

FENCING TIMES

XL Edition

2024, Issue 13

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Often you are too scared

“What, wood? Do you want a fence made of wood? Do I look like a carpenter? We do not have wooden fences here, go somewhere else. Bye.” It is an answer a customer can get just like that when walking into an arbitrary fencing company. And not just for wooden fencing. *“Agricultural or wildlife fencing is rotten stuff to put up and the margins are low, we don’t get involved with that,”* we have heard many times here at the editorial office. As well as: *“detection fencing gives far too many false alarms, it will only cause trouble,”* and *“ornamental fencing we don’t do either, because people who order ornamental fencing whine about every scratch.”*

So what else do we have? Wire mesh? *“Well no, that’s from the old days.”* High-security fencing? *“We do not do that either. Far too much lugging around with heavy prison mats and the razor wire will cut open your hands.”* Guide rails then? *“Are you crazy? Way too boring, all those kilometres straight along the motorway.”* Is there anything left? So what fences do you put up? *“Well um, double bar of course!”*

We exaggerate a little. The average fencing contractor can erect more than one type of fencing - and does so regularly. But it is noticeable that by no means every fencing company has all types of fencing in its catalogue.

Double rod, bar fencing and wire mesh can actually be done by anyone. However, the number of fitters who can still properly assemble wire mesh fencing is decreasing.

Mortise fencing is also being offered by more and more fencing contractors because demand for it is growing so fast. But we also know fencers who primarily install agricultural and wildlife fencing, passing up all other jobs. Or those who only put up wooden fences. Or only ornamental fencing.

Sometimes this is a very conscious choice. Of course there is nothing wrong with that in itself. If you specialise in one type and are a true professional in that type, customers from the extended area will come to you and you will obtain every job in that area because you can deliver the best quality at the best price.

But often it is also something that has just developed that way, without really thinking about it. You learnt to fence from your supervisor, so you can install the fences he could install. There is no fence worker who first went to fencing school, where he learnt how to set every type of fence there is - because there is no such school.

And then you stayed with those fencing types. Once you started for yourself, those were the types you offered to your customers. You knew where to buy them and how to install them. You knew how long it takes to install them - and so you could calculate the bid.

Anything that is different is difficult, awkward, and sometimes complicated. A customer asking for a fencing type that you have never installed before is tricky. You have to look for a supplier, you have to figure out





exactly what materials, accessories, and fasteners you need, and then you have to estimate how long the install will take - and hope you do not miscalculate hopelessly. So you pass it up and thank them for the job.

In itself it is all very logical, but at the same time it is also a shame. If you talk a customer, who would be satisfied with a simple mesh fence, into a double bar fence because you do not have installers who can put up a mesh fence, for example, then that customer has to spend more money than necessary and is less happy. Or he goes to a competitor and then you are less happy. Especially if it is a regular customer who regularly ordered fencing from you and now stays with that competitor.

And that while it is often unnecessary to say no to a customer who wants a fence that you do not yet have in your catalogue. Because every fence is the same. You have to put posts in the ground and place padding against or between them. The most difficult part is making sure all the posts are in line, at the right height and at the right spacing. If you can do this with steel posts, you can also do it with wooden posts, concrete posts, or aluminium posts. And vice versa. Everything else is secondary, it just involves some figuring out.

And although fencers - in the absence of fencing school - often have the idea that they have to invent and learn everything themselves, in practice this is not really so bad. Those who dare to ask, get quite a lot of answers.

Manufacturers and other suppliers understand quite well that not every fencer can assemble all fencing types. They do not think you are dumb if you ask how to install, or calculate, their product. On the contrary:

they are happy that you want to sell it for them and will be happy to help you as a colleague.

There are also several Facebook groups for fence workers. If you join those, you can ask colleagues for advice. Most fencers enjoy sharing their knowledge with you and are happy if they can be of service to a colleague.

And even customers can help you. If you ask them honestly if you can do the installation at an hourly rate, because you don't install the fence you order especially for them on a daily basis and therefore don't have experience with the installation time, chances are they will say yes, because they see that you are committed to them.

It does take a bit of perseverance. Not everything is successful the first time, in fact that applies to everything in life. But the more you try, the faster you will know if and whether you can make money from something. The more fencing types you can set, the more customers you can serve. And the better a customer is served, the more he is willing to pay a competitive price for it.

Feel free to try it out - and send us pictures of the end result, if it worked out. We would love it! ■

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CIRCULATION:

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

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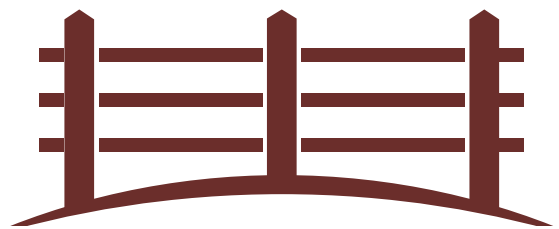
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FENCE POST

Michel@Hofman

Michel Hofman of Zoetermeer company Hofman Hekwerk in the Netherlands made this stunning gate. The project was a major collaboration: The design came from architect VVKH from Leiden, the wood was supplied by Foreco in Dalfsen, Vrijeban Beton in Delft produced the concrete pillars, Struyk from Berkel en Rodenrijs provided the zinc end caps for the pillars, and Blijleven from Pijnacker made the letterbox with the house number. Hoogendoorn from the village of Hazerswoude took care of the electrics, Van Tol from Berkel en Rodenrijs paved the driveway, and Kiestra from Eindhoven supplied the access control. "Versatile through collaboration," Michel commented - and that's a fact. Thanks for sending it in!



Marco@Hadra

Marco Herzog from Hadra's Philipsburg branch sent us this photo from Völklingen, in the German state of Saarland. "For years now there's been a gate here, just sitting on its own, waiting for the fence," he writes. That is indeed a strange state of affairs, Marco. Thanks for the photo!







Photo of the month

We received this photo from Gerd Schmidt of Zaunteam Hamburg-Ost, showing a two-colour aluminium fence he installed. The customer then added his own lighting, creating this superb result.

Thanks for the photo, Gerd! This month's Locinox radio is heading to Hamburg.

Would you also like the chance to win a Locinox construction radio? Send your best photos to foto@fencingtimes.com.

Hörmann mourns senior chief

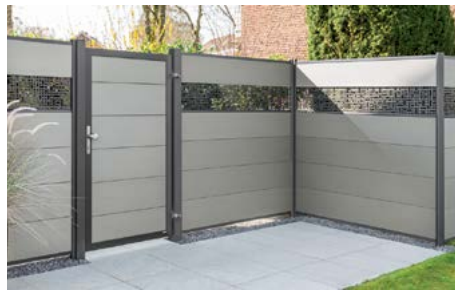
Hörmann of Steinhagen near Bielefeld, a German door and gate manufacturer, is mourning the death of Senior chief Thomas Hörmann, who died on 22 March – according to the press release – after a long and fulfilled life.

Thomas Hörmann was the third generation in the family business, founded in 1935 by August Hörmann under the name Bielefelder Stahltürenfabrik. After completing his engineering education in 1963, he immediately joined the company, which, under his leadership, grew into a global player with production sites in Belgium, Canada, China, France, India, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States and with annual sales of more than a billion euro. After his father's death in 1994, he ran the company with his sons Martin and Christoph. In recent years, he increasingly left day-to-day management to them, while he himself dealt mainly with new construction projects, investments in the production sites and new products. Until his death, he could be found at the Steinhagen headquarters almost every day.

Thomas Hörmann is praised and remembered in the company for his human warmth, his high degree of responsibility, his broad entrepreneurial outlook, and his courage: *“With his exemplary motivation, his extraordinary expertise, and his admirable energy, he led the Hörmann Group to its current international significance. He coached many employees in their careers at Hörmann and was a direct point of contact and role model, always with the firm conviction that the employees are the basis for success and are the ones who make the difference.”*

Thomas Hörmann was 85 years old. ■





AFI organises Best Practice Day in Sussex



In mid-March, the UK's Association for Fencing Industries (AFI) held a Best Practice Day around agricultural fencing. At the event, the finalists from previous editions of various UK fencing championships shared their tips and tricks for installing both wooden and steel agricultural fencing.

"We see differences in quality – sometimes big ones – in the agricultural fences that are being put into the ground across the country," CEO Pete Clark says. "That's only logical – there's no 'fencing school'; everyone installs fences the way their foreman taught them to do it, and not everyone had the same foreman. But a bad fence can give the whole industry a bad name, and if the customer isn't familiar with the differences in quality it means there's unfair competition. That's why we've organised this event."

The Best Practice Day was held on the grounds of Plumpton College, an agricultural school in Lewes in the south of England. About 100 fencing installers got together there to view – and to discuss, as good fencers should – various techniques for tensioning wire and mesh, and building braces and corners.

Installers Rob Bell, Jono Bradley, James Corbett, Mark Evans, Nic Quan, Peter Redgwell, Rory Samson and Charlie Wright – all of them finalists from previous editions of the British Open Fencing Championship, the UK Fencing Timber Championship or the Tornado Wire Fencing Competition – had volunteered to act as trainers. They took the participants through various demo setups to explain how they worked. AFI director Pete Clark gave a 30-minute seminar on how to make a sound calculation, and a representative of LineSearch explained where and how to make a free enquiry about whether there are cables and pipes in the ground at a particular location.

The event was sponsored by wildlife mesh manufacturer Tornado Wire and timber post supplier Scanpole, each of which also had a stand at the event where they answered questions on the best or fastest ways to install their products. It cost next to nothing to take part, with an entrance fee of 10 pounds sterling, that was only charged so a caterer could make cheeseburgers for everyone at lunchtime.

"We can reflect on a very successful day," Clark says. "We discussed lots of different topics, and learnt a lot from each other. I've had a lot of positive feedback, so we'll definitely be doing this more often, possibly in other parts of the country. We might be able to organise something around the next edition of the Fencing Awards in Newcastle, but we're also considering Edinburgh." Fencing Times will keep you posted. ■



Bydsyd post now suitable for stainless steel cables

Bydsyd, the Austrian post manufacturer behind the eponymous Bydsyd post, is expanding its range with a Bydsyd post suitable for stainless steel cables. This allows customers to give a railing or balustrade the same look as their fence.

The Bydsyd post consists of two rolled steel sections, which are welded between a base plate and a cover cap. When assembled, the mesh panels simply slide between the two sections. They rest on studs on the inside of the section. Furthermore, special self-developed screws are already invisibly pre-installed in the section.



As soon as these are tightened with the special Bydsyd spanner, the sections are pulled together and the wire panels are clamped.

“Assembly is super fast, and no screws or bolts can be seen on the outside,” says developer Eduard Holzbauer. “This means you can put up a complete fence – of 10, 100 or 1000 linear metres – without needing a single screw, clamp bar, bracket, or anything else to attach the mesh panels. You do not even need to install a cover cap. It is a great system because parts you do not need to install can never be missing and you do not have to throw away their packaging material. You do not even need a clamping section when mounting plastic privacy strips, they just end in the post. And best of all: you do not have to think about which neighbour gets to see the best side, because both sides look the same.”

The Bydsyd post is available as an intermediate post, corner post for 90- and 45-degree angles, end post and as a gate post for garden gates. *“For both single and double garden gates, no mesh strips or other connection sections are needed, and the gates are delivered fully assembled,”* says Holzbauer.

In the new railing variant of the Bydsyd post, an aluminium block is clamped between the two special sections. This block has a hole through which the railing's stainless steel cable is then pulled. *“In the past, we often made stainless steel railings and balustrades in our workshop,”* says Holzbauer. *“Now recently we had a customer who needed both a fence and a railing and wanted both in the same style.”*

We obviously wanted to use our Bydsyd post for the railing, so we had to produce something to make it suitable for stainless steel cables as well. With the clamped aluminium block, we succeeded. And as you can see, we now also have special caps with brackets for a railing tube.”

