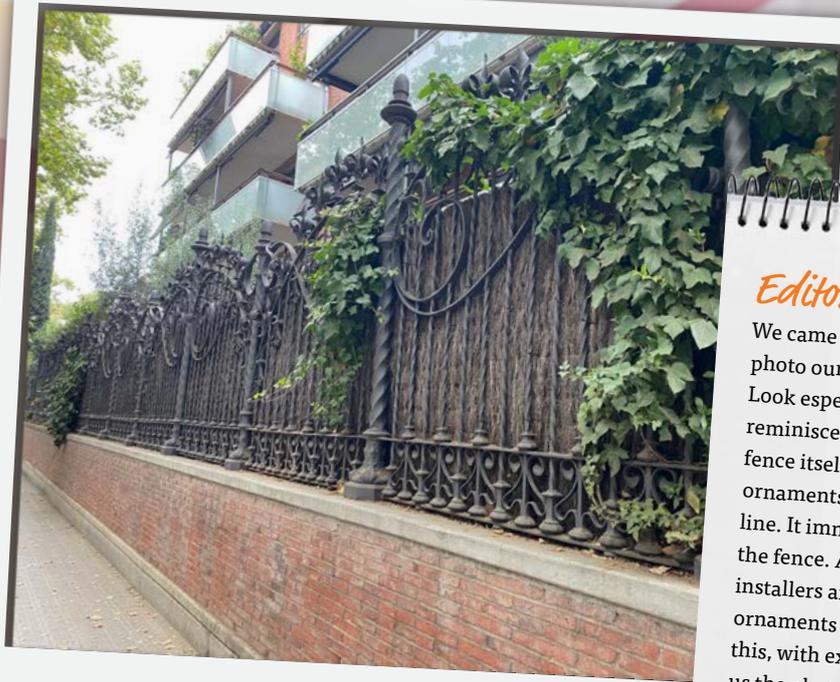
Nicolas @ Direct Factory

Nicolas Gabert at fencing retailer Direct Factory in Dottignies, Belgium, sent us these photos of a fence made of wood composite in the town of Le Rœulx, with a tailor-made sliding gate on a rail, featuring wood composite as filling too. Lovely project, Nicolas, and a lovely gate. Thanks for sending it in!



Wilhelm @ Zaubau Dinslaken

In the column of Number 6, we gave the tip that you should always write down colours with both their colour number and their name to prevent any confusion. By way of an example, we wrote RAL 8017, chocolate brown. Immediately after that number was published, Wilhelm Hegemann from Zaubau Dinslaken sent us a picture of a chocolate brown gate with brown privacy strips in it as well. The thought is father to the deed, or however the expression goes! Thanks for the photo!



Editors @ Fencing Times

We came across the ornamental fence in this photo ourselves in Barcelona in the summer. Look especially at the ornaments on top. They're reminiscent of crowns and are wider than the fence itself. It's not often that we see that - most ornaments curve longitudinally, or on the fence line. It immediately adds an extra dimension to the fence. A question for the ornamental fencing installers among our readers: do these kinds of ornaments still exist? Do you still sell fencing like this, with extra-wide posts and ornaments? Send us the photos!



Denis @ Walput

This rather special fence comes from Denis Valput at Draht Walput in Rheinstetten. It's tightly woven for extra privacy and also stands on a concrete wall as fall protection. Denis had special static calculations done for it and put the posts extra close to each other. Looks the business, Denis! Thanks for sending the photo.



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Photo of the Mouth

We know a lot of ornamental fencing manufacturers, but we've never come across a fencing company that can make something like this. Florius Pellikaan at fencing company Pellikaan Arkel in central Netherlands encountered this unusual gate along the road from Tirana to Lake Bovilla, in Albania. That's one hell of a gate, Florius. Great that you stopped to take the photo. The Locinox Construction Radio is on its way to you!

Would you too like to win a Locinox Construction Radio? Send us your nicest, prettiest and most bizarre fencing photos. The more the merrier, we can't get enough of them.

Berner moves to climate-neutral operations

As of this summer, drive manufacturer Berner Torantriebe from Rottenburg am Neckar in southern Germany is a climate-neutral manufacturer. *“With a lot of businesses, their sustainability is about the products themselves,”* director Frank Kiefer says. *“But true sustainability is only achieved when you follow environmental guidelines in all areas of your business operations. That’s why, a while back, we started tackling increased sustainability on a broader scale.”*

“Being sustainable and caring for the environment is extremely important to us,” Kiefer says, *“so over the past 10 years we’d already been ensuring that we manufactured our products as efficiently as possible – and then, in turn, that those products were as energy-efficient as possible during their lifespans. But we wanted to do more than that. For that reason, we’ve set out our own five-step climate protection strategy. We started by establishing our CO₂ footprint for all areas of the business.*

After that we determined how far we could reduce our CO₂ emissions, and adapted the processes accordingly. Where it hasn’t been possible to reduce the CO₂ footprint, we support climate protection projects to compensate. Then as the fifth step we have committed to transparent communication on the measures that have been planned and implemented.”

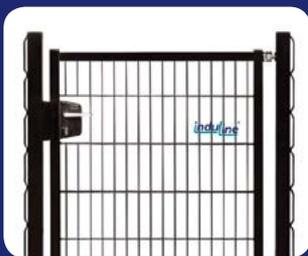
The reduction in the CO₂ footprint doesn’t just relate to manufacturing. “It’s turned into a company philosophy,” Kiefer says. *“For example, we’ve turned down the thermostat in all rooms and we now only have drinks in glass bottles. Our clients – with just one exception – are sent digital invoices, and business trips are replaced by online meetings wherever possible. We’re also working to optimise our fleet of vehicles and we’re looking at where we can avoid the use of plastic packaging, or else recycle it. In these ways, we’re contributing to protecting the climate for future generations.”* ■



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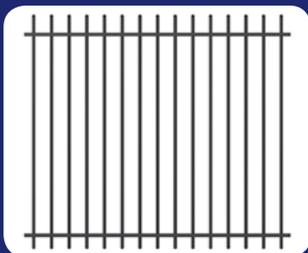
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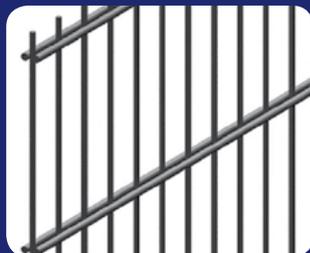
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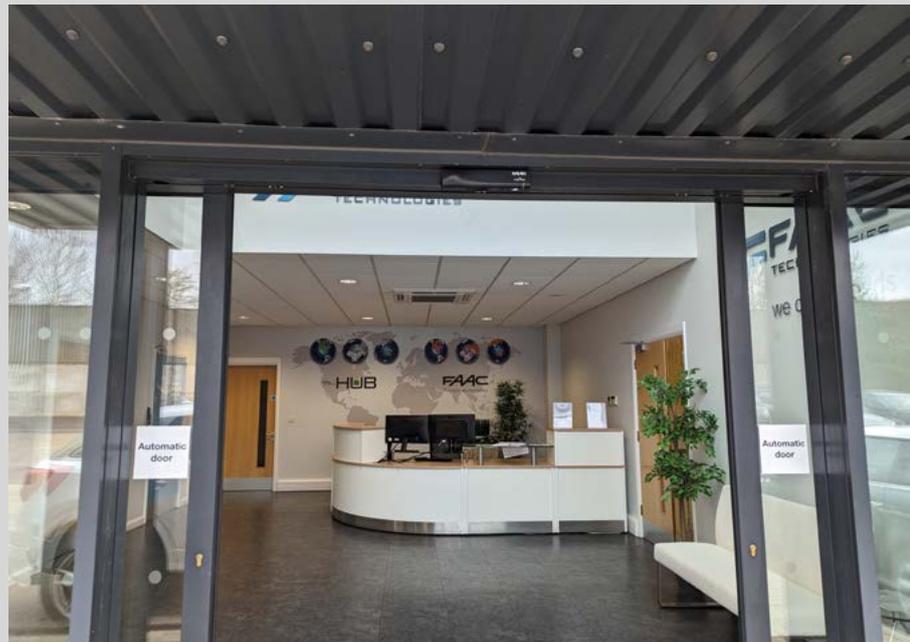
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Faac UK opens doors of Basingstoke HQ

This spring the UK branch of Italian drive manufacturer Faac held an open day at its headquarters in Basingstoke, west of London. The company proudly displayed its new showroom and presented three new drives.

“After a gap of several years due to Covid, it was truly a special occasion to be able to host an event of this magnitude and reconnect with our valued customers,” sales director Anthony Parrish says.

Throughout the day Faac’s technical team delivered presentations on various topics, including the latest product range that features barriers, gate drives and new software systems. *“These sessions not only offered valuable insights,”* says Parrish, *“but also sparked intriguing discussions among the attendees.”*



Moreover, the event provided ample networking opportunities, allowing participants to connect with industry peers and exchange ideas."

Faac UK also used the open day to launch three new products on the UK market. There was a new guide post with inbuilt sliding gate motor, a swing gate drive that can be installed on top of the hanging post, and finally a high-speed industrial sliding gate drive (more on that soon).

Parrish also enjoyed the opportunity to present the renovated showroom at the Basingstoke branch. "It now beautifully showcases our complete range of products," he says. "It was a pleasure to walk our customers through the impressive display and provide them with an up-close look at the cutting-edge technology we offer."

As the perfect finishing touch, a Mexican-food caterer provided burritos and tacos throughout the day to ensure that no one went hungry. "The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive," Parrish concludes. "It not only affirms our efforts in organising such events, but also provides us with valuable insights to further enhance future gatherings. We are grateful to our customers for their continuous support and look forward to hosting many more engaging events that bring us closer together." ■



Cardin develops new underground drive

Italian drive manufacturer Cardin Elettronica, from Codognè to the north of Venice, launched a new underground drive for swing gates earlier this year. Known as the HLXCore, it is available in 24-Volt and 230-Volt versions.