Like Bydsyd's standard posts, the new handrail post is also available in all desired heights. Customers can select the number of stainless steel cables themselves and the aluminium blocks are produced and assembled accordingly. ■



Eduard Holzbauer with his colleague Bettina
(Photo: Johannes Puch)



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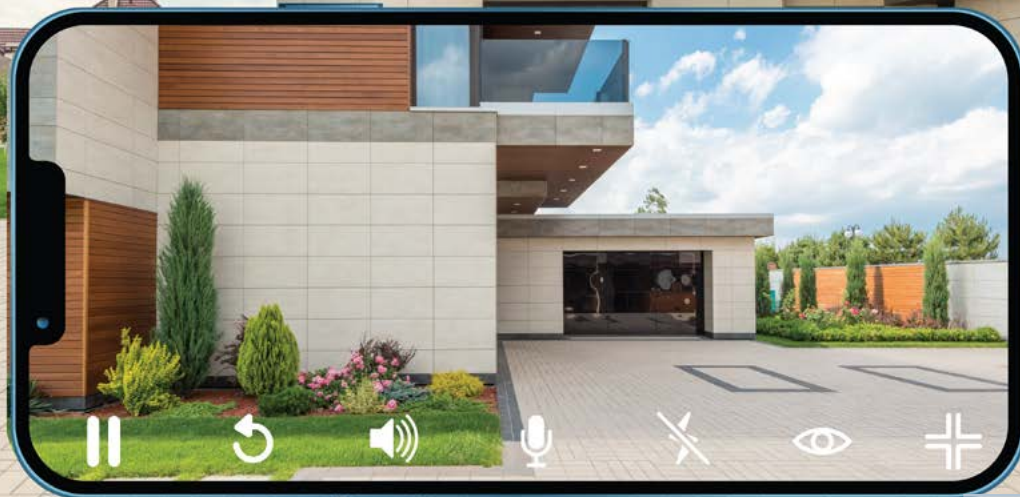
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Remootio adds camera option to its gate opener

Hungarian gate opener manufacturer Remootio, based in Budapest, presented two new cameras at R+T this February. With these cameras, users of the Remootio gate opener will be able to use the app to see who's at the gate before they open it.

“We had more and more customers asking us which cameras were compatible with our app,” says Csaba Szántó, one of the company's founders. “As a result, we looked into whether we could make the app compatible with existing cameras on the market. It turned out to require a lot of customisation. Our research showed that it would be easier to add our own camera to the range, so that's what we've done.”



REMOOTIO

Remootio gate openers are small boxes that can be connected to a gate drive's controls. They connect to a mobile phone via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. When the gate owner is in the vicinity of the gate, their phone connects to the Remootio and they can open the gate using the Remootio app. "Remootio is the successor to the old-fashioned GSM module," Szántó says. "Thanks to Bluetooth the gate always works, even if the internet's down or there's no Wi-Fi signal. When the internet does work, then not only is the customer able to operate the gate from anywhere in the world, but they can also see on their phone whether the gate is open or closed."

ACCESS CONTROL

Not only is the owner able to open and close the gate, but they can give access to others as well. "It works with keys," Szántó says. "They're digital keys and are only on the Remootio and the owner's phone – they're not stored in the cloud. The owner is able to create up to 20 keys on their phone, and share them with others. The times that each user can enter can be programmed individually. For example, the owner's family could have 24-hour access, their best friends during daytime only, and the gardener only on Saturday mornings. On top of that, the gardener's access can be limited so that, for example, he's only able to open the gate via Bluetooth when he's standing in front of it, and he can't operate it via the internet. Keys can also be programmed to expire, so that they no longer work after a certain date. This is handy for people who rent out their homes via Airbnb, for example." Remootio openers can be supplied with an optional button, which can be programmed to operate as a doorbell or a gate opener.



CAMERAS

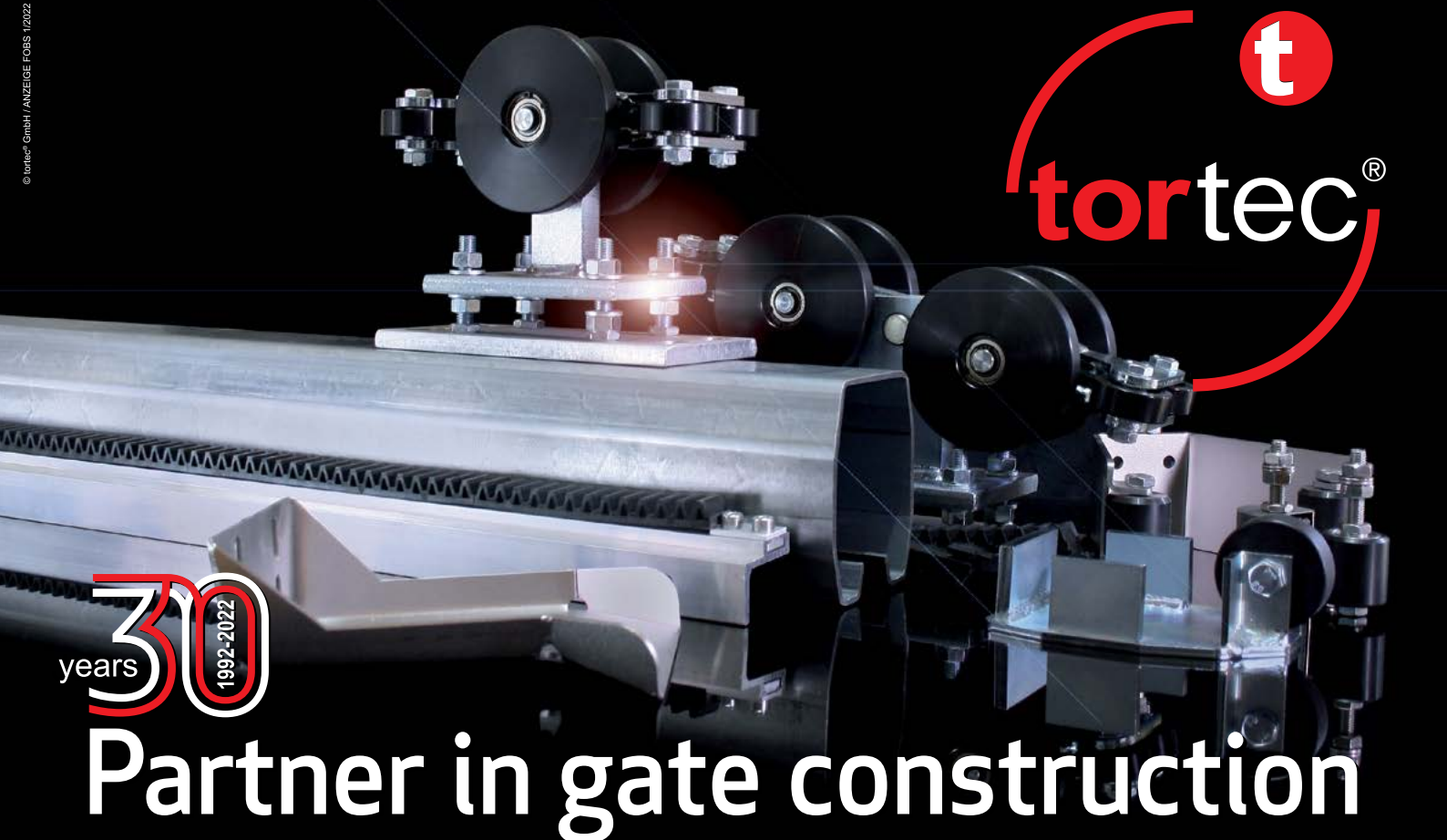
Since the R+T, Remootio users have had the option of adding two different cameras to their setups. These two cameras are actually the same camera, in two different housings. One is a waterproof housing for outdoor use, and the other a slightly smaller and less expensive model for indoors. *"It can be used in the garage, for example," Szántó says, "or on the kitchen windowsill."* Thanks to the cameras, users can keep an eye on the gate via the Remootio app. *"It's handy when a delivery guy comes along. When he rings the bell, you can open the gate for him and then keep an eye on things to make sure he doesn't drive over your plants. And if you can't, or don't want to, connect the limit switches, you can now use the camera to see whether the gate is closed."*

FEATURES

Remootio's indoor and outdoor camera both contain the same 4-megapixel camera with a resolution of 2560 by 1440 pixels. Both also include a speaker and microphone, enabling two-way audio. *"Via the app you can tell a delivery guy where to leave a parcel, for example, or tell a burglar to get lost," Szántó says.* Both cameras include an infrared light for night vision. The outdoor camera has a spotlight as well, which can be turned on and off via the app. The camera operates over both Wi-Fi and Ethernet. There is no need for a separate cable connection from the camera to the Remootio gate opener; when both are connected to the same network, the Remootio automatically establishes a connection. Once that is in place, you can configure the cameras using the app. ■



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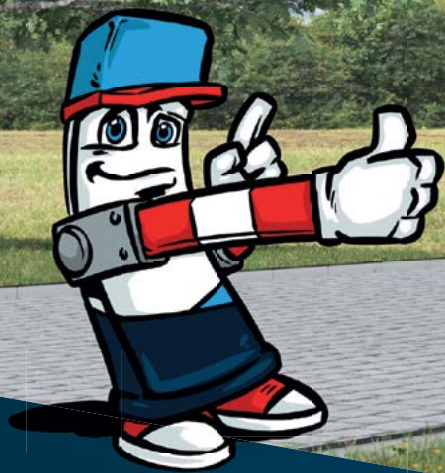
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Profex builds configurator for plug-in fencing

Fast quotes and a greater chance of an order

The German fencing manufacturer Profex from Uetze near Hanover put a configurator for its plug-in fencing online in March. With it, fencers can quickly design the fence with their customers and then make a quote with a single click.

“We wanted to develop a quotation tool that would save fencers a lot of work and at the same time significantly increase the chances of an order,” says managing director Marcel Aehlig. “That has become the Mein Zaun – German for ‘My Fence’ – configurator.”

QUICKLY

“Until now, selling plug-in fencing has been a fairly long process,” Aehlig continues. “The fencer advises the customer about the options, whereupon the customer lets him know which models he is interested in. The fencer then calculates all the materials needed and, if necessary, requests a quote for this himself. He then types this quote into his own software and sends out the quote he has generated – sometimes a week or more after having visited the customer. And then, with a little bit of bad luck, that customer has already ordered somewhere else in the meantime. With the configurator, that trajectory changes completely. The customer sees in real-time what his fence will look like and what it will cost. The fencer immediately sees how the customer reacts on the configuration and can respond immediately.”



Marcel Aehlig

“Online customers become fencing customers again”

SALES EXPERIENCE

“The sales process thus becomes much more of a sales experience for the customer,” Aehlig continues. “Especially if you also set up a consultation lounge, with a comfortable sofa and a big screen, where the customer can relax with a cappuccino so he can completely concentrate on his fence. But of course it also works without that consultation lounge. You can also turn your screen around at the counter, and if you are at the customer's home, the configurator works on your tablet as well. The point is: you can configure a 40-metre fence within a minute and easily show a few different alternatives. You can immediately remove or respond to any reservations the customer may have. We feel it is important that the customer does not leave before he has signed – and with the new configurator, the chances of that are greatly increased. And that has not even mentioned the timesaving of material calculation yet.”

ONLINE BUYERS

The second big advantage of the Mein Zaun planner, according to Aehlig, is that it also brings in customers. “Some of the customers who used to go to a specialist dealer now buy on the internet,” he says. “They no longer think of going to a fencing dealer nearby. They want

to sit on the couch in the evening with their iPad on their lap and select their fence there. That is why the new Mein Zaun planner has its own website, where private customers can configure their new fence themselves just by clicking. However, that private customer cannot buy anything in the configurator; we send his configuration to a fencing partner in the vicinity of that private customer. Using their own dealer login, our partners can then add installation costs to complete the quote. With one click they can then create a quote, which looks like it comes from the fencer's ERP system. Complete with logo, contact details, opening hours and contact person. This is how we bring the online buyers back to the fencers.”

CONFIGURATOR

When launched in March, the configurator included Profex's complete range of plug-in fencing, with infills of PVC, glass, wood-polymer composite, rice-grain composite, and aluminium. “Right now it includes more than 1500 different elements,” says Aehlig. “Piece by piece, of course, we keep adding parts. Our representatives are already fully introducing it to all partners and the reactions are downright positive. And from now on, we can continue to develop the configurator together with our fencing partners so that it becomes and remains an important sales tool.” ■





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Frog-X: the new underground drive from Came

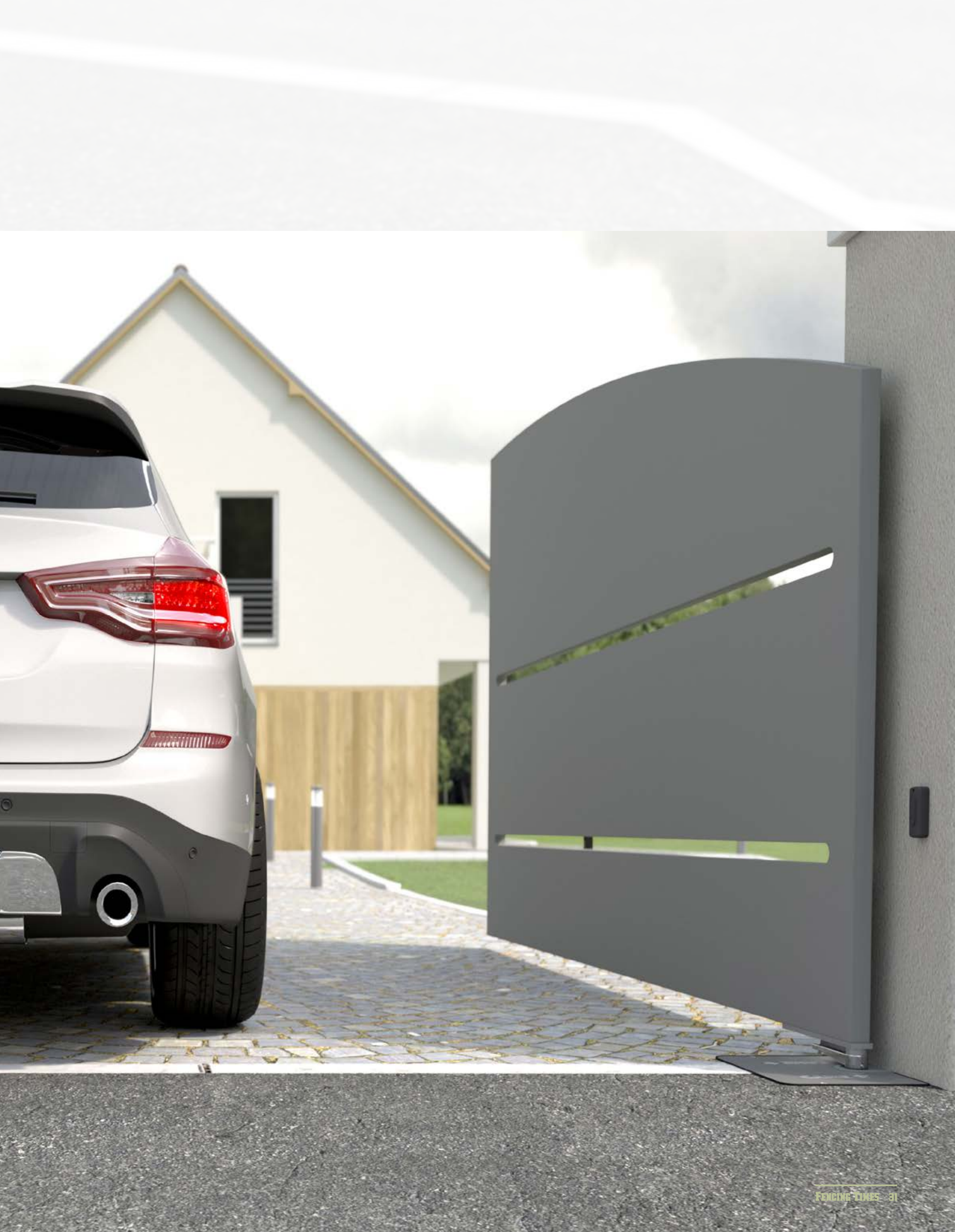
This winter, Italian drive manufacturer Came added a new version of its underground swing gate drives to its range. The Frog-X features a brushless motor and hardened steel transmission, and fits into the existing Frog casing.

“**T**o stand still today is to go backwards,” says Kieran Harrod, marketing manager of the UK Came branch in Castle Donington, just outside Nottingham. “Our existing line of Frog motors is leading the underground drive market, but naturally we want to keep on innovating and ensure that we continue to supply products that are going to stand the test of time for the next generation of installers. This mindset has produced the Frog-X: the most advanced drive we’ve ever made.”

BRUSHLESS

The new Frog-X features a brushless motor. “Not only does that reduce wear and tear,” Harrod says, “but it also allows you to determine the gate leaf’s opening and closing positions even more precisely. On top of that, the obstacle detection is even more reliable and therefore safer, because the motor’s speed and torque can both be adjusted electronically while it’s moving. We call it ‘Adaptive Speed and Torque’. Then also the brushless motor makes the drive quieter and, above all, faster: a gate leaf now opens 90 degrees in just 10 seconds.” In addition to the brushless motor, the new Frog features a new transmission with gears made from extra-hardened steel. “Connecting it has been made easier too, as there’s no longer a need for an external encoder.”





CAME CONNECT

Like all new Came drives, the Frog-X is compatible with Came Connect. "Connecting a Came Connect Gateway to the Frog-X automatically connects the gateway to the Ethernet via Wi-Fi, 4G or LAN, and you can manage and configure the control system remotely," Harrod says. "When it's time for maintenance or if the gate malfunctions, installers are sent a notification via the system's SetUp App. They are able to view the status of photocells and contact strips, and can easily add handheld transmitters. Via the Automation App, the customer can see whether the gate is open or closed, operate it from anywhere in the world, set timers, send the installer a request for assistance, and lots more."

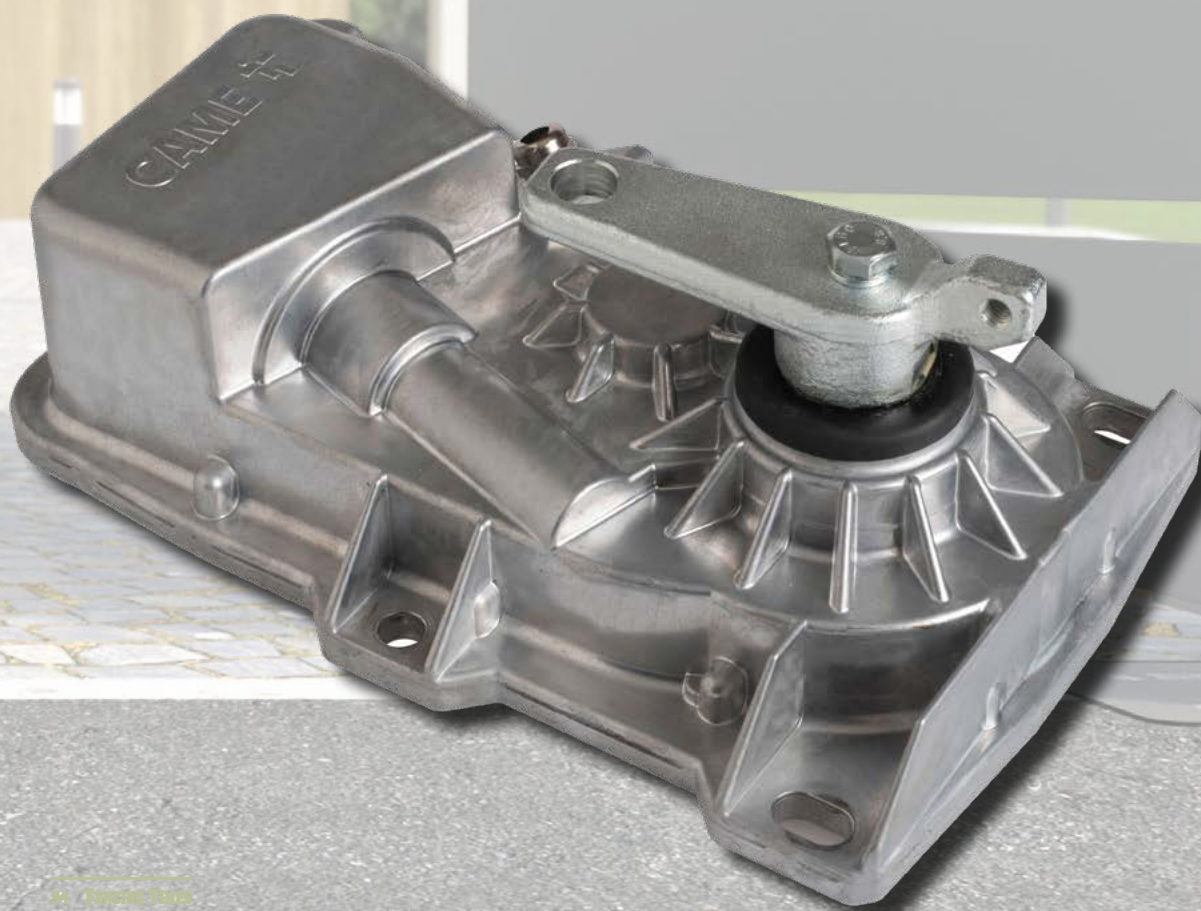
DEVELOPMENT

"Technological advances and product reliability are two of the foundations of our business," Harrod says. "They give us the edge on the competition. That's why we invest massively in R&D – at our headquarters in Dosson di Casier, just outside Venice, we have a development team of 120." There were also a number of installers actively involved in developing the Frog-X. "The lead engineers had a lot of contact with our network of installers. They invited some of them to travel to Italy so they could get together in person to discuss the functions and features the new Frog should have. The installers also gave feedback on which of the potential improvements would be valuable to the largest number of customers. The new Frog-X is completely tailored to the needs and requirements of the market."



RANGE

The Frog-X will join the existing Frog drives on the market. *"The Frog AE, which we offer in both a 230-volt and a 24-volt version, will stay in the range for use by installers who are familiar with the existing technology,"* Harrod says. The new Frog-X runs on 24 volts and is suitable for gate leaves of up to 4 metres wide and weighing up to 400 kilos, or with a maximum leaf weight of 800 kilos and up to 2 metres in width. It is supplied in a new casing that features reinforced welded joints and a mounting pin of high-grade steel. *"The new box is waterproof in line with IP67 – it can be fully submerged – but it also fits into the old casing, so you can retrofit it. It really is the best swing gate drive we've ever produced."* ■



AOS organises 'Hausmesse' in Olpe

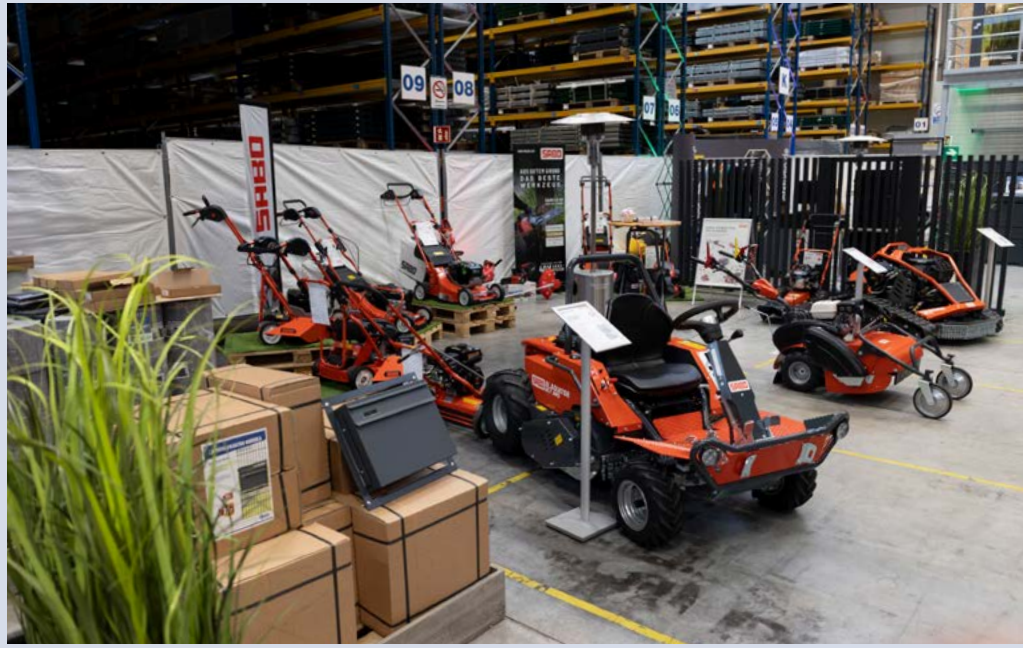
On the first weekend in March, fencing manufacturer AOS-Stahl from Wetter, on the southern edge of the Ruhr Area, welcomed some 800 customers and other visitors to its distribution facility in Olpe on the Autobahn from Dortmund to Frankfurt. The occasion? An in-house trade fair (or 'Hausmesse' as it's known in German).

“We’re always buzzing with ideas here, and we add several products to our range every year,” says founder and CEO Oliver Schake. “In the years that Perimeter Protection is held in Nuremberg we’re able to present our new creations there, so in alternate years we always try to organise our own event.”