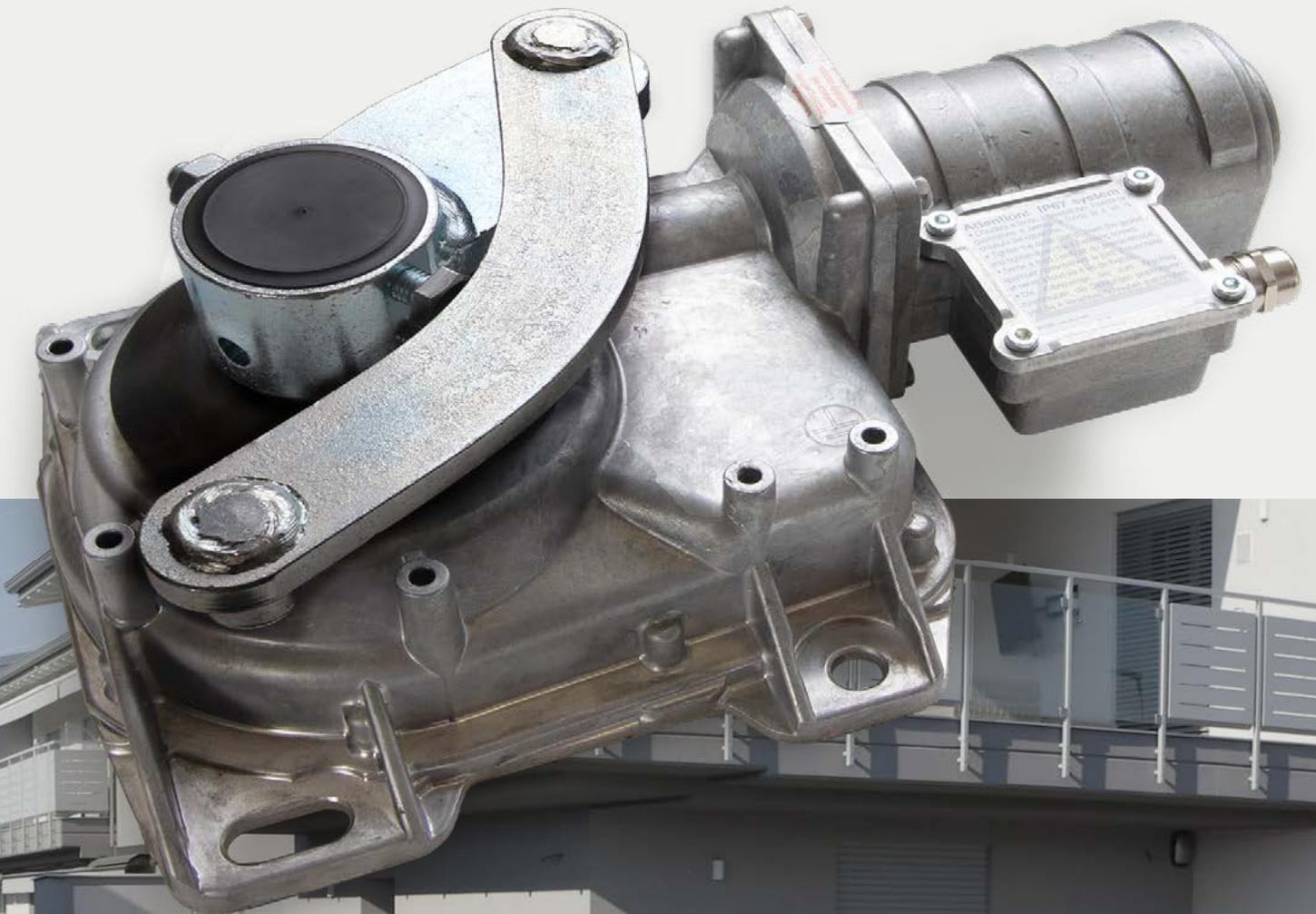
“This new range of drives is the ideal combination of our previous two motors, the HL and HLMole,” CEO Cristiano Cardin says. “Merging the two philosophies keeps the best aspects of the previous solutions as well as allowing for the addition of new components, in addition to greater reliability and compatibility, while retaining the already-great performance.”

There were a large number of improvements on previous models. “For example, we reinforced the aluminium motor housing,” Cardin says. “The bearings are new as well. The ones used in the HLXCore can withstand greater axial loads. We’ve also integrated mechanical limit switches into the arms and added an additional protective seal against water and mud. And to round it all off, many small details of the drive have been improved: we looked at every feature and component to see if there was something that could be done better, to increase the drive’s reliability and functionality. Our end goal was – although this goes for all Cardin products – for the drive to be so good that you can simply forget about it immediately after installation.”

The new HLXCore range consists of two models: HLXCore24 and HLXCore230. The first is a 24-Volt motor for gate leaves of up to 350 kilos, while the second is a 230-Volt motor capable of moving gate leaves of up to 550 kilos. Both versions are suitable for gate leaves of up

Cristiano Cardin





to 3 metres. A complete automation with an HLXCore motor consists of a range of components that are available separately, including the electronic controller (a different one for each of the 24- and 230-Volt models) and separate flush-mounted boxes made from galvanised or stainless steel, naturally in addition to all possible types of signalling and safety components. *"The motors are compatible with the HL and HLMole flush-mounted boxes,"* Cardin says. *"It means that you can easily fit a new motor to an existing gate, without the concrete in the foundation or the pavement getting in the way."*

On the 24-Volt model, the gate position is encoder-controlled and self-learning. *"That keeps installation time to a minimum,"* Cardin goes on. *"You can programme it quickly and easily. If the gate makes an emergency stop due to an obstacle being detected, then there's automatically a new learning cycle that re-establishes the position of the gate leaf. All in all, we're very happy with the new range. The HLXCore does exactly what it's supposed to do. It's quiet and, thanks to its ball-bearing, balanced rotary lever system, the gate moves very smoothly and evenly. ■*



Highland comes to the Netherlands

Highland Stall und Weide, a wholesaler from Sottrum near Bremen, Germany, that mainly deals in agricultural and wildlife fencing has also been active in the Dutch market from this autumn. The company has engaged two new staff for this purpose and put together a product range for the Dutch market.



Eric Nijpels, Johanna Hancken and Martin Holm



“In recent years, we’ve experienced rapid growth in northern Germany,” says managing director Martin Holm. “While brainstorming about setting new targets this spring and the regions where we’d like to expand further, the Netherlands was the first region mentioned. Not only just because it’s nearer to us than Bayern or Saxony, but also because the soil in the Netherlands is a lot like ours and we already have a good deal of experience with that kind of soil.”

EXPERIENCE

“A large part of our growth is due to us having lots of experience in pasture fencing and we constantly share this knowledge with our customers. As farmers ourselves, we started off 25 years ago by going to help other farmers with their fencing and we learnt all the ins and outs of the trade ourselves through trial and error. We apply all that knowledge so our customers can be successful too. And virtually all that knowledge is transferable one-on-one to the Netherlands.”



FEAR

"Fencing installers with little experience of meadow fencing or wildlife mesh often steer clear of these applications," Holm continues. "They don't know how to set them up, how to calculate them or where to buy the materials. Or they think there's not enough of a margin involved. They refer their customers to the local Farmers' Union or worse – to a competitor. And that's a pity, because the basic principles for meadow fencing are no different from those for ordinary fencing. You drive the posts into the ground, attach mesh to them and your fence is ready. And once you can do it at a reasonable speed, the margins are very attractive."

SERVICE

"You just need to know how to go about it – and that's where we come in," says Holm. "As well as providing detailed advice on the best type of mesh for you to use, we also help calculate and then sell the order. If you can't assemble it yourself or don't want to, we can send our team to do it. As a dealer, you remain the contact person for the customer in this situation. Or we'll send one of our installers to work alongside your installers for a couple of days, so they also learn how it's done. That's our great strength and it's been highly successful for us here in northern Germany. Most fencing installers see a profit on their very first project."





PRODUCT RANGE

Highland Stall und Weide's product range is extensive, ranging from simple rolls of chicken wire to complete stable layouts. "But our main focus is on fencing," says Holm. "We stock all types of wire and mesh, all types of wooden posts, meadow gates, electric fencing and all the tools you need for installing all those materials efficiently. We keep all of these materials in stock and you can order them per project and directly on the job, with no minimum quantities being applied."

TEAM

The Dutch team consists of Johanna Hancken and Eric Nijpels. Hancken is German, but went to agricultural college in Dronten and worked for 2 years in the Netherlands, where she learned to speak Dutch fluently. Nijpels is Dutch, and he worked for Zaunteam in Germany for four years where he gained a lot of experience with agricultural fencing, among other things. Together, they're aiming to make Highland as successful in the Netherlands as it is in northern Germany. "We've produced a separate brochure with the materials we think are best suited for the Netherlands," says Hancken, to which Nijpels adds: "Together with all the advice and our culture of close collaboration, we have a nice package to offer Dutch fencing installers. Moreover, we're ambitious and the communication lines in the company are short. If it appears that something could or should be done better or differently, we can quickly make any changes. We really believe we can be very successful in the Netherlands." ■



Triebenbacher presents stainless steel handrails with wood-effect look





Triebenbacher, a German manufacturer and wholesaler of fence and gate components based in Kirchheim near Munich, is expanding its product range to include stainless steel handrails with a wood-effect appearance.

In the long run, you can forget about real wood for outdoor use," says Dirk Wiegand, technical lead at Triebenbacher. "It develops mould, goes rotten, weathers and looks unsightly. This could take 10 years or more, but it normally happens sooner than that. At the same time, the demand for wood is increasing. It looks friendly and has a natural appearance. That's why we've now coated our stainless steel handrails with a wood-effect coating. It gives you the natural look of wood, but in a quality that will last for decades."

DECEPTIVELY REAL

The stainless steel tubes acquire their wood-like appearance by being powder-coated using a special process. "The process is known as thermosublimation," says Wiegand. "After a chemical pre-treatment, a so-called transfer film bearing the wood motif is applied around the tube. In the next step, the film is vacuum-sealed so that it adheres perfectly to the surface. The final step is then carried out in the oven. The resulting surface is impact- and scratch-resistant and absolutely proof against all weather conditions. It can be cut to size easily using a circular saw or band saw. The tube can withstand rough handling. At Groke, a sister company in the Sommer Group, the same technique is used for front doors in

the luxury segment. The visual effect is stunning. It's extremely realistic, you have to look twice to check whether the handrail is wood or not."

RANGE

The wood-effect handrails are available in Grey Oak Planking and Granary motifs. "We're starting off with two colours," says Wiegand. "But a large number of motifs are possible, so we can expand the range quickly." The stainless steel tubes are 3 metres in length with a diameter of 42.4 millimetres. "The tubes themselves are the standard ones from our handrail assortment. That means you can combine them with all the coupling and fixing elements that we have in our range. Flexible curves, fixing to a wall or to fence posts, it's all possible." ■



Attas makes grade 316 sliding gate wheels

Attas, a German manufacturer of sliding gate components based in Waiblingen, near Stuttgart, has launched four rollers for sliding gates on rails. They are made of grade 316 stainless steel, a stainless steel alloy that contains molybdenum which makes it extra resistant to salt and chlorine.

“Due to COVID-19 there were lots more swimming pools built all of a sudden,” says sales manager Dennis Gresch. “This in turn meant an increase in demand for pool covers, and as a result we suddenly had a lot of demand for sliding gate drives and sets of wheels for sliding gates on rails.”

POOL COVERS

“The rail and the rollers in our range turned out to be perfectly suited for patio contractors and construction businesses to make pool covers that move back and forth,” Gresch continues. “But the galvanised wheels we had at the time just rusted when they were used at the edge of a swimming pool. Then we started looking for wheels made from stainless steel. These were the wheels made of grade 304 stainless steel. These ones don’t rust through, but after a while you could see a layer of rust film on them and it really doesn’t look good. After that we spent a long time searching for wheels made of grade 316 stainless steel, but we couldn’t find them anywhere. In the end we had them made ourselves. The alloy of these grade 316 stainless steel rollers contains 2 per cent molybdenum in addition to chromium and nickel. It makes the wheels highly resistant to chlorine, salt water and salty air, for example in coastal areas. Now we’ve got rollers that stay beautiful and functional.”