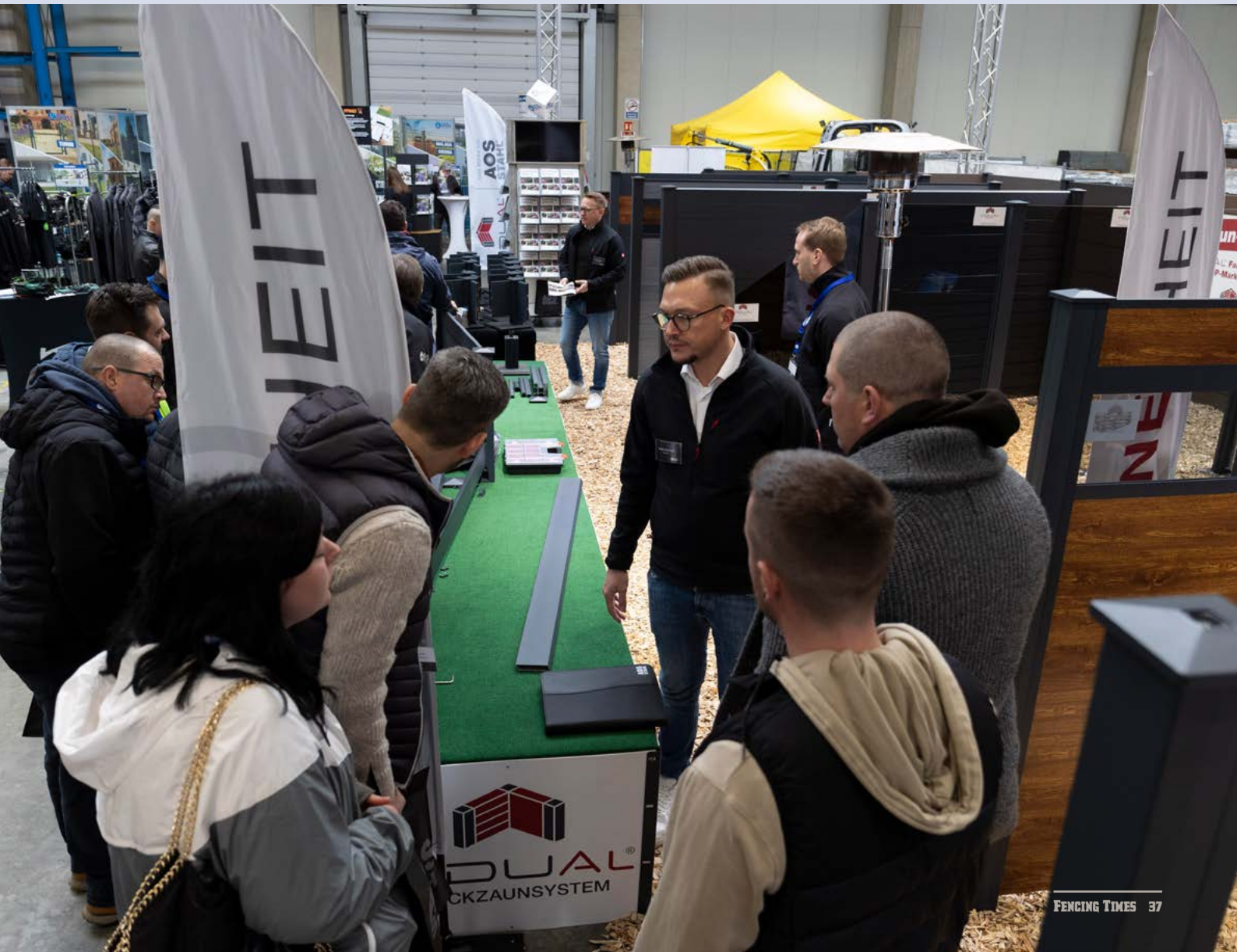
TRADE FAIR

A portion of the shipping hall was emptied out for the trade fair, and AOS exhibited almost all of its range in the space. Obviously they included everything they manufacture themselves, but also products made by regular suppliers such as Locinox and Sommer, both of which attended with their own stands. Dealers of workwear, lawnmowers and hot tubs were there as well. "While the last group doesn't supply the equipment that fencing installers are using on a daily basis," Schake says, "they work outdoors too, often in the garden. Having that fact in common can get discussions going, which in turn helps you, as a fencing installer, to see the customer through someone else's eyes – it means that you broaden your horizons."



VIDUAL

The highlight of the Hausmesse was the presentation of AOS's product brand Vidual. Vidual, developed in-house by AOS, is a new range of aluminium board fencing. It features a universal aluminium post, into which infill can be slotted made of aluminium profiles, wood-plastic composite, lasered aluminium plate, and various glass plates. "The Vidual fence post in particular is really special," Schake says. "We worked on it for almost two years and we've filed two patents for it. You can make 35-degree angles with the intermediate posts, and the end cap locks the infill in place using a clever clamping system, so the infill profiles will never rattle in the wind. It's the best product we've ever made." We'll introduce the Vidual range to you in more detail in the next issue of the Fencing Times.



IN ALIGNMENT

The AOS trade fair ran for three days, from Thursday to Saturday. In addition, on the Friday there was a VIP evening with guests treated to an extensive buffet and a wine tasting. *"It's enormously important for us to be aligned with our clients,"* Schake says. *"We want to know what their customers ask them for, how we can improve on existing products, and the things they're coming up against when they're on the job. These are things that you can only find out if you make the time and opportunity to do so. That's also why we made it a three-day event – to be sure that we'd have enough time for everyone. And we achieved our aim, as far as we're concerned – we had a lot of great discussions. Next year is the Perimeter, but the year after that we'll definitely hold another trade fair."* ■



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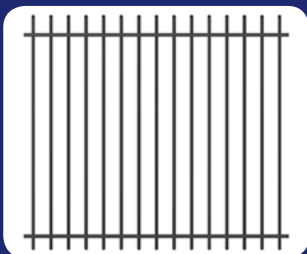
Single Leaf Gates



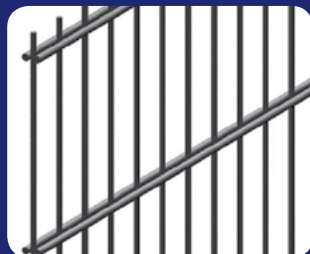
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AFI calls for entries for Fencing Awards 2024

The Association for Fencing Industries (AFI) has announced a new edition of the UK Fencing Industry Awards for this year, with a presentation ceremony in October at Newcastle's St James' Park football stadium.



All winners

“**T**he Awards are a big success,” AFI director Pete Clark says. “Since the first time we held them in 2022, the industry has gained more recognition and there’s more awareness of the value of a good fence. And many of the finalists and winners of previous editions really have been able to score more orders, because they’ve been able to profile themselves as professionals. That’s why we’re going to keep holding the Fencing Awards every year going forward.”

FENCING AWARDS

Fencing installers who want to take part can submit projects for the awards until the end of spring. “We need a brief description that explains why the project was special,” Clark says. “What were the challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them? And obviously we also need photos of the end result. A jury will evaluate all entries this summer and select the winners, which we’ll announce at the ceremony in October.”

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



CATEGORIES

Participants can submit entries in the categories of Agriculture and Equine, Domestic, Gates and Barriers, Highways and Railways, Industrial, Security, Sports and Education, Temporary and Hoarding, Project of the Year and, starting this year, the new category Apprentice of the Year. "We, as AFI, work to coach and train new installers as much as we can," Clark says. "This year, to show the next generation of fencers that their efforts are valued, they'll be given their own category. It's also a way to generate interest in the industry amongst future fencing installers."

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



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



Saint James' Park American Football Stadium



NEWCASTLE

After London and Cardiff, this year it's Newcastle's turn. The 2024 awards ceremony will be held at St James' Park football stadium. "Our members come from across the UK," Clark says. "We want the awards to be accessible to everyone, not for installers from the North to have to travel the whole way to the South every year, so this year we're doing it the other way around." As with previous editions, the organisers looked for a stadium for the ceremony. "Stadiums are ideal for us: the atmosphere is good, there's something to see, there's good catering, and the costs aren't too high. But obviously it doesn't always have to be a rugby stadium; we've chosen a football stadium this time."



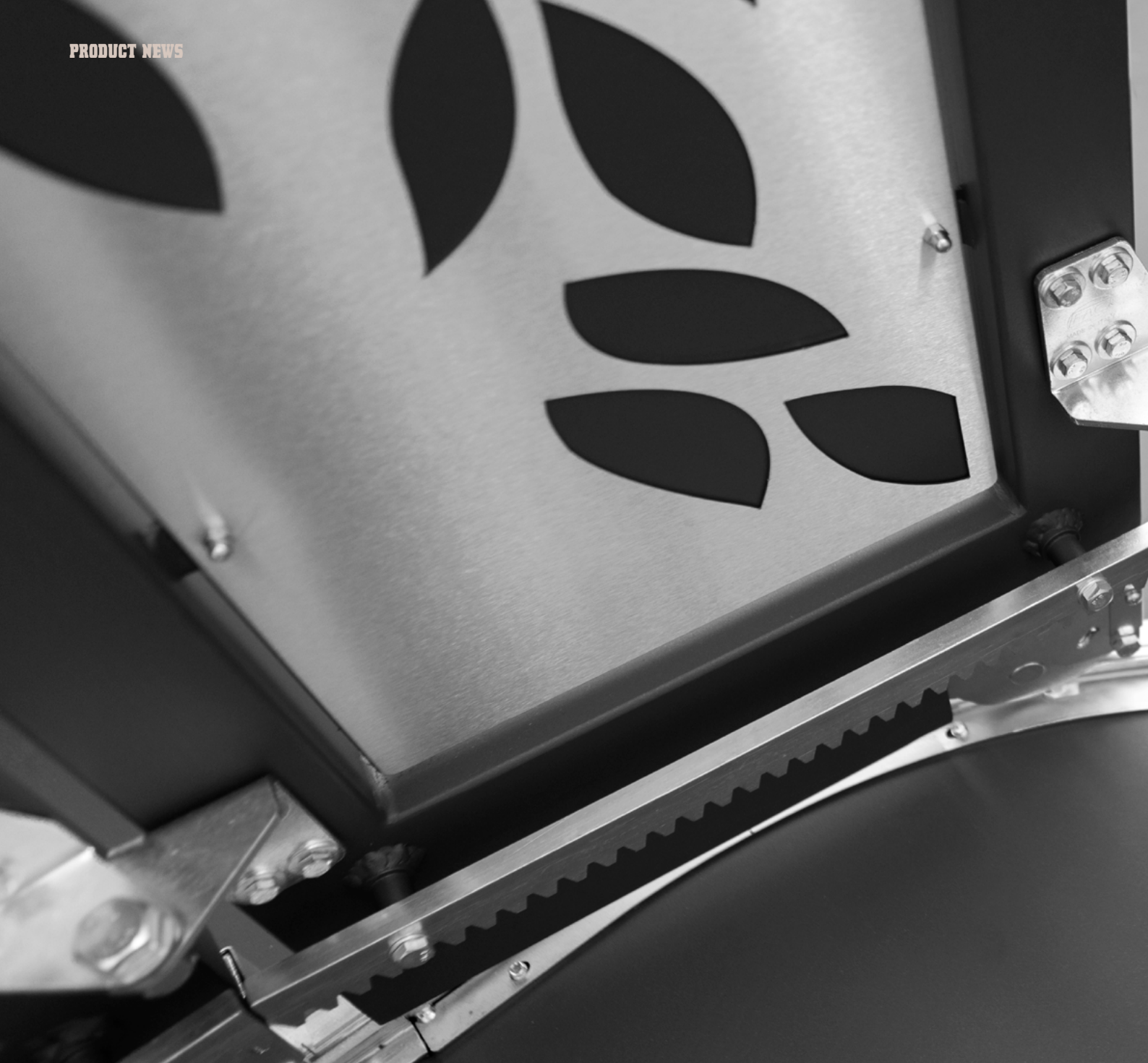
Louise and Charlie Wright of Front Row Fencing, with Chris Hambridge of sponsor McVeigh Parker behind them to the right. Front Row Fencing won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Bravo category (for installers with a turnover of up to 750,000 pounds sterling) with this project, for which livestock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