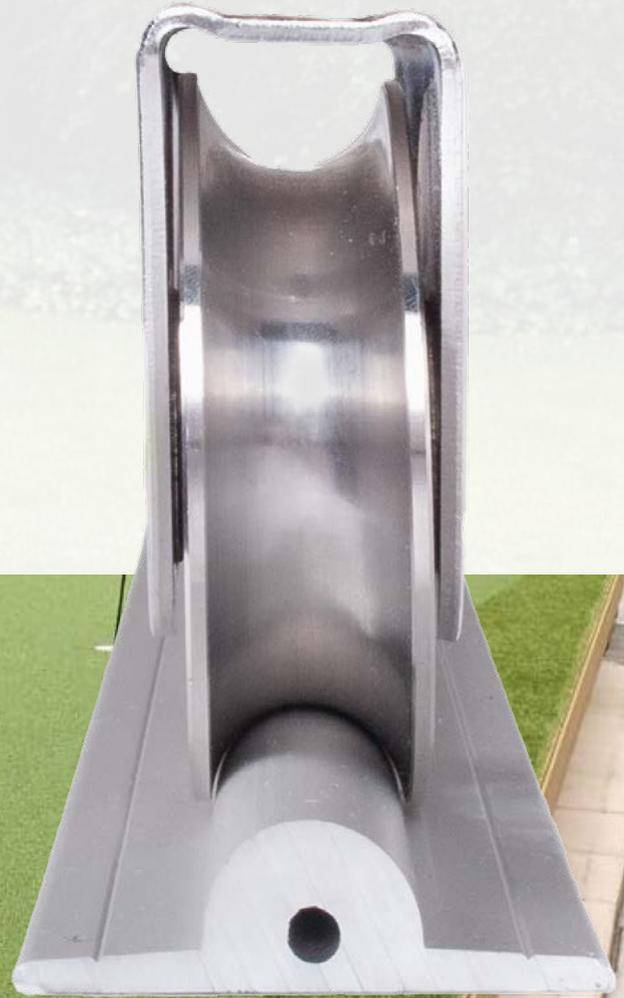
Stainless steel

Stainless steel, also known as inox or corrosion-resistant steel, is a collective name for a number of alloys consisting mainly of iron, chromium, nickel and carbon. In order to be considered stainless steel, an alloy must have a minimum of 11 per cent chromium and a maximum of 1.2 per cent carbon. In addition, many types of stainless steel also contain the elements molybdenum, titanium, manganese, nitrogen and silicon. Different alloys vary in terms of hardness, machinability, magnetism, thermal conductivity and a number of other specific properties, and you'd need to be a chemistry professor just to understand the Wikipedia page.

The standards of the American Iron and Steel Institute are generally used in international industry. Two common alloys are AISI 304 and AISI 316. AISI 304 is an alloy that contains 18 per cent chromium and 8 to 10 per cent nickel in addition to iron. AISI 316 contains 17 per cent chromium and 12 per cent nickel as well as 2 per cent molybdenum. In Germany these alloys are better known as V2A and V4A. The V stands for Versuch (test) and the A for Austenite. Austenite is related to the structure and stackability of the atoms. According to Wikipedia, both types of steels have an austenite crystalline structure, the crystal lattice of which has a face-centred cubic structure. The first person to explain to us what that means in plain language will receive a large cream cake.

RANGE

The new range of rollers includes wheels with diameters of 80, 90 and 100 millimetres. The 80-millimetre wheel is available with two different wheel holders, one for screwing or bolting on and one for welding. All four of the wheels have double ball bearings and, depending on the diameter, are able to support 380 to 420 kilograms per wheel. "Not only the wheels are made of grade 316 stainless steel," Gresch says. "The axles, the balls in the ball bearings, and the holders are too; everything is made of grade 316 stainless steel. Then you know that it's the highest quality." In addition to the wheels, Attas will soon be releasing a new rail made of anodised aluminium. "That will always stay shiny too – even if you install it next to a swimming pool. For gate-builders it means: higher and more durable quality in challenging regions like coastal areas – 316 stainless steel simply retains its beauty forever." ■



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Tell creates smart gate opener

Tell, a manufacturer of alarm communicators and gate controllers based in Hungary, launched a smart gate opener this summer. The device is called open.ioting. Customers can both open their gates, as well as manage who has access.

“We wanted to create a smart controller that gives customers a level of convenience in line with the times,” Gábor Kozák, Head of International Sales at Tell, says. “So last year we started developing a gate opener that doesn’t have a built-in GSM module, but instead is integrated into the customer’s network.”



APP

Open.ioting stands for 'opening with IoT', where IoT represents the Internet of Things. IoT refers to connecting devices – such as cars, refrigerators, coffee machines, and consequently gates – to the internet. Connecting the gate to the internet means that it can be controlled remotely. "Then you can control it with an app on your phone or watch," Kozák says. "Obviously the app features two big buttons for opening and closing, but you can also use it to see the gate's status. The open.ioting unit has two connections for this purpose, which you can connect to the gate's limit switches. You can also invite other users."

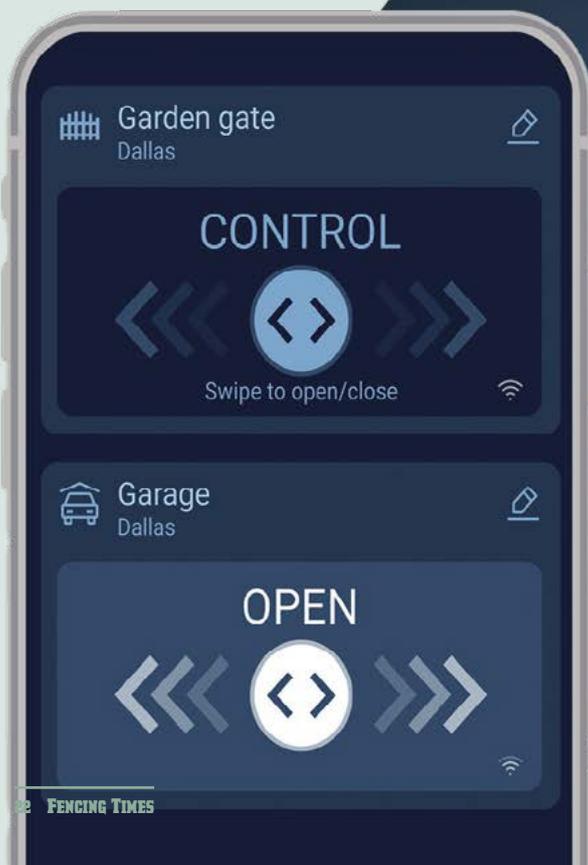
MANAGEMENT

The app distinguishes between two types of users: owners and invited users. The owner level has the highest level of access and can configure device settings and add users. For example, in a home situation, they can add family members; in a business setting, they can add co-workers, you name it. The first 50 users are free; after reaching that limit, the number

of users can be increased to 100 or 500 for a one-time fee. The owner invites users via email, and they then receive a link to the app. Once installed, users gain access to gate-opening options, but are not provided access to the management features."

FAST

The opening features aren't just in the app. "Even being able to control the gate with an app is very handy," Kozák says. "You always have your phone with you, so you never have to go looking for a remote control, but you still have to take your phone out of your pocket, unlock it, start up the app and then open the gate. We knew there had to be a faster way. That's why we made the app compatible with Siri Shortcuts. It means you can either add a button to your home screen to open the gate, or – even faster – ask Siri to open the gate."





HANDY

For people who don't like talking to their phone, there's also an app for the Apple Watch that allows you to add a gate button. "Then you get a button on the watch face," Kozák says. "Upon tapping it, two big buttons for opening and closing the gate appear. This allows you to keep your phone in your pocket and still control your gate super-quickly." Open.ioting's last handy feature is that you can receive a notification if you leave the gate open for too long. "If you've connected the gate's limit switches to the unit, which continuously displays the gate's status, the app can send you a message if the gate remains open for longer than a particular period of time. Sometimes this might be intentional, but usually it's not. In the app you can set the time after which you want the unit to notify you."

TECHNOLOGY

The open.ioting unit connects to the internet through the user's home network via Wi-Fi or an Ethernet cable. It doesn't require a SIM card. "These days there's internet almost everywhere," Kozák says, "both in businesses as well as at private residences. Without the GSM module and the SIM card that goes with it, we're able to sell the unit at an attractive price point that any gate owner can afford." The unit has two relays, but is suitable for a single gate control. "Some controls have separate connections for opening and closing, which is why there are two output contacts." The unit has three input contacts: two for limit switches, and one for connecting a separate opener. "If your gate control doesn't have enough connections and you need to, for example, disconnect the handheld transmitter receiver in order to connect the open.ioting unit, you can also connect the handheld transmitter receiver to our unit. That works too." The open.ioting app is available for Apple's iOS and watchOS, as well as for Google's Android.



“Open.ioting is super secure”

SECURE

Tell uses RSA 2048 bit-encryption for communication between the app and the unit at the gate. “That is the technique used to secure online banking and digital signatures,” says Kozák. “It provides a significantly higher level of security compared to traditional remote controls.. Furthermore, the server is safeguarded with Cloudflare to counteract DDoS attacks and, finally, of course, the user's phone is still secured with a fingerprint or facial recognition. Unlike a stolen remote control, a stolen phone does not grant a burglar access to the gate. Open.ioting is really super secure.”

THE FUTURE

Tell has plans to add even more features to open.ioting in the future. “We’re currently working on a Geofence update,” Kozák says. “With this, you can create a circular area on the map around your home or business. The app will then monitor the location of your phone, and if you enter this designated area, the app will automatically open the gate for you. This eliminates the need for pressing a button or issuing a command to Siri. If you usually take the same route home, it’s a very useful tool. We are also aiming to extend our compatibility to other voice assistants such as Amazon’s Alexa and Google Home soon.” Open.ioting works with all brands of drives for garage doors, swing and sliding gates, turnstiles, and barriers. ■



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Geran celebrates anniversary with Trade Days

In September Geran, the fencing component and access technology wholesaler, celebrated its 30th anniversary with a cross between an in-house trade show and an open day. During the two days of the 'Geran Vakdagen', visitors had the opportunity to see the business and chat to manufacturers.

“For our 25-year anniversary we threw a big party,” owner André Ligtenberg says. “Such a big celebration for 30 years felt a bit over the top, but we still wanted to mark the occasion. We’d also noted a few times that there are no trade shows in the Netherlands for fencing or gate installers. Fencing installers who want to talk to foreign manufacturers directly have to actually go and visit them – which almost never happens – or they need to travel a long way to attend a big international trade show. That’s why we came up with the Geran Vakdagen: a cross between a trade show and an open day.”