TAKE PART

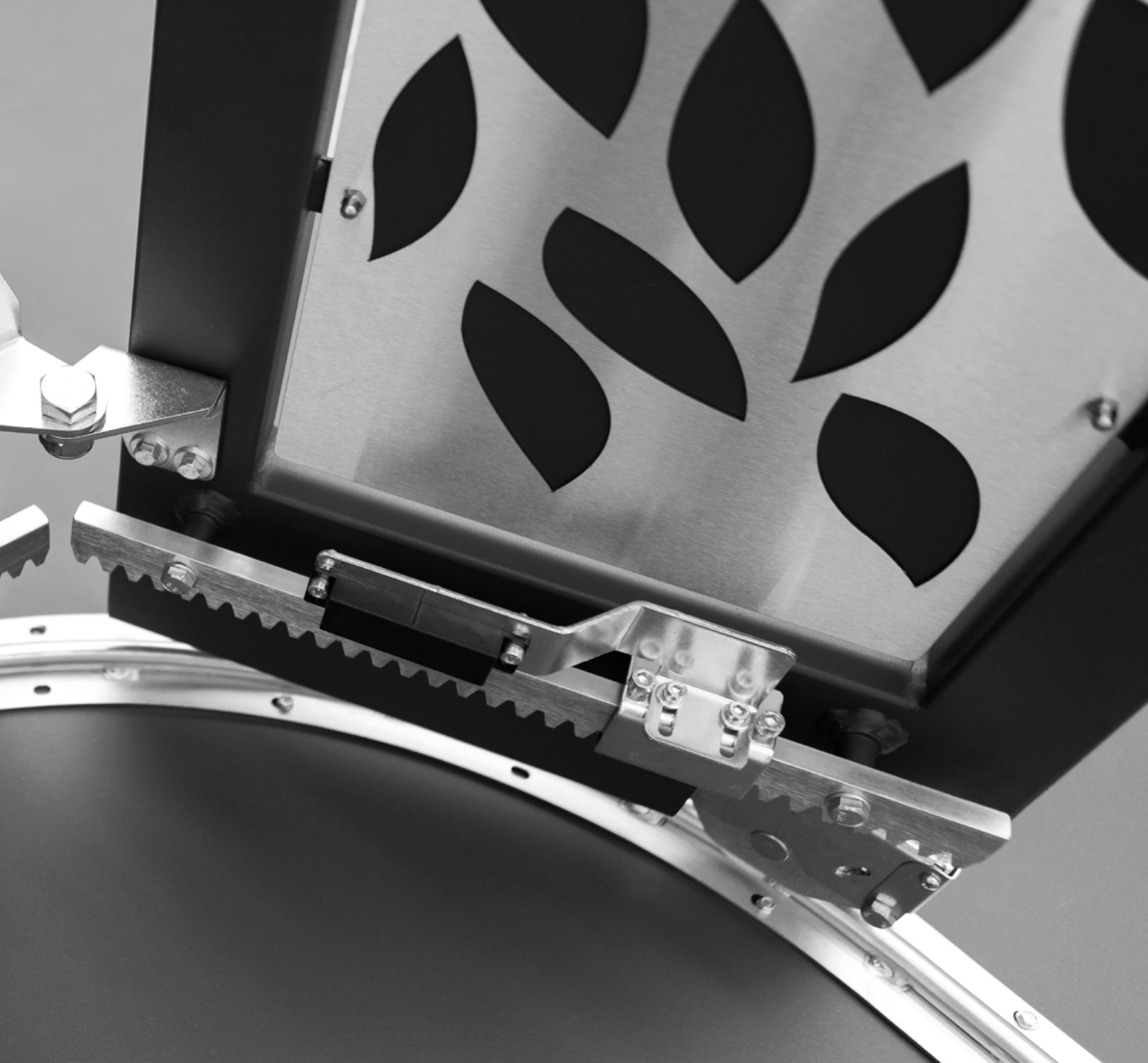
The UK Fencing Awards are open to all fencing companies; you don't need to be an AFI member to take part. "If you think you meet the standard that the market expects, then you're very welcome," Clark says. "It's a fantastic opportunity to give exceptional projects, exceptional installation skills and exceptional apprentices the attention they deserve – and to be appreciated as one of the better fencing companies in the industry. On top of that, you can get lots of new inspiration and make new contacts at the ceremony. Let's raise the bar and celebrate the successes!" Entry is now open. Entries can be submitted via the AFI website. ■

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



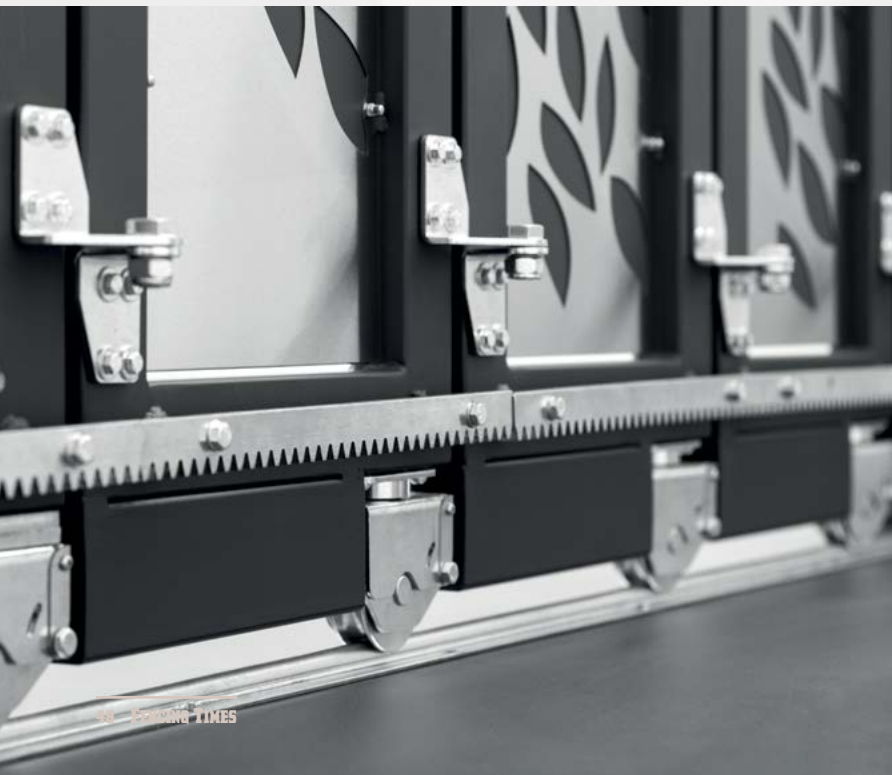
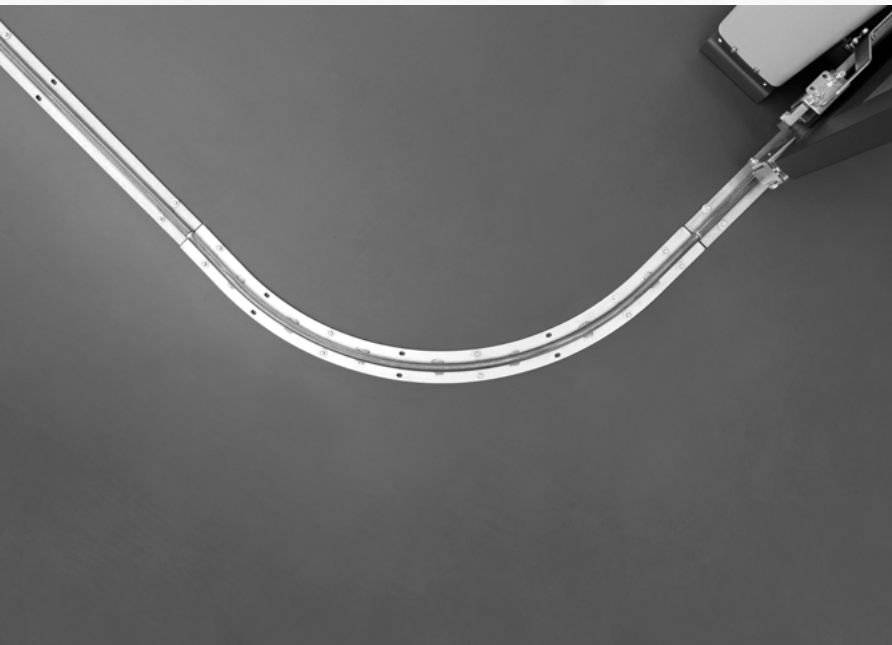
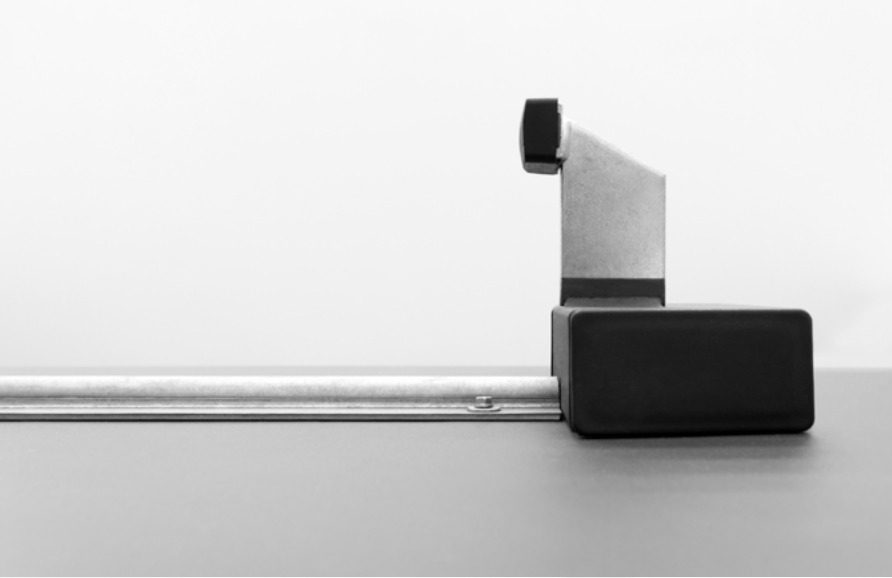


Radius Reverse new kit from FAC for sliding gates



FAC, a gate hardware manufacturer from Isola Vicentina in northern Italy, introduced an updated version of its sectional system Radius at the R+T exhibition in Stuttgart. This new kit is called Radius Reverse and allows for a larger free passage with a reduced footprint.

“The existing Radius kit is ideal to use all the features of sliding gates on narrow driveways without return space,” says managing director Fausto Valente. “When the available space is rather small, though, every centimetre usually counts. That is why we continued to develop the kit, to see how we could make the opening clearance as large as possible.”



RADIUS

The existing Radius Solution is a system that allows a tracked sliding gate to slide on a curved rail. To this purpose, gate builders do not make one long sliding gate leaf but divide it into multiple segments. Those segments each rest on their own wheels and special hinges then join them together. *"The Radius is ideal when you have no return space for a sliding gate and no swing space for the leaves of a swing gate,"* says Valente. *"For example, if the customer wants to be able to park his car immediately behind the gate, that car could be in the way when closing the swing gate leaves. With the Radius, you can build a gate for that customer that slides past the side of that car. It's a solution that can be installed along walls, fences and buildings, allowing for considerable space saving."*

REVERSE

With the new Radius Reverse kit, the guide post and gate drive are located behind the curve. *"The big advantage of this is that the footprint of the gate is much reduced,"* Valente explains. *"This allows you to offer a customer the maximum passage width. Just over eighty per cent of the total available space remains available as free passage with the Radius Reverse."*



KIT

FAC supplies the Radius Reverse in seven different predefined kits, suitable for openings from 2.5 to 6 metres. Each kit includes special hinges to connect the leaves, a 90-degree curved track to steer the gate around the corner, 360-degree swivel wheels that enable driving over a curved rail, a guide plate and an end stop. Each kit comes with extensive documentation on how to assemble all parts and the dimensions of the leaf segments to allow the gate to slide smoothly over the curved rail. The new Reverse joins the programme alongside the existing Radius solution. *"The Reverse is intended for driveways where every centimetre really counts. Both solutions provide high level of performance, the choice of one over the other depends on the objective needs for general space-saving or maximising the opening clearance."* ■



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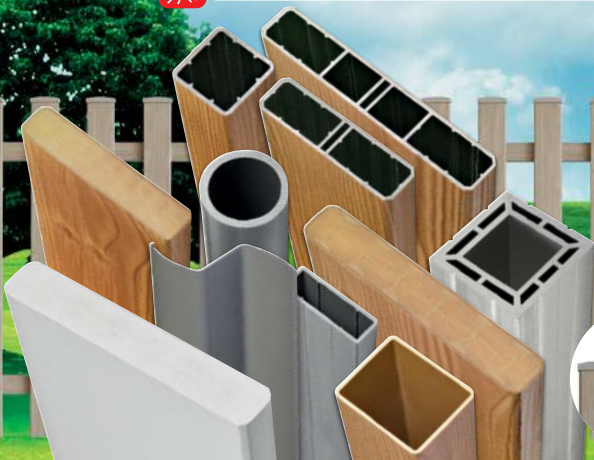
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Betafence presents Securifor Defender

This spring, Betafence is marketing a new type of fencing which is even more difficult to penetrate. Built from two rows of Securifor prison mesh panels, with transverse prison mesh in between, it can delay intruders with a petrol grinder for almost 7 minutes.



“Securifor Defender stems from a custom-made project,” says product manager Kris Van Waes. “We designed it years ago for a project in the Middle East, at that time in an even heavier version. But we now see that the demand for fencing with a larger delay factor is also increasing in Europe. That is why we have now created a standardised version of it and included it in our catalogue.”

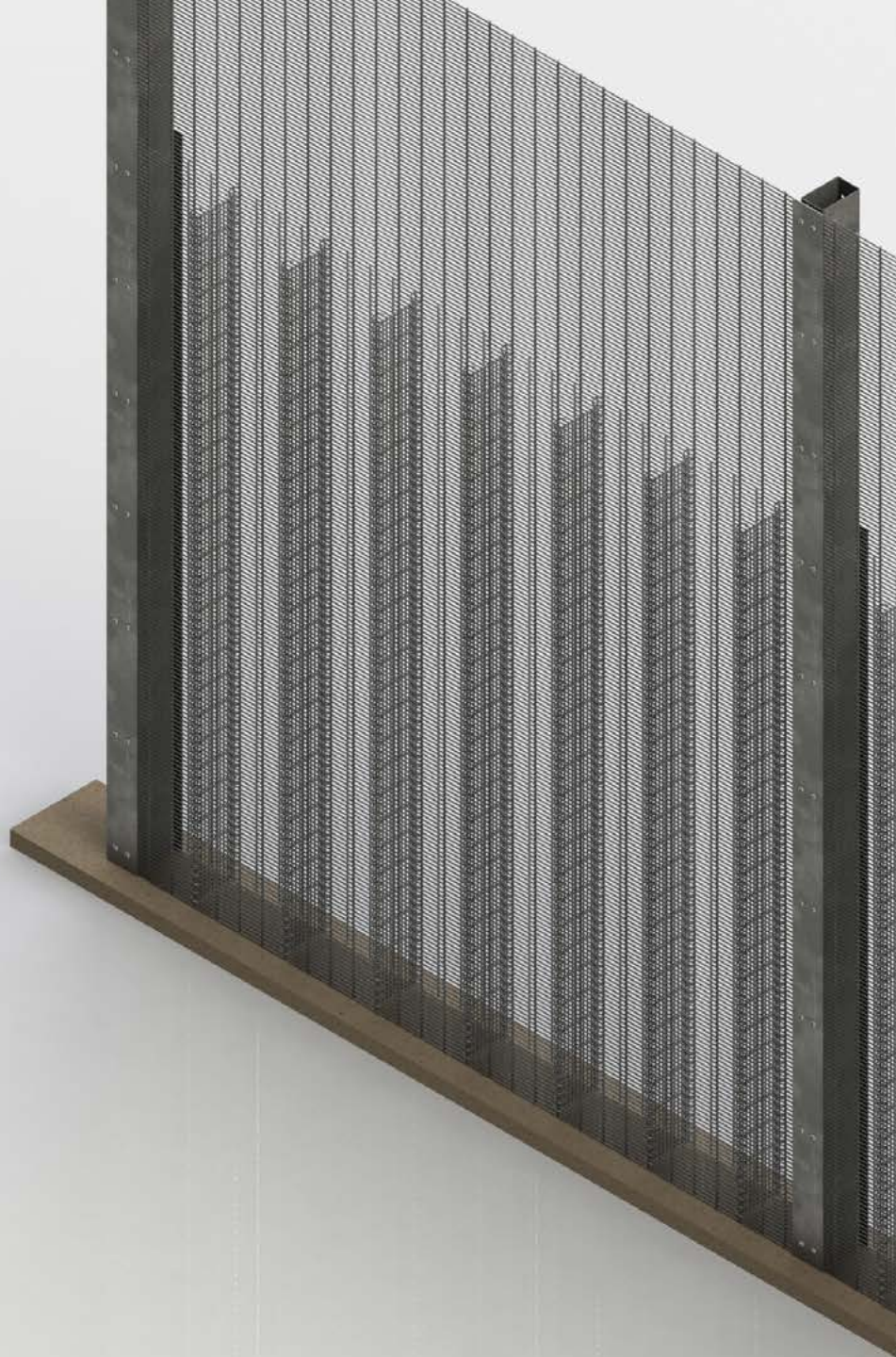
DEFENDER

Securifor Defender consists of posts against which prison mesh panels¹ are mounted on the inside and outside. The space between the two mesh panels is filled with transverse intermediate panels. Securifor Defender has a fence height of at least 3 metres. The outer panel is also embedded 300 millimetres into a continuous foundation to prevent undercutting. The inner panel and intermediate panels are at a standard 2 metres high. The intermediate panels are spaced just under 40 centimetres apart. The mesh panels are attached to the posts with a continuous cover strip.

LONG DELAY

“The major advantage of Securifor Defender is that it creates an extensive delay, while you can still see through it reasonably well,” says Van Waes. *“Having good visibility is incredibly important for security guards, it is the reason for many security experts to choose a fence, rather than a concrete wall. But then it does have to be a fence that delays intruders, giving guards time to get to the scene. And that is the beauty of Securifor Defender: the intermediate panels and the distance between the inner and outer panel make it exceedingly difficult to reach the inner panel with a grinder. The delay time is up to fifteen times greater with Defender than with the other fence types in the Securifor assortment. It is the ultimate delay fence on today’s market.”*

1) Prison mesh panels, best known in Britain where they were designed as 358-mesh (pronounced: three five eight), are single wire mesh panels made of thin wires of almost 4 millimetres (8 gauge) with a mesh size of 3 inches by 0.5 inches. The combination of the small mesh and thin wire makes the panels difficult to climb over, making them popular with prison designers.



*“Securitor Defender is
the ultimate delay fence
on today's market”*



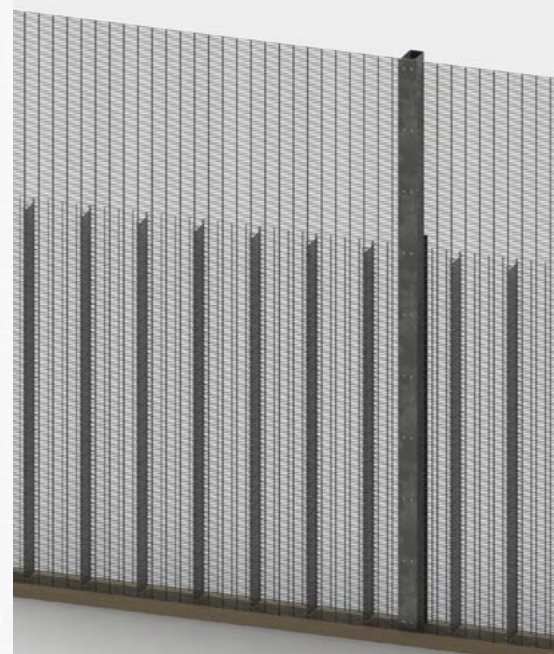


PETROL GRINDER

An independent testing institute assessed the delay of the new system against the requirements of the ASTM F2781 standard. "To meet that standard, it is assessed how long it takes to create an opening in the fence of 600 by 600 millimetres," says Van Waes. "600 by 600 millimetres is considered the smallest opening that an intruder needs to climb through. A distinction is made here between intruders with only simple tools like a crowbar, a hammer and a saw, intruders with heavier tools like bolt cutters and an electric grinder, and intruders with a heavy petrol grinder. To meet the requirements of the standard, you have to stop the aggressive intruders with the petrol grinder for 5 minutes. Securifor Defender does just that: the test team needed 6 minutes and 48 seconds."

AFFORDABLE

This delay is achieved by the Securifor Defender without extortionate costs. "The price is about the same as Securifor Double Skin," says Van Waes. "That has so far been the fencing type in the assortment with the greatest delay. With Double Skin, two prison mesh panels are welded together, with one panel turned 90 degrees. That is also very sturdy, but the system has the disadvantage that you cannot see through it very well since the meshes become exceedingly small at 12 by 12 millimetres. With the Securifor Defender, the distance between the mesh panels ensures that visibility is much better. This makes it an ideal system for high-risk applications, such as oil and gas terminals, data centres as well as prisons."



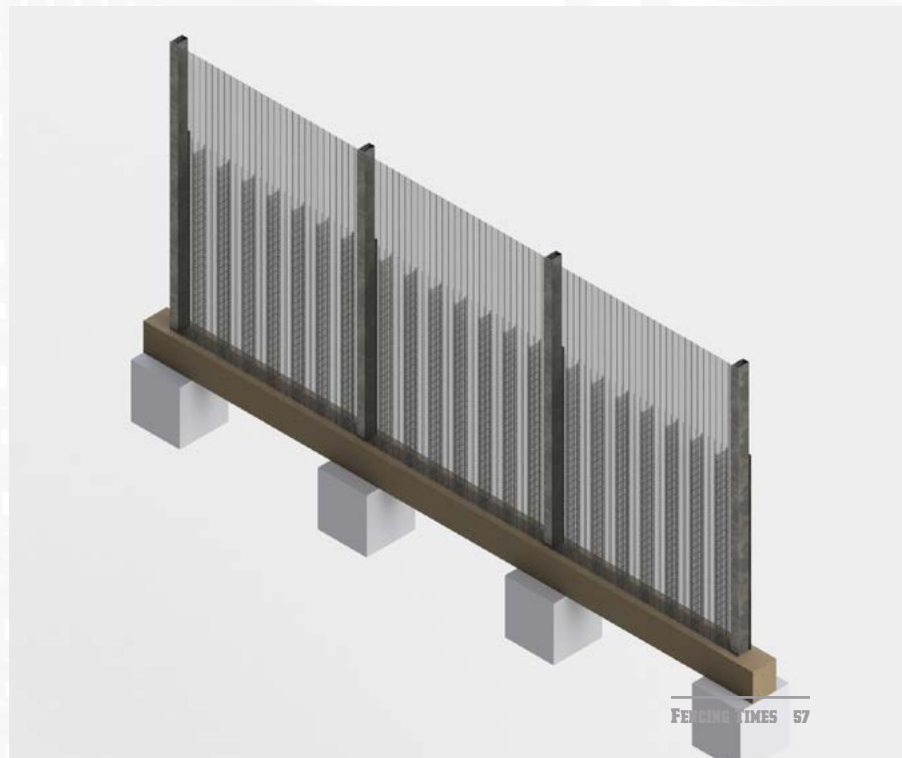
Threat	Tool	Delay in minutes to meet standard	Delay in minutes during test by certification body
Low	Hammer/saw/crowbar		16,7
Medium	Concrete shears/electric grinder	10	13
Agressive	Petrol grinder	5	6,8

FEATURES

The posts of the new Securifor Defender are made of 120-by-80-millimetre box sections. The prison mesh panels are clamped against them on two sides with cover strips, which are secured with bolts in rivet nuts. The intermediate panels are fixed with wire spirals. *“The technology with those wire coils comes from Hesco, a defensive barrier producer and an affiliate company in the Praesidiad group,”* says Van Waes. *“Hesco builds large gabion baskets lined with geotextile, or which fit large bags that can be filled with sand and earth. Hesco baskets are usually sold for military applications, soldiers can use them to quickly build a defensive wall. Because the intermediate panels are less than 40 centimetres apart, there is always a panel in the way for the grinder.”* Standard prison mesh panels are used for the intermediate panels and on the inside. *“The panel on the outside we weld from Zincalu wire, because it will be buried.”*

OPTIONS

The height of 3 metres is the minimum height of the new Securifor Defender. *“Higher is of course also possible, if the situation calls for it,”* says Van Waes. *“And in theory, you could make the fence even stronger by replacing the standard prison mesh with Securifor 2D or 4D panels.”* With 4D, the horizontal wires alternate, while with 2D part of the horizontal wires are doubled. Further options include base plates for the posts and crank extensions for rolls of razor wire. The new fence type is also suitable for Betafence's Smart Fence, a system where detection wires are clicked to the fence in a special cable duct. *“All in all, we are making a big step forward with Securifor Defender. Customers can now offer greater delay and visibility for about the same price.”* ■



Plast-Met adds to range

Polish fencing manufacturer Plast-Met, from Trzebnica near Wrocław, is expanding its range. In addition to steel fencing, the company's portfolio now includes aluminium fencing styles, standardised design elements, and tailor-made design.

“Our development team never stops,” export manager Maciej Radota says. “We have a separate design department that keeps on top of the latest trends, then works with the technicians to develop the models for each new season. This year's focus is on aluminium.”

SODALIT

The first new model in the range is called Sodalit. “It's a palisade fence,” Radota says. “What you see is not posts and sections, but a continuous fence made of identical hollow sections.” Sodalit is available in two versions, known simply as Sodalit 1 and Sodalit 2. Each consists of square sections measuring 60 by 40 or 80 by 40 millimetres, welded to an underground base frame. The welding can be done at various intervals and with either the narrow or the wide side facing forward, to create different effects. Sodalit 1 is available in fencing heights of up to 1500 millimetres, while Sodalit 2 starts at 1500 millimetres in height and has a cross-profile halfway up to keep the upright profiles stable. This horizontal profile is also used in the matching Sodalit swing and sliding gate leaves.