EXHIBITORS

Naturally the trade show included stands from the brands sold by Geran. “Almost all the suppliers from our range were there,” Ligtenberg says. “Locinox and D&D with their locks, hinges and gate closers, FAC, Fadini and Comunello with gate components, bollards, barriers and gate drives, Grande Forge and Euro-Fer with decorative bars and ornaments, Del Ponti with its wide range of primarily plastic components and DAS with its parking systems. But it didn’t stop there: the Vakdagen were also open to third parties. We had various manufacturers of machinery, ranging from welding equipment through to compressors and to Wikam with their pile-driver. There were also stands with workwear, pallet trucks, and anything else you might need as a fencing installer; for example work vans with interiors, and a drawing programme.”

DEMONSTRATIONS

In addition, visitors had the opportunity to take a tour of neighbouring business Voortman Steel Machinery, a machine builder that specialises in steel processing – particularly in sizes that other companies can’t handle. They have plasma cutters that can slice straight through a 60-millimetre-thick solid steel sheet. The company makes complete production lines, and everything is highly automated. “If you – like most fencing installers – are interested in steel and steel construction,” Ligtenberg says, “then it’s amazing to see how these machines are built and can be used in your own manufacturing.”

SOCIAL OCCASION

In addition to being useful, the Vakdagen were above all an enjoyable social occasion. Not only could the fencing installers meet manufacturers, but also each other. We on the Fencing Times team were there too, and had the opportunity to catch up with lots of old and new acquaintances. “After all, work can be fun now and then, right?” Ligtenberg asks rhetorically. “We deliberately didn’t call it an Open House, because the Vakdagen really are intended as a trade show. But we did aim to create the social atmosphere that you get with an open house, for example by providing snacks and drinks. It made for a relaxed mood and at the same time we could celebrate the fact that we’re now 30 years old. That was a great success; we’re already looking forward to the next edition, which we want to organise in 2025 or 2026.” ■





André
Ligtenberg

30 Years of Geran

Geran was founded in 1993 by owner Ligtenberg and his then business partner. *"We really weren't intending to start a wholesale business at all,"* he says. *"We'd just finished school and had a job with someone who made concrete garden statues. We mixed up concrete and filled the moulds with it. The owner of the concrete statue business sometimes had requests come in for decorative fencing, and since he knew we wanted to do something more, he sent those customers through to us. To start with we only welded ornamental fences in the evenings and on Saturdays, but it just kept getting busier. Little by little we started working more hours for ourselves and we made fewer statues and more ornamental fencing. The statue-maker was fine with that. He didn't want to have anything to do with the welding and he let us sell the fencing ourselves, in a separate space at his business and in our own name. He even loaned us his Opel Combo to drive out to customers. But then, when at a certain point we came to him yet again to ask if we could work another one day less for his company because we were so busy with our fencing business, he said that it was time to go into business for ourselves."*

MAYOR

"So that's what we did," Ligtenberg goes on. *"We were able to rent an old shed somewhere for a very low price, we registered with the Chamber of Commerce, and from that point on we were welding fences every day. But not long after that, the municipality started being difficult.*

The shed was behind a house, and obviously the work we were doing didn't fit into the municipality's zoning plan in the slightest. They wanted us to move to an industrial estate. They did have a piece of land available, but the price was too high for us. So we just stayed where we were and tried to string the municipality along for as long as we could, but eventually we couldn't stall any longer. Then we had to go and see the mayor – that's how it worked in those days. The mayor reduced the price of the land a bit, on the condition that we moved there quickly. So that's what we did."

FENCING

"Before long we were a real fencing company with our own manufacturing," Ligtenberg continues. *"We bought steel and fence ornaments, and welded them into fences. We had them galvanised and coated, and we installed them in people's gardens ourselves. We had absolutely no plans to start a wholesale business; that only happened when EuroPages landed in our mailbox. It was a sort of international Yellow Pages for businesses, not long before the internet made its big breakthrough. In that edition of EuroPages I found an Italian company that made fence points. I gave them a call using my best Dutch and, to our surprise, not much later we had a visit from a representative from Italy. Instead of the 3 guilders we were paying a wholesaler in the south of the Netherlands, we could now buy fence points for 1*

guilder ... then we thought: 'Well, that's business.' We placed a big order with the Italians and then we went to fencing installers in the region – the Italians had given us the north-east of the Netherlands as our sales area – to ask whether we could supply them with fence points. We had nothing to lose; if it didn't work out we could always use the points for our own fencing. But we needed to place another order from Italy in no time."

WHOLESALE

Slowly but surely the wholesale portion of the business increased, alongside the production of fencing and chimney caps. Ligtenberg: *"Through mutual contacts we came into contact with a manufacturer in India. They had fence points for 50 cents, but then we had to order a whole containerful. It was a big step, but it worked out well. At the same time we were also trying to expand our range. Obviously fencing installers don't just need fence ornaments."*



Then once again by chance, we heard that Fadini was looking for a new Dutch distributor for its barriers, drives and bollards. The Belgian company Vanhalme, which until then had done the distribution in the Benelux, had been taken over by Faac and obviously couldn't continue to sell Fadini as well. So we started doing that. Later there came gate components and automation from Comunello, the locks, hinges and gate closers from Locinox, decorative curlicues and ornaments from Eurofer, and all the rest of our range."

GROUP

Eventually Geran's wholesale branch was bigger than its own production. "It meant that we were increasingly our clients' competitor," Ligtenberg says, "which sometimes got in the way of our good relationship with those clients. So we stopped manufacturing. By then we'd moved four times within a short period of time and had a pretty big workshop. That freed up a large space and we completely

filled it with stock, so we could supply more products faster. That went down well with the clients and led to another big growth spurt." In 2011 Ligtenberg became the sole owner of Geran. "We've continued to expand Geran Handel's range. In 2011 we also acquired Twentse Sierhekwerkonderdelen – TSO – from Vasse, and in 2016 we set up a second company – Geran Access Products – to distribute Digicon from Brazil and Turnstar from South Africa, manufacturers of turnstiles, speed gates and tripod turnstiles. We sell these brands across Europe. Then last year a third company joined the group. The owner of JPA Hekwerkonderdelen (now JPA Handel), a small competitor from Hollandsche Rading near Hilversum, wanted to retire and asked if we were interested in buying his business. And we were. That was another nice addition."

THE FUTURE

Ligtenberg isn't planning to rest on his laurels in the coming 30 years. "In the wholesale businesses it's mostly about

service," he says, "so we're always looking at how we can improve it even more, with even faster delivery times, more stock and even better technical support. But we're also continuing to expand our product range, so we can offer increasingly more choice to fencing installers. We're taking a cautious look at other markets, too. We're only 25 kilometres from the German border, and obviously a formula that works well in the Netherlands can be fairly successful in Germany as well. There are plenty of fun projects and challenges – bring on the next 30 years!" ■





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H+S certifies Absturzsicherung (Fall Protection) for German market

Fencing manufacturer H+S Zaun from Graz, Austria, has had its twin wire fence classified as fall protection also certified for the German market this summer. This means that German fencing installers can now also legally use the system.



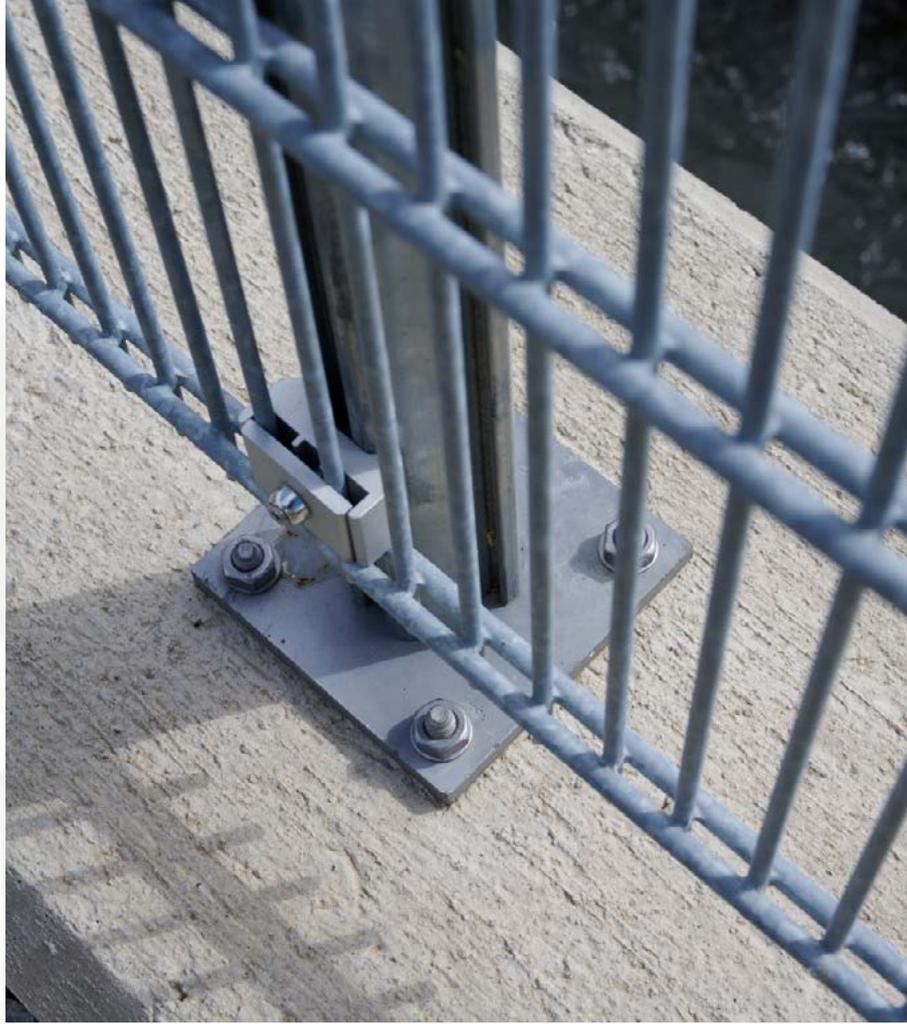
“The system is highly successful in Austria,” says managing director Günther Baumhackl. “It’s cheaper than a welded steel structure and also quicker to assemble. That’s why we wanted to make it available now for the German market.”

FALL PROTECTION

“Fall protections are always a tricky subject,” Baumhackl continues. “The requirements vary by federal state or sometimes even by municipality. There are several building categories, each with its own requirements. For a fall distance of 100 centimetres or more, a fall protection is required in most cases. An ordinary fence is no longer sufficient then.”

SYSTEM

H+S’s fall protection consists of Oktavia Uni type posts and twin wire panels with an extra narrow mesh size. “The Oktavia Uni is our universal octagonal post with a slot on three sides for fasteners,” says Baumhackl. “The three slots mean you can use it as an intermediate, corner or end post. We have all sorts of fasteners for it and we use it for all our fencing types. Together with twin wire panels with a mesh size of 25 by 200 millimetres and at least four panel clamps per post, the system has now been tested and certified by Tüv-Süd as fall protection.”



REQUIREMENTS

There are a few additional requirements. "You have to have a post every 1.25 metres," says Baumhackl. "And you have to use the heavy-duty, 10-millimetre-thick base plates measuring 120 by 120 millimetres, in combination with at least four M10, stainless steel concrete anchors, which are at least 90 millimetres long. And you have to mount any protruding wires on the twin wire panel downwards."

CERTIFICATION

H+S's fall protection already complied with the requirements of the Austrian Building Directive 330.4-020/15 - paragraph 4 and those from Categories A and B of EN 1991. Tüv Süd has now also certified the system for the German market, for building categories A1, A2 and B2 and for building heights up to 10 metres in Wind Zones 2 and 3 or up to 18 metres in Wind Zone 1. ■





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ACCESSORIES FOR GATES

Profex expands range of plug-in fencing

Profex, a fencing manufacturer from Uetze near Hanover, is expanding its range of plug-in fencing with three new profiles. The new additions are twice as high as the other profiles in the range. They have an inner layer of WPC and an outer layer of PVC, leaving them unaffected by water.





“We have 20 extrusion lines in our factory,” managing director Marcel Aehlig says. “We’re also able to co-extrude on some of those lines. That means we can use two different materials for a single profile, with separate inner and outer layers. That’s also how we make our existing range of wood-plastic-composite¹ profiles. The core of those is made of standard WPC, with no colouring. For the outer layer, we add water-resistant fibre, and colouring. The profiles that we’ve just added to the range have the same WPC inner core, but an outer layer made of PVC. We use the same PVC that we use for window and door profiles; it’s extremely weather-resistant.”

PATTERN

The unusual thing about the PVC outer layer is that it’s two-coloured. “We use the same technique as we use in our new privacy strips,” Aehlig says. “We use a standard base colour and during the extrusion process we mix in an anthracite-grey colour. Then in the profile that grey shade looks like wood grain. That grain is completely random, with no set pattern; it doesn’t repeat anywhere. From a distance the profiles look like they’re made of real wood.” The new profiles will be launched on the market with three different base colours. The first is also anthracite and is called Slate Look, the second is lighter grey and known as Antique Look, and the last is mid-brown and called Walnut Look.

WINDOW PVC

“The advantage of window PVC, as we call it,” Aehlig goes on, “is that it does not take on or absorb any water whatsoever. Not only does that mean that the inner layer with the wood fibres is fully protected against water, but also that after rain there are no colour differences or stains if the fence dries unevenly. On top of that, the combination of WPC and PVC makes the profiles stronger. This enabled us to make them 300 millimetres high, which is twice as high – or actually I should say wide – as the WPC panels that we already had in the range. Higher panels are popular these days, particularly in houses where the modern garage door is made of panels as well. Then the fence and the garage door look the same.” The new profiles were released this spring. ■

1) Wood-Plastic-Composite (WPC is the collective term for thermoplastically processable composite material made from various proportions of wood (usually wood flour), plastics and additives. Most composite materials are produced by plastic engineering processes such as extrusion, injection moulding or rotational moulding, or using pressing techniques.





According to a survey of 100 installers:

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Global Fence celebrates 20th anniversary

Global Fence, a Swiss fencing wholesaler from Frauenfeld has now been in business for 20 years. On a Friday in early September, the company celebrated this landmark with customers, suppliers and, of course, its own staff with an in-house fair and festive evening.



Global Fence was founded by Michael Etter, Peter Odermatt and Zaunteam founder Wädi Hübscher, as a kind of buying group. "Zaunteam, back then, only had become a franchise organisation a few years earlier," says Tenger. "The majority of the materials and equipment used came from abroad. From Germany, and also from Great Britain, New Zealand and the United States. It took the various different partners a long time to get all that material through customs themselves. And in terms of logistics, it was often faster and cheaper to get material to Switzerland in full trucks or containers and then distribute it there. For those reasons, a separate company was set up to manage this."

NAME

Because Zaunteam isn't easy to say in English and to lend the company a more international image, the name Global Fence was selected. "Initially, we were actually called Global Fence Limited," says Tenger. "But that seemed to be a bad idea. In those days and especially in Germany, less serious entrepreneurs opted for a Limited, as then they only needed one British Pound of start-up capital, instead of the 25,000 euros it cost to incorporate a GmbH. Since its incorporation, Global Fence had been an Aktiengesellschaft¹ with 100,000 Swiss Francs of share capital so when the first sceptical questions came from German suppliers, the founders quickly got the name changed officially to Global Fence AG."

¹ The Aktiengesellschaft (AG) is the Swiss equivalent of the Public Limited Company (PLC) in the United Kingdom or the Corporation (incorporated, inc) in the United States.

GROWTH

Global Fence underwent rapid growth from the very start. "More and more Zaunteam partners were joining and they themselves were also growing fast, so they needed an ever increasing amount of materials," says Tenger. "But Global Fence also grew with a couple of big projects. Located two villages away from here is one of the largest grandstand builders in the world and my predecessor, Philip Scheibli, had thought up a system for easily and quickly fencing those grandstands. We supplied huge amounts of equipment for the Olympic Games in Turin and later in London, and for the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi."

EXPANSION

Ruedi Tenger himself joined the company in 2013, after having worked for 23 years for a fencing company in the region. Under his leadership, Global Fence enjoyed another surge in growth as it also targeted fencing installers outside the Zaunteam group. "Initially, these were sometimes reluctant to buy from the 'competitor'," he says. "But our fellow wholesalers in Switzerland also all have their own installation teams, so that argument quickly evaporated. Furthermore, apart from sharing the same owner, Global Fence is otherwise totally separate from the Zaunteam group and the various Zaunteam partners. We treat each fencing installer equally, whether inside or outside the group. And thanks to the large volume, we can deliver at competitive prices and with fast lead times, which also helps."





PRODUCTION

In addition to importing and wholesaling, Global Fence also manufactures. "For chain-link, we make the posts and gates ourselves," says Tenger. "We have just introduced a new machine that allows us to drill five holes for tension wire holders at the same time. We get the frames for chain-link gates welded at construction workshops nearby, but once they've been galvanised, we make the mesh for them in our own workshop. This enables us to supply customised work really quickly."

CELEBRATION

The anniversary celebrations began in the afternoon at the first in-house fair. Various producers from home and abroad had travelled to Frauenfeld to attend this. "We wanted to give our customers the opportunity to also exchange views directly with the manufacturers for once," says Tenger. During the fair, the manufacturers themselves were available for questions and feedback." The exhibition was followed by a speech from founder Wädi Hübscher, who gave special credit to the employees. "They certainly earned that," says Tenger. "We have a really tight team and hardly any staff turnover. Everyone continually does their very best to help customers as much as possible and the result is always happy faces." After Hübscher's speech, there was food from the buffet, followed by another brief speech by Tenger himself, after which the celebrations carried on into the small hours of the morning. "Here's to the next 20 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.

Strict 'right of withdrawal' legislation now even tougher

The European distance selling legislation that stipulates that consumers always have the right to cancel their order within 14 days is now even stricter. That is, while the law hasn't changed, a ruling by the European Court in Luxembourg means that from now on it will be even easier for customers to avoid paying their bills.

To begin by summarising the existing 'right to cancel' legislation: since 2014, consumers across the EU have had the right to cancel their order within 14 days when purchasing at a distance. The legislation that governs this was created because when you buy something over the big bad internet, you're not able to see the product before purchasing so it's more difficult to tell whether you actually want it. The legislation prevents online shops sending you a product that doesn't look nearly as nice as it did in the picture.

The law applies to delivery to consumers, in the case of 'off-premises' sales. In other words: when a customer buys something in a shop, they can see what they're buying and if they change their mind later, then bad luck. Off shop premises, the customer has additional protection. But 'off-premises' is a broad term and therefore doesn't just cover orders made via the online shop. The law also applies to orders made via phone or email, at the door, or on the project.

This legislation in itself is obviously a nightmare for fencing installers anyway. Because it means that the customer can order a fence only to say, when it's ready: "Oh, actually I don't want it."





If the customer decides to cancel the purchase, then the whole thing is reversed. When this involves the purchase of a product from an online store, it's simple. The customer sends unflattering jeans back to Zalando, and Zalando refunds the money. But that's obviously not an option for a fence that's already in the ground. It first needs to be uninstalled.

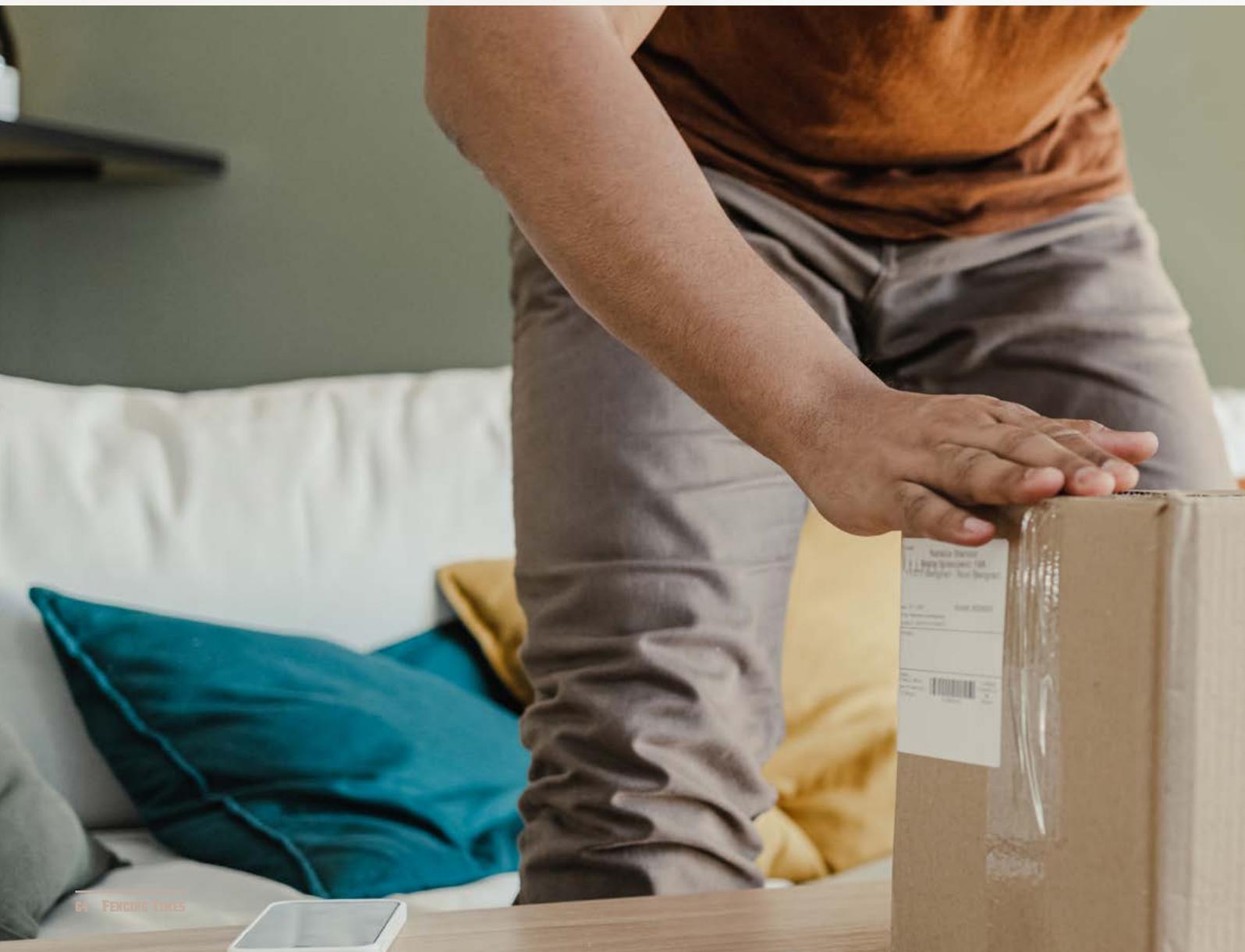
If you do everything by the book, then you do have the right to compensation for the installation services provided, up to the point that the order was cancelled. But when it comes to the materials, the posts and fixings of which you can no longer sell as new, the customer is not required to pay. Not even a small amount.