101



Sublimation

In chemistry, sublimation is the process of converting a solid material directly into a gas, without liquefying it first. For example when ice suddenly turns into water vapour without first becoming water, this is known as sublimation. In the world of powder coating, the term is used for a technique in which a powder-coated aluminium or steel product can look like it's actually made of wood or marble. As the first step of the process, the product is given an ordinary coating. After that a film, which has had images printed on it with special ink, is applied to the coating. This film is vacuum-sealed to the coating to ensure that it's firmly attached. The film is then heated in a special oven, so rapidly that the dry ink suddenly becomes a gas and penetrates deep into the polyester coating. Coatings on which this technique is used are also known as Decoral coatings, after the Italian powder-coating company that first applied it on an industrial scale: Viv Decoral, from Arcole near Verona.



HORIZONTAL

In contrast, two other new models consist solely of horizontal profiles. They are Malachit AL and Travertyn AL; Plast-Met already has steel versions of these in its range. For Malachit the infill consists of horizontal profiles measuring 100 by 20 millimetres, while for Travertyn the profiles are 200 by 20 millimetres. Both of these are welded between two vertical profiles, with a small gap, creating a fencing element that can be installed between two posts. Just as with Sodalit, swing and sliding gates with Malachit AL and Travertyn AL infill are available in addition to the fencing.

PORTALUX

The new models are not only available as fences and gates: there's also an entrance portal, called Portalux, available for all three types of fencing. *"There are always customers seeking additional allure or prestige,"* Radota says. *"These customers can combine the new Portalux portal with the pedestrian gate next to the driveway."* The portal has space for lighting, a house number, a letterbox, a parcel box, an intercom, and a full range of access control components. *"The portal is designed in such a way that no additional knowledge or tools are required for assembly. It's something that every fencing installer can do."*

SUBLIMATION

Another new addition to the range: sublimation coatings¹ with wood effect. *"Wood is really popular at the moment,"* Radota says. *"With this process, it's impossible to tell the difference between the aluminium profiles and the wooden boards in the fence. You need to take a very close and careful look to see that it's not real wood."* Plast-Met supplies the special coating in four different patterns: pine, golden oak, silver oak, and black cherry. They can be ordered for the Travertyn AL and Malachite AL models, as well as for some of the steel models in the range. *"Sublimation with wood effect goes with any fence, and it lightens the entire structure."*

¹) See box

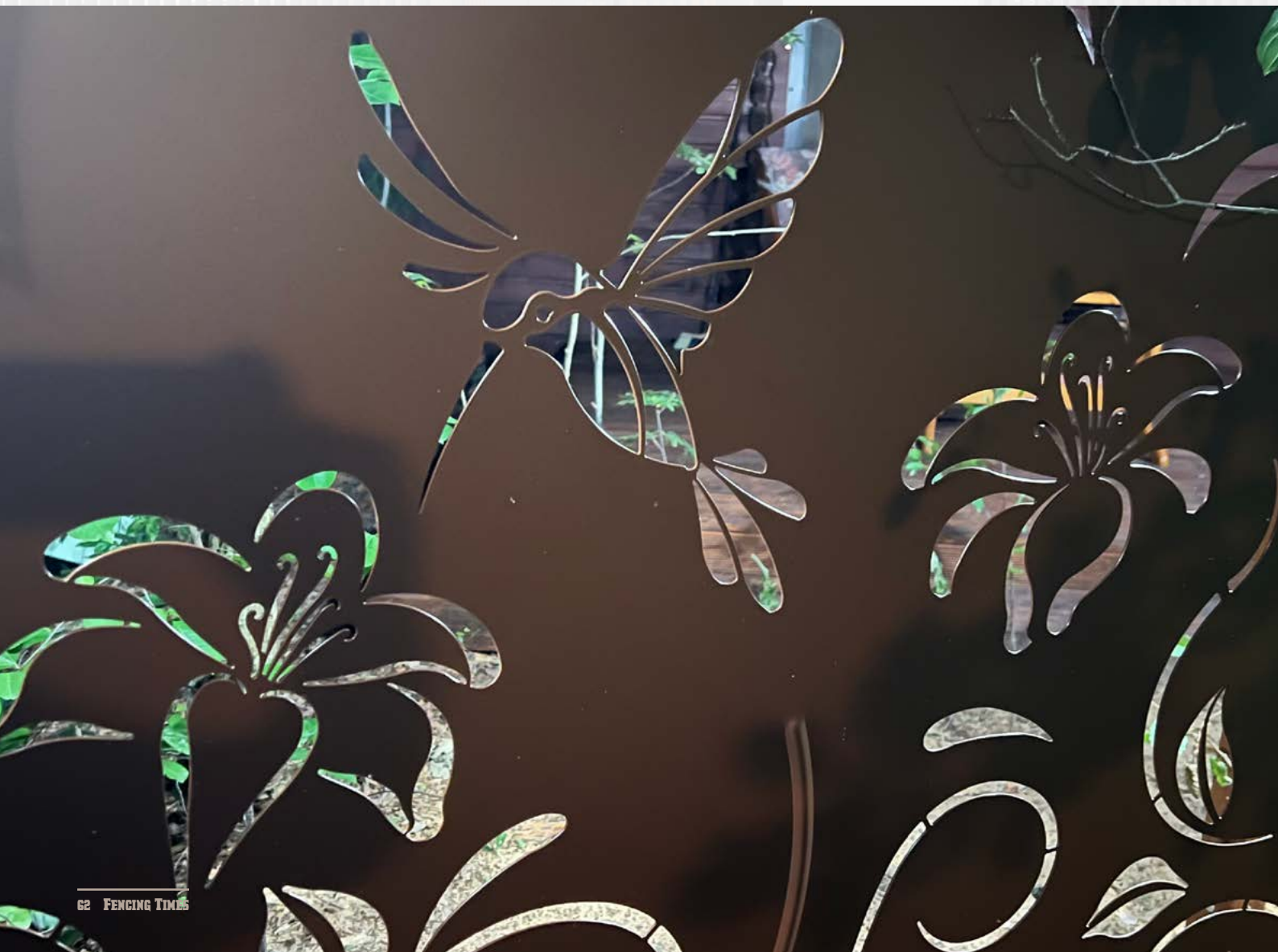


OSKOMA

Oskoma is the name for the process by which the fence for a project is designed and manufactured in a new, standardised way. Radoka explains the new approach: "For Oskoma projects, we ensure that the customer works with a designer. We have our own in-house designers for this, but can also use industrial designers in the area of the project. The important thing is that the designer can take the customer's wishes into account right from the start, designing the fence to match the style of the building or the surroundings. Customised projects don't get more tailor-made than this. The patterns on the fencing panels around a property can be customised to reflect the homeowner's passions or hobbies, or the company's business activities. It creates unique and eye-catching entrances."

Brites

The final addition is the Brites privacy elements. "Brites are elements made of steel plate, from which we've laser-cut designs," Radoka says. "Customers can choose to have us laser-cut their own designs, for an additional cost, but we also have a selection of standard designs. You can use them to build an entire fence, or alternate them with the Travertyn or Malachit models or the Kwarc model from the steel range. They also work well between fences made of natural stone or wood." Both vertical and horizontal Brites are available. "With all these new features, our clients can continue to stand out from the competition in the 2024 season – and meet their own customers' needs," says founder and owner Marian Przybylski. "This has always been what we stand for, ever since we started back in 1988. All the fences and gates in our catalogue have been designed in consultation with our customers or according to their wishes. Anyone who wants to come to Trzebnica to discuss the future and the development of the fencing market is always very welcome." ■



According to a survey of 100 installers:

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

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

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



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European Standards texts soon available for free

Good news for everyone who likes to keep abreast of all laws and regulations: if things go well, the texts of the European Standards will soon be available for free to all EU citizens. That is, the harmonised technical standards. This, according to a ruling by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg in early March this year, which we were alerted to thanks to a press release from a German industry association for locks and door hardware.

The ruling follows a long-running dispute: In 2018, the European Commission rejected the application of two non-profit organisations, Public Resource.Org and Right to Know, to grant them access to harmonised technical standards concerning toy safety. The organisations demanded this access citing a different Court ruling which casually mentioned that harmonised European standards 'form part of European Union law'. The organisations therefore challenged the EU Commission before the General Court of the European Union. In 2021, this Court declared this rejection lawful, whereupon the two organisations appealed to the European Court of Justice. The Court of Justice has now overturned the General Court's ruling, confirming its own previous ruling. The reason given by the Court for this ruling was that there is an overriding public interest in the distribution of harmonised toy safety standards.

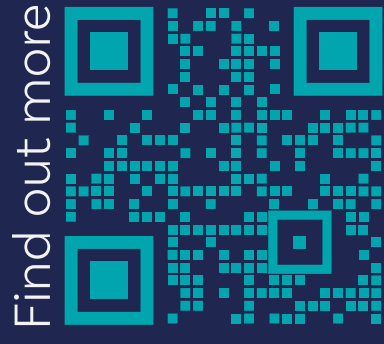
The ruling does not (yet) affect all non-harmonised standards and testing procedures. For now, the literal ruling only applies to the harmonised (toy) standards brought forth in the lawsuit. However, the industry association – and we along with them – expect a large number of interpretations of the ruling in the near future, such as, for example, in the case of references to standards of any nature in national (construction) law.

If it turns out that this ruling should actually be applied to all harmonised standards, it will likely have major consequences for the standardisation organisations such as the DIN, NEN, AFNOR and CEN, which are now financed by the sale of standards, among other things, and will then therefore have to look for new sources of income.

The complete text of the Court's ruling can be found by googling case number C-588/21 P. ■







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Perimeter security using cameras

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

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

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

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

Rajmond Rondeel

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



VIDEO CONTENT ANALYSIS

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

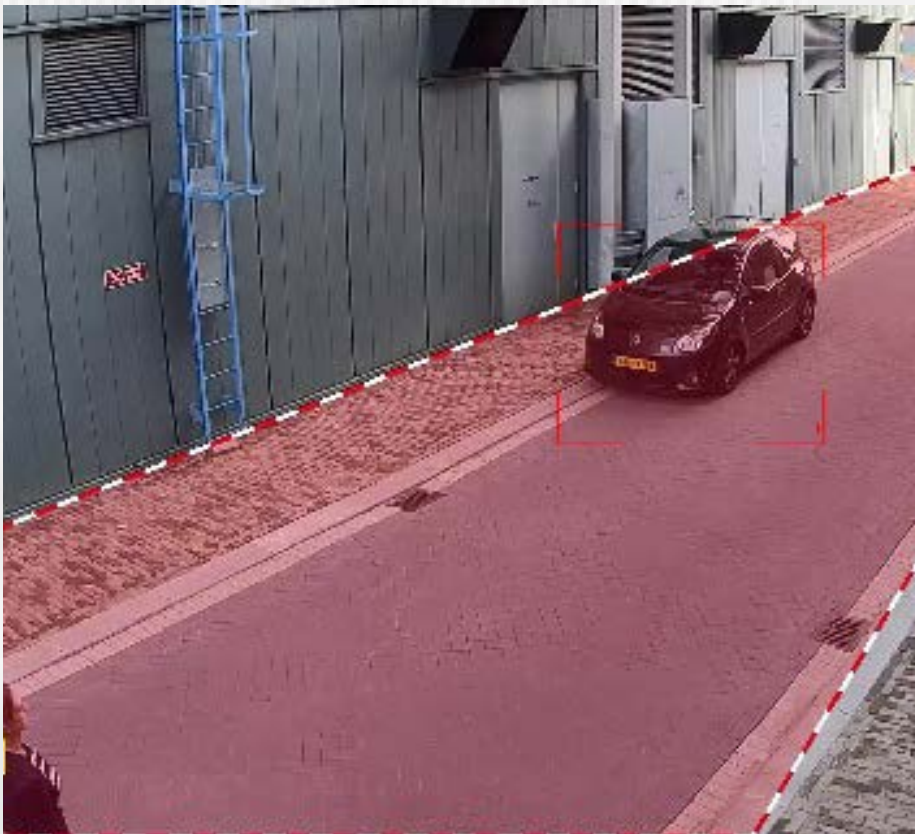
This classifying of images can be subject to yet further refinement. An example could be displaying or registering only vehicles with a certain registration, i.e. number plate recognition. Or where you want to know via facial recognition that a football hooligan is trying to get into a stadium. The more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