There is a provision that states that a supplier is entitled to compensation for a product's loss of value, if the customer caused that loss of value through improper use. So if the jeans are returned

to Zalando with a few wrinkles, that's Zalando's problem, because the customer had to try them on in order to decide whether they wanted them. However, if the jeans are returned full of rips and stains, the customer must compensate Zalando. But try proving to a judge that your returned fence's materials are worth less as a result of the customer's improper actions.

Right, so much for the basics of the legal right of withdrawal. That part's bad enough, but we're not done yet. Not only are you obliged to cancel a purchase if the consumer requests it, but you must also inform them of their rights in advance.

The 14-day period doesn't begin on the date that the order is made or delivered, but on the date that the customer is informed of their right to withdraw from the sale. If you forget to inform your customer, this period is automatically extended by a year (!).



The idea behind this is that a supplier can't get away with 'forgetting' to inform their customer, simply because they don't want to accept materials being returned.

It means that a customer who has not been informed of their right to withdraw can still reverse the sale after a year, even if they have already paid the invoice. And now the European Court ruling: If you have not informed a customer of their right of withdrawal, your right to any compensation at all for delivered (installation) services is thereby forfeited. In other words: the entire purchase price must be given back to the customer¹.

In the case on which the court ruled, there was an electrician from Essen in Germany who had rewired a customer's house.

¹) If you're interested in the European Court ruling, you can Google file number C-97/22. The ruling can be found online in almost all European languages.

He had been given verbal instruction for the job in October 2020, off-premises. In December of that year the work was completed and the electrician sent his invoice. The customer didn't pay the invoice, but instead invoked their right to withdraw from the sales contract. The electrician took the customer to court, but lost, first before the District Court in Essen and then before the European Court. The customer didn't have to pay a cent.

It's not clear from the judgement whether the electrician then at least got back – or was allowed to remove – the copper wire and power sockets he had supplied. That would have been interesting to know.

If you want to protect yourself from customers actually exercising their right of withdrawal, there are things you can do.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, holding a crumpled 10 Euro banknote. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers gripping the edges of the paper. The background is a bright, out-of-focus white space with faint, large-scale circular patterns, possibly from a washing machine or dryer, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere.

There are all sorts of exceptions to the law; otherwise it wouldn't be possible to sell things like lottery tickets or food with a short shelf life. You could, for example, have your customer sign a statement confirming that they understand that the order is a custom-made product and therefore the right of withdrawal does not apply. And if you really want to play it safe, you can always start work on the order only once at least 14 days have passed after informing your customer.

Either way, the case is a valuable lesson. If you sell to consumers, don't forget to inform them of their right to a refund if they order outside your office or showroom; otherwise you might just end up being stuck with all the costs. ■

Disclaimer: This article is a news report and does not constitute legal advice. European legislation and European Court rulings are implemented and interpreted differently in each EU member state, according to the existing national legislation. Obtain legal advice regarding local and national laws in your own country to ensure that you are clear on your rights and responsibilities. Your local Chamber of Commerce may be able to provide you with sample texts that you can use in your quotes and order confirmations.

Have you had a customer who wanted to exercise their right of withdrawal? Please get in touch with us to share your story!

The trade show season is here



It happens once every two years: a number of trade shows that are of interest to our industry line up neatly one after another – and that means that there's a full trade show season about to start. We on the editorial team are big fans of trade shows. You encounter new products that will help you stand out from the rest. You make new contacts and get new ideas.

The season has actually already started: in the UK, the International Security Expo in London was held at the end of September. This is a trade show at which – in addition to all sorts of other types of protection – you'll mainly find high-security fencing. And in October, also in the UK, was Fencex, a one-day trade show that for more than 20 years now has brought the market together

at Stoneleigh Park, an event centre close to Coventry in the West Midlands. In the Netherlands, Geran kicked off the season in September with the first edition of the Geran Vakdagen, a cross between an in-house expo and an open day.

The next trade show on the calendar is Paysalia, in Lyon at the start of December. Paysalia is a French trade show for landscaping ('paysage' = landscape), but we can recommend it to fencing installers from all over Europe.

At the most recent editions there were more than 100 stands from suppliers in the fencing industry, and as the French market is the most design-oriented of the European markets, there are many new models of fences and gates.

Fens & Fits in Istanbul follows in January. This trade show is focused on fencing and materials for parks and sports fields and is part of Atrax, a trade show for theme parks. At the same time, under the Atrax umbrella the trade shows Premo (for landscaping), Aquafun (for swimming pools, spas and wellness) and Vendist (for vending machines) will be held in other halls. Even though Istanbul is a long way away for most of our readers, we keep a close eye on this trade show as the Turkish manufacturing sector is growing fast. In addition, Istanbul's strategic location means that it attracts exhibitors and visitors from across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, which means opportunities to make contacts in new markets.

Security trade fair Intersec will also be held in January, in Dubai. It features drones, camera surveillance, alarm systems, personal security, and fencing as well. Dubai is even further away than Istanbul, but again its strategic location means that it attracts exhibitors and visitors from all over the world. If you want to visit all the international trade shows then after Intersec you can fly straight on to Nashville, Tennessee, which will be hosting this year's Fencetech. With almost 300 stands, Fencetech is the world's largest fencing trade show – but it focuses solely on the US market. Even so, there are plenty of ideas to be gained.

And finally, in February, there's the R+T trade show in Stuttgart. R+T stands for 'Rolladen and Tore' (roller shutters and gates); it's a trade fair for roller shutters, doors and gates, and solar shading. R+T is held only once every 3 years and the 2021 edition was cancelled due to Covid, so the upcoming trade show will be the first edition in 6 years. It can be an interesting trade show for fencing installers because almost all European drive manufacturers have stands there, in addition to various manufacturers of intercoms, gate components and other accessories.

We always try to attend as many of the abovementioned trade shows as possible, so perhaps we'll run into you at one of them. ■



Upcoming events

This overview lists all trade shows and events that we think might be of interest to fencing professionals. This is why we have included events that only partially overlap with our industry (such as construction, security and infrastructure trade shows). NB: not all events are free of charge, and events may be cancelled, moved or rescheduled at the last minute. Check all information on the relevant event's website before making travel arrangements.



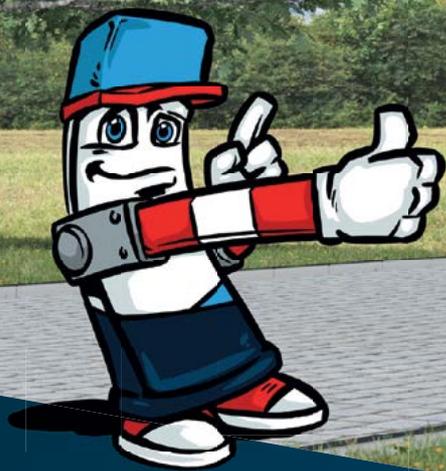
**SAVE
the
DATE**

| EVENEMENT | START | EIND | LOCATIE | BRANCHE |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Saie Bari | 19.10.2023 | 21.10.2023 | Bari | Building & Construction |
| Paysalia | 05.12.2023 | 07.12.2023 | Lyon | Landscaping & Fencing |
| Fens & Fits | 11.01.2024 | 13.01.2024 | Istanbul | Fencing & Sport Pitches |
| Intersec | 16.01.2024 | 18.01.2024 | Dubai | Security |
| Fence Tech | 24.01.2024 | 26.01.2024 | Nashville | Fencing |
| Budma | 30.01.2024 | 02.02.2024 | Poznań | Building & Construction |
| Batibouw | 17.02.2024 | 25.02.2024 | Brussels | Building & Construction |
| R+T | 19.02.2024 | 23.02.2024 | Stuttgart | Shutters, Doors & Gates |

If you're aware of an event that isn't listed here, or if you are organising an event that will be open to all fencing professionals, please be sure to let us know at team@fencingtimes.com or by calling +44 1227 919552.

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Signs warning of the high voltage must be attached to electric fencing at regular intervals

I've never tried it myself, but it must be very painful: touching the wires of an electric fence system. They're also known as High Voltage or electropulse systems. Long polymer profiles are mounted on the inside of fence posts, and wires are stretched between them. These wires carry around 8000 volts of electricity. The mounted profiles are taller than the fence itself, so there are wires above the fence as well. These prevent people climbing over. Signs are attached to the fence that present a clear warning that the wires carry a very high voltage. Any would-be intruder will think twice before trying to climb over or get through this fence.



The height of the electric fence is unlimited; they can be installed at great heights.

This in itself is the strong point of this type of system: the psychological deterrent is extremely effective. In particular, opportunistic thieves who happen to be passing and come across an electric fence system are then more likely to break in a bit further down the street. Professional burglars, too, prefer to try the neighbours if they sell expensive cars too but have a non-electrified fence.

These systems have become extremely popular in the Netherlands over the past 20 years, ever since a car dealer got sick of having airbags stolen from his cars every weekend and developed his own electric fence system. Other car dealers wanted one too, and a new market was born. They are also becoming increasingly popular in other countries, such as Belgium and the UK.



Gates can also be protected with electric fencing.

Sales are still slow in Germany; my guess is that it's due to the association with wartime concentration camps. But there's a good chance that in time they will see increasing popularity in Germany as well, because German car dealers are also faced with a growing number of thieves targeting airbags and navigation systems, and electric fence systems are extremely effective here.

If I'm honest, when I first encountered electric fence security, I thought: *"But what is that? It's not a detection system?"* When you work with infrared, radar detection, induction cable and those types of technology on a daily basis, it's easy to turn your nose up at a livestock-alike electric fence. Because after all, that's what it's based on. But on closer inspection: if you're a car dealer on a remote industrial park, what use is it to have a fancy sophisticated fence detection system that detects intruders at a very early stage, if there is more than 20 minutes' response time for either you or the police? Exactly: no use at all. Alerts are sent promptly, but the long response time means that losses will still be incurred. Perhaps more than just the navigation system or airbags from a car, because the fence has been broken and if you're unlucky the sensor cable too. This owner would actually prefer a system that stops the intruders even trying to break in. In essence, this is what these systems do in the first instance: they scare people off. But they defend too, because if you've experienced being shocked, you'll never again try to climb over the fence to steal something. These systems also very much increase the psychological resistance of the fence on which they're mounted. In the first place this is because the wires are mounted higher than the top of the actual fence – usually about 50 centimetres higher. But it's also due to the threat of electric shock, which you'll get if you touch the wires. Everyone's scared of that. No one grabs the wires of their own free will, not even as a joke.

But the system doesn't just defend and deter: it detects as well. You might think that an intruder who isn't scared of electricity and brings well insulated tools along will get a long way. For example I've seen my brother-in-law, a qualified electrician, do things with 230-volt wires that make me say, *"Stop it, I can't believe you're doing that!"* But even he wouldn't get far with this system.



An electric fence can almost always follow the fenceline.

The wires of an electric fence are usually around 10 centimetres apart.



Because the wires are tensioned every 10 centimetres, it's almost impossible to get past the fence undetected. If you cut through the wires with insulated tools, you'll be detected because this breaks the current loop. If you try to climb over the fence by throwing a blanket over it or leaning a wooden ladder against the wires, your weight will cause the wires to touch and will cause a short circuit. Again: detected. And of course this also applies if you step on the wires in your rubber boots. All this is additionally guaranteed by tensioning the wires in a particular way and using insulators, which break or give way at a certain weight. Advanced systems even have an alarm contact on the tensioners, so they can't be tampered with. You can't connect or loop the wires and then cut a piece out in between, because the total resistance value of the loop would be changed – and this, too, can be measured.

Although touching the high-voltage wires is painful, electric fence systems are safe, as in Europe the energy released is not allowed to exceed 5 Joules. There are European standards for this. This is achieved by working with a very low current (measured in amperes). In addition, only 50 pulses per minute are allowed to be transmitted and a pulse is only allowed to last for 300 milliseconds. It means that touching the wires is not fatal, but still very painful.

The wires are only mounted to the inside of a fence, which ensures that people on the outside can't touch the wires accidentally. However, employees who drive onto the site and park their cars need to be considered. And garden centre visitors have also been known to get an unpleasant surprise when looking at plants and trees. In these types of situations it's better to turn the system

off during the day, or to switch to low voltage. Then there's still detection, but no electric shocks. The owner of the system should also ensure that there are warning signs attached to the fence at regular intervals, stating that the wires are electrified and touching them can be dangerous and painful. I've sometimes joked to a customer that we sell signs and the customer gets a system with them – primarily because the psychological deterrent effect is so huge. This makes the system very effective.

Here, the electric fence is only mounted above the fence, so it only protects against people climbing over. An intruder who saws through the bars will be able to enter undetected.



Electric fencing is usually mounted to the inside of the fence, up to half a metre or more above the height of the fence itself. Electric fence systems can be mounted to chain-link, rigid mesh and bar fencing.



These switch boxes convert the 230-volt mains voltage to 7,000 or 8,000 volts.





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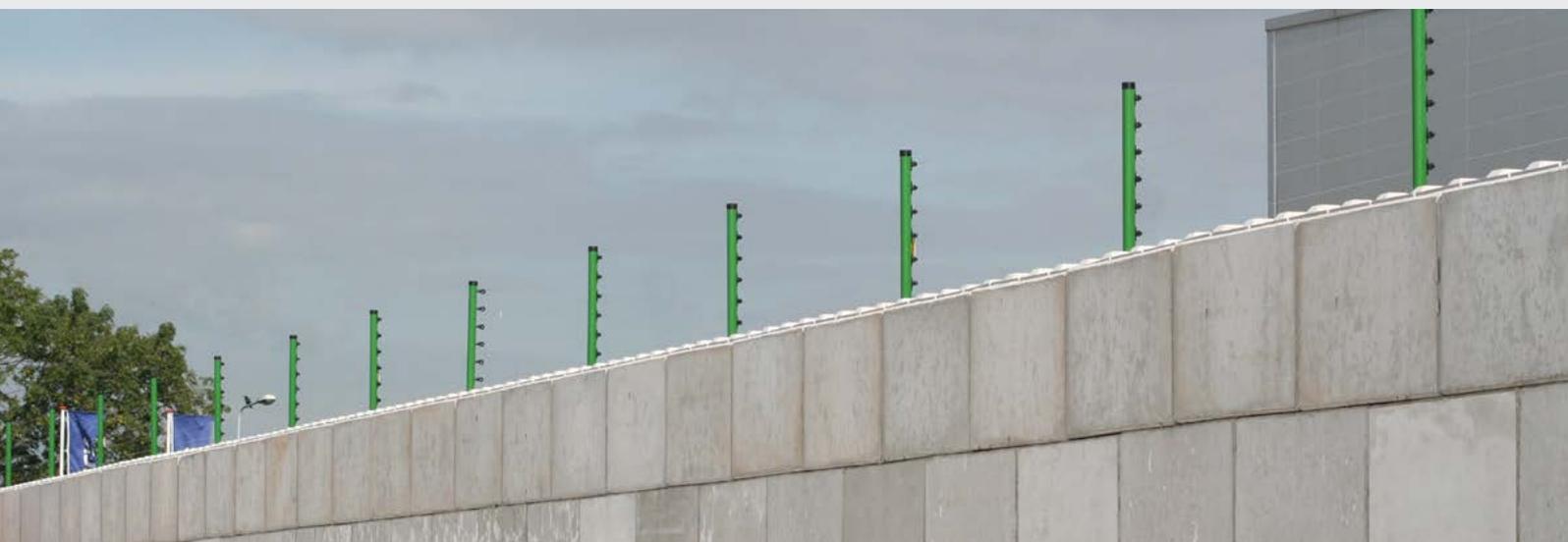
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Some constructions call for creative thinking.



Gates can also be protected with electric fencing.



It's also the reason why these systems are very widely used, at places from car dealers to distribution centres, and from scrap dealers to properties owned by defence and justice departments. Electric fencing systems can be installed on the existing fence using profiles. With supports, you can also realise very good anti-climbing protection for walls. Even swing and sliding gates can be included. In these cases special gate contacts are installed. These ensure that the current loop remains closed even when the gate is open. For extremely high-risk properties, Y or T extensions can be used on the existing fence posts for additional security. Advanced systems can be divided into multiple alarm zones; these can then be combined with video surveillance, for verification. They can also be integrated into an alarm management system. The systems are less popular in the private sector, because all the wires – which can extend up to half a metre above the fence – start to make the garden look like a prison.

In terms of cost, the system is comparable to the cost of a detection system based on the detection cable discussed in a previous column. Here, too, a fence that needs to be fitted with an electrification system will cost approximately twice as much as one that doesn't. But there is a difference. The total cost will tip more towards the labour factor, as the fraction spent on materials and electronics is smaller than for a sensor cable detection system. Conversely, it takes a lot longer to mount a profile with 23 insulators on each fence post and then stretch 23 wires along them than it does to tie-wrap a single detection cable along the fence. An electric fence system contains far fewer electronic components, so there is less to break down. This makes the system's lifespan longer



Taking the electric wires into account when the posts are produced often produces a more attractive end result than when profiles are mounted afterwards. It means that the wires are closer together and more evenly spaced on the fence.

than that of a sensor cable system, making for a favourable cost of ownership. These costs become even more favourable if the customer had been planning to install a new fence anyway. Then you can use posts that have been pre-fitted with the insulators. This reduces the labour factor of the electric fence system, reducing the cost per metre. Systems that are integrated into the fence in this way often have a sleeker appearance than retrofitted systems.

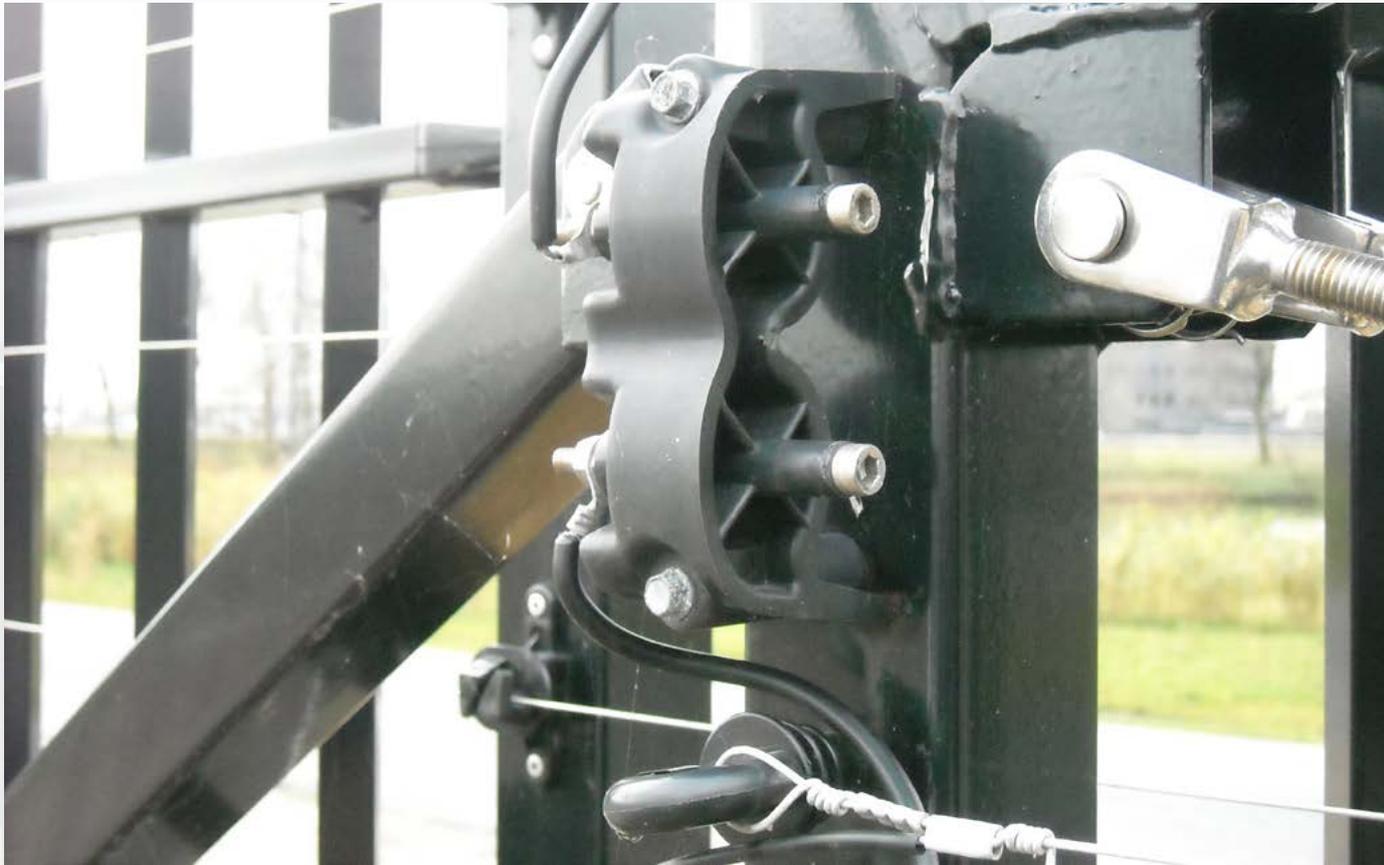
As I just mentioned, not many electronics are required. Up to 50,000 metres of live wire can be connected to a power unit. This means that for a fence that is 2.40 metres in height, with a wire every 10 centimetres, you only need a unit once every few kilometres. Compare this to sensor cable detection as described in the previous column, where a central unit is required every 600 metres. Repairing any defective wires is also much easier than repairing a sensor cable system.