But if you adhere to all these conditions then there are interesting things you can do with them. You can draw a virtual line through the image, which no one is supposed to cross. Anyone who is still standing on the good side of the fence is ignored but as soon as they attempt to climb over and thus cross this line, an alarm is given. You could also detect when a vehicle is stationary for too long, or remains stationary at a place where waiting is not allowed. It could also be used, for example, to notice that someone has left an object at a busy metro station, or conversely removed a valuable item in a museum. Any abnormal behaviour can be detected and generate an automatic alarm signal.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This is going to get even better in the future. Because 'deep learning' technology is also making inroads into the security sector: artificial intelligence. The software behind the camera is beginning to learn from its own mistakes and thus becoming more and more smart. Just like a child who scalds themselves on a hot kettle is more careful next time. Cameras are actually going to take over the security guard's function to a large extent thus making their work a good deal easier and more efficient. This enables some security guards to supervise hundreds of cameras simultaneously. All images are subjected to live analysis and only the relevant ones are displayed. I recently attended a demonstration of deep learning cameras deployed for so-called crowd management in entertainment areas or at a festival. These cameras are capable of recognising the difference between people dangling around and sweet talking to each other in party spirit, and a few people getting into each other's hair and arguing. Even though an altercation starts with just a mild push or slap, the camera has no problem registering this and the system sounds the alarm before you even notice it

yourself. In this instance, I was actually there watching the same images. Very impressive. The same technology can also recognise the difference between someone exercising their dog on the right side of a prison wall, and someone pacing up and down nervously and then tossing a mobile phone or a packet of drugs over that wall with a throwing motion. In my previous column, I wrote that the latter example can really only be picked up with a laser detector. But actually, the deep learning camera is beginning to become a viable alternative. The camera will pick up on the difference in behaviour between a dog-walker and a drug-thrower much more quickly and generate an alarm. This gives the guards more time in which to react. There is no end to the possibilities for deep learning cameras and the more data these cameras get to learn from the better they will be. In which case these camera types could well become the error-free perimeter detectors of the future.



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

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

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

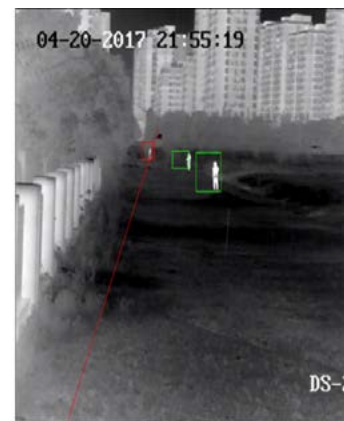
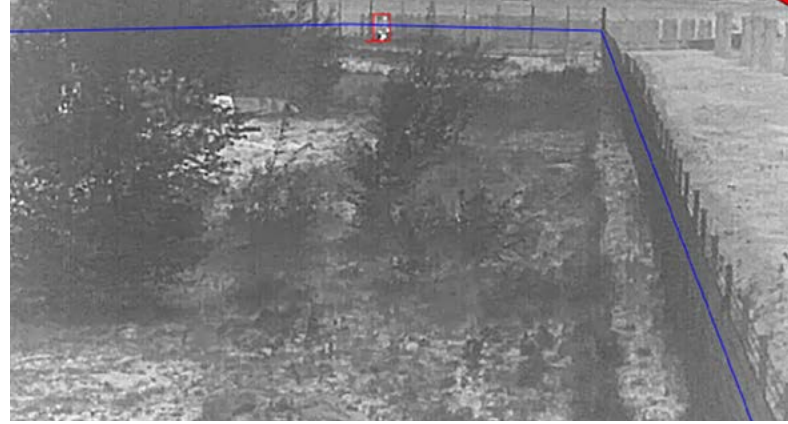
THERMAL CAMERAS

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



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

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

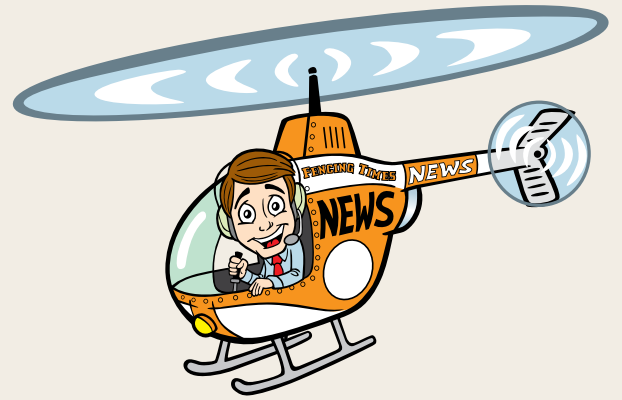




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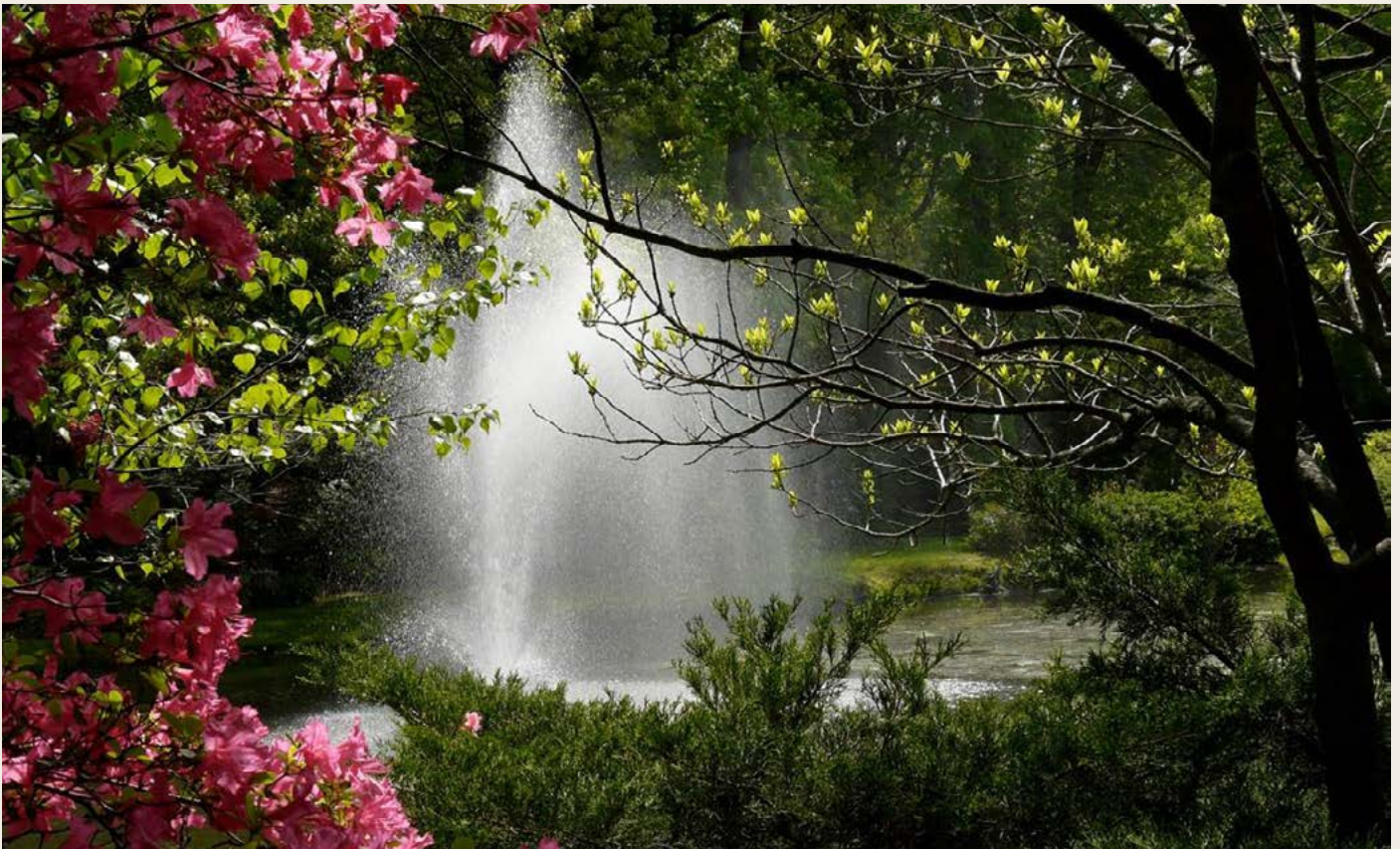
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FENCES IN THE NEWS



24 APRIL 2024

Fence beats playground



In the New Jersey town of Wayne, 30 kilometres from New York City, a botanical garden will finally be surrounded by a wildlife fence after two years of wrangling – to the enormous satisfaction of the Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum (FOLA). The group had stood by for years with great

distress as wild deer snacked on the botanical garden's rare plants. However, the decision has made residents of the Pines Lake neighbourhood very unhappy as they fear that wildlife will now be forced out into the narrow streets of the neighbouring district, where they will eat the plants in

residents' gardens. Additionally, they would have preferred that the 200,000 dollars to be spent on the fence had been put towards a new playground for the neighbourhood's children. Well, while we don't have anything against children's playgrounds, if they come at the cost of a fence then obviously

we're biased and are happy that the Friends of the Arboretum won the battle for the council's money. With a bit of luck the local residents will all order fences to keep the deer out of their own gardens too, which would mean more than enough orders for New Jersey's fencing installers for the time being. ■

Broken fence threatens to keep village residents awake again



In Houston, a village in north-western Canada, just about all the 1000 residents were being driven crazy by the whistling of goods trains, which run straight through the village day and night. The only level crossing in the village had no security, so train drivers whistled and tooted in Houston to warn that they were coming through. And so, back in 2020, a full-blown Train Whistle Stop Plan was created. The various aspects of the plan were as follows:

⇒ Step 1: apply for a federal government grant to install security at the level crossing;

⇒ Step 2: install barriers, flashing lights, and 400 metres of fencing to each side of the level crossing;
 ⇒ Step 3: make a formal request to the Canadian National railway company that the drivers stop sounding their whistles.

The wheels of bureaucracy turn as slowly in Canada as they do everywhere else, but by the end of 2023 the town had received 400,000 Canadian dollars in grant funding, an additional 120,000 dollars had been set aside in the municipal budget, the barriers, flashing lights and fence had been installed, the request had been sent to Canadian National, and it looked like the train whistles

had finally stopped for good... if not for the fact that by now, villagers who were too lazy to go just a little out of their way had repeatedly cut holes in the new fence. Whether these were the same residents driven crazy by the whistling or other residents who weren't so easily bothered, the press release doesn't say. In any case: Canadian National has warned that if the vandalism doesn't end soon, another official whistle-blowing order will be issued. As a result, the municipality has put a special team on standby to repair any holes in the fence as soon as they are discovered, and has threatened substantial fines for anyone caught cutting a hole in the fence. ■

TV crew solves fencing dispute

In Toledo, Ohio, the owner of a vacant block of land had it cleared of all weeds and other vegetation. The team that came to do that job managed to damage the neighbour's fence in the process. The landowner claimed that the fence had already been in poor condition and was 'leaning' on the vegetation on his land, thus falling over when the vegetation was cleared. "We made

sure to inform the neighbour," he said. The neighbour, however, felt that the gap in his old fence was completely the landowner's fault and asked him to install a whole new fence. The landowner rejected this demand, whereupon the neighbour called in a reporter from the local television station, who presented a tear-jerking story on how one of the neighbour's Rottweiler puppies had almost

been run over after escaping through the hole in the fence – and that the neighbour had now had to get rid of his two puppies, because he was unable to afford to pay for a new fence himself. The landowner runs several Toledo restaurants and has a public reputation to maintain, so was left with no choice but to immediately phone a local fencing installer to get the fence fixed asap. Following which,

the neighbour claimed on camera – with a straight face – that he was happy that he could now get new puppies. We haven't looked into what a Rottweiler puppy costs on the Ohio dog market, but here in Europe prices range from 1500 to 2000 euros. We think that the neighbour could have nailed quite a few planks to his broken fence for that amount, but what would we know? ■



BENNETT ENTERPRISES BREAKS MAN'S FENCE

India to build border fence

The India Government is planning to build a fence along its lengthy border with Myanmar, the country's Home Minister Amit Shah announced, after hundreds of Myanmar soldiers fleeing insurgent attacks crossed the border into India.

Shah, who gave no details on how the fence would be built or in what timeframe, said that India also wants to end its free movement agreement with Myanmar, which allows those living in border regions to enter each other's countries without visas

when travelling short distances.

We have no knowledge of India-Myanmar relations and thus no idea whether installing a fence will be a good thing for the people of these countries. It's good news for the local fencing installers though: the border between

India and Myanmar is more than 1200 kilometres long, so that will keep them busy for a bit. ■



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