As the installer of the system, it's important that you pay close attention to the earthing. Also be sure to install lightning rods. It's a good idea to use a power unit that is able to withstand high voltage spikes. The

negative wires along the fence act like a very long antenna. If the fence is located on flat terrain, for example in a solar park, it may be struck by lightning. Be sure to choose a system that can cope with this, so that a lightning strike won't be passed on to other equipment.

With the exception of lightning, the electric fence system is completely immune to the weather conditions. It doesn't matter whether it's raining, hailing, snowing or foggy: deterrence and detection are always in place. To ensure that the system works properly, however, the customer must conduct regular maintenance of the fenceline. As the tensioned wires go down right to the very bottom of the fence, in wet weather any long grass or weeds are likely to cause a short circuit and therefore set off the alarm. Make this very clear to your customers; they shouldn't underestimate it. It is the most common malfunction. If the customer is still able to, suggest that they lay paving or place gravel on top of weed control fabric to create a weed-free strip. If this can't be done, the customer will need to mow the grass very frequently. If this is not done then before





These contacts are used to transfer the voltage to the moving leaf of a swing or sliding gate





Ground rods like these can be used to divert the peak voltage of a lightning strike to the ground. This is very important, and especially if the project includes electric gates.

long the system will be disabled due to all the unnecessary notifications, which would obviously be a real shame. It's also a good idea to sell a maintenance contract, because the tension of the wires needs to be checked each year, and re-tensioned if necessary. If the system is close to bushes or trees, ensure that any broken branches will not hit the wires. This is all very simple, but in practice it is just not considered or it's ignored. You can't have a properly functioning perimeter system without maintaining the surroundings, and that goes for an electric fence system too. ■

inova

The grass in the foreground needs to be kept short to avoid false alarms.

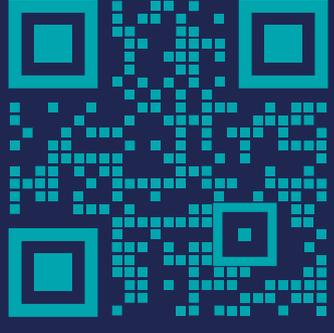




A strip of gravel with weed control fabric underneath ensures that no weeds grow along the power wires



Find out more

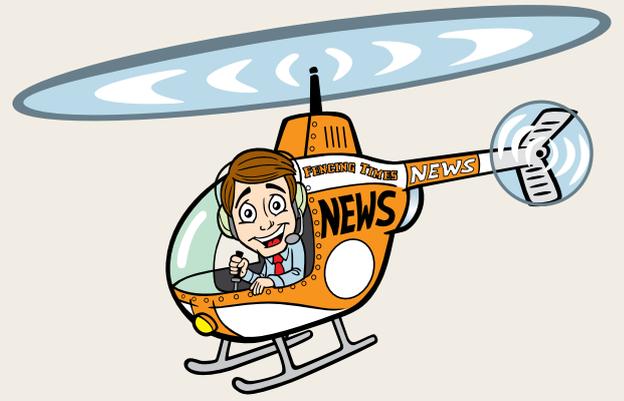


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FENCES IN THE NEWS



History teacher discovers fence older than his country



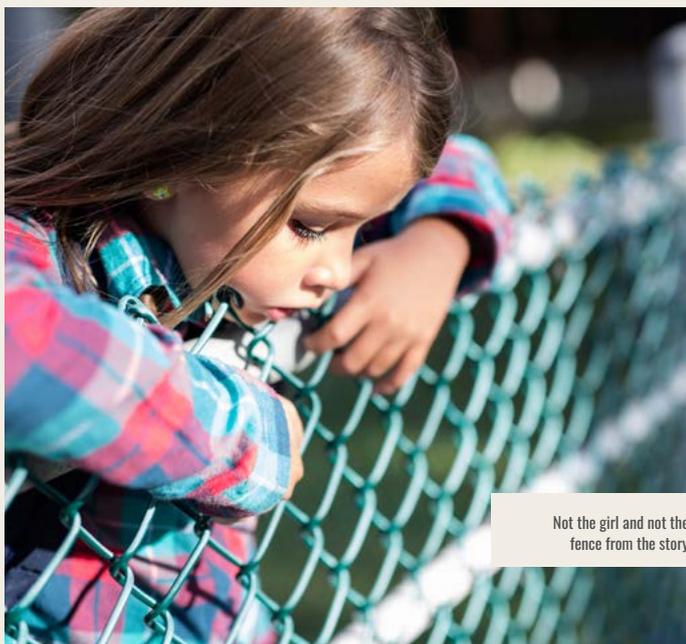
All his life, Robert Parks, a retired history teacher from Corpus Christi in South Texas, had been fascinated by an ornamental wrought-iron gate at the driveway of a villa. He recently discovered that this ornamental gate had been produced as early as 1750 and wrote a column about it for the local newspaper. “Can you imagine, 1750! That’s 26 years before

the Declaration of Independence was signed,” he says enthusiastically. On reading this, we immediately wanted to make a bunch of jokey comments about American cultural barbarians, who have no proper history of their own and regard anything older than 200 years as ‘amazing’ – but we would be doing this history teacher an injustice. It’s fair to say that a gate made of forged cast iron from the

year 1750 is really rather special even by European standards. Although the use of iron ore as a raw material in itself pre-dates the era, cast iron only came into use in the West from around 1400 onwards. The French and English made cannons for their ships from it. But it was only from 1700 onwards that they mastered the making of robust profiles from it, which could also be used in

building and manufacturing. As an example, it was only in 1779 that the world’s first iron bridge, the Iron Bridge in the English town of Ironbridge of the same name, was opened. Whereas the casting of this story’s wrought-iron gate took place as early as 1750, at the Imden Iron Works in New Orleans. It remains in use to this day. If you also know of some place with an ancient gate: feel free to report it! ■

Man hangs girl from fence and disappears



Not the girl and not the fence from the story.

In Jockgrim, a village near Karlsruhe, Germany, the Polizei is looking for a man in his sixties who hung a 6-year-old girl from her own fence. Do what? No, you did read correctly. The girl was playing in her own garden when the man lifted her up from behind and hung her up by her dress on the fence surrounding her own garden. He then left. Normally, on reading such an absurd news item, we're always a bit suspicious. Young children can invent the craziest stories

when they've climbed over a fence and are scared of what will be said about the rip in their clothes. But in this case, the girl's story was confirmed by footage from surveillance cameras. The man was walking down the street with a woman, when all of a sudden he grabbed the girl, hung her up on the fence and walked off. Luckily, the girl managed to free herself. She was not hurt in the incident. To put it in fencing terminology, someone clearly has a screw loose here. ■

Young deer disappeared due to arrival of fence



In Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto in Canada, five young deer disappeared without a trace due to the arrival of a wildlife fence. At least, that's what a worried resident of the nature reserve where those young deer were seen last spring is claiming. The previous summer, a fence was erected in several places in the conservation area to prevent newly planted trees and bushes from being trampled. The resident, who happens to be called Karen, now claims that the

new fence prevented the young deer from escaping when they were attacked by coyotes. She is demanding that the fences be removed because they are a threat to the deer population. According to the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC), which manages the area, there is no evidence whatsoever for the woman's claims. Whether or not the five young deer were eaten by coyotes is by no means certain, and even if it did happen, it has had no effect on the deer population, which is still roughly the same size as last year. Even so, the resident has started a petition to get the new wildlife mesh fences removed again. She collected 220 signatures, but the CVC took no action apart from promising to keep the situation under review. ■



KAREN

Karen is a term used for a woman who is very demanding or acts like she is especially privileged in some way. The term is also used for women who make problems for themselves by first behaving in an interfering manner – or for those who don't get their own way

– and then ask to see the manager or call the police for no good reason. Karen is the stereotypical prejudiced, screaming, interfering and insufferable middle-aged woman, often characterised as having a plump figure and a short hairdo.

Seen a funny story about a fence in the news? Let us know via team@fencingtimes.com



Elderly couple escape death as fencing panel falls off truck

In Poulton-le-Fylde, a village near the English seaside resort of Blackpool, an elderly couple escaped death in June, according to the local tabloid press, when a fence panel fell off a pick-up truck driving in front of them. And when the tabloid press write about someone's narrow escape from death, you know very well that their car probably just got a bit scratched. Well, in this case it was rather more than a scratch. The panel fell from the pick-up truck onto the bonnet of the couple's Vauxhall Meriva, which sustained a dent, but then it bounced against the front windscreen and burst it. The elderly couple were showered in splinters of glass and were extremely shocked, but not injured at all (not even slightly). The driver of the pick-up truck

stopped a bit further on, but after a while he didn't feel like waiting any longer and drove off. According to the report, the couple followed police advice to remain in the car because it would be too dangerous to get out onto the busy road. They couldn't read the number plate at that distance and told the newspaper how upset they are that they cannot recover damages from the fencing installer.

But the latter is of course utter nonsense. Because whoever is to blame for this accident – it's by no means the fencing installer in the pick-up truck. We can be sure of that because fencing installers always secure their loads properly. They really do. It's simply not possible that the load would come loose because a fencing installer failed to secure it properly. What

is possible though – and even likely – is that the lashing strap broke during the journey. After all, that does happen from time to time. Or the panel supplier used too few or too weak straps to bundle the panels together. That also happens. So in all probability the manufacturer of the straps or the manufacturer of the fencing panels is to blame for this accident. Another possibility is that the lashing strap vibrated loose because there were too many potholes in the road. In that case, the road authority is at fault. And besides, the couple in the Meriva obviously didn't maintain enough distance. Everyone knows you need to keep your distance in traffic. If you're driving behind a loaded vehicle, you have to keep even more distance than usual,

something that everyone also knows. Through no fault of the driver, something can always happen to cause a load to come loose. So perhaps it's also simply the Meriva driver's own fault. And, of course, it was only logical for the fencing installer to drive off. Time is money and if fences need to be put in the ground, a fencing installer is not going to sit and twiddle his thumbs by the side of a busy road. Certainly not, if no one has been injured. It was good of him even to have waited a bit first, to see if anyone got out of the car.

Nevertheless, we wish the elderly couple a speedy recovery from their traumatic experience and hope for their sake that their Meriva won't cost too much to put right. ■

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- You work in an accurate manner with an eye for detail and you enjoy immersing yourself in a subject
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- Preferably, you have the ability to write well or would enjoy learning to do so, but this is not a firm requirement
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If interested, call Rembrandt at +49 173 6038627 or e-mail to rembrandt@fencingtimes.com. 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.

