

Volunteers Pavilion in Mote Park following its restoration by Gallagher.



## Kentish Ragstone company Gallagher refurbishes country park

The £2million regeneration of the 450-acre historic Mote Park in Maidstone, Kent, by Kentish Ragstone quarry company Gallagher has just been completed.

The project received funding from the The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) under the 'Parks for People' scheme.

In Autumn 2011, Gallagher was appointed main contractor for the regeneration project,

which included restoring the 19th century neoclassical Volunteers Pavilion pictured left.

Following our report on CE marking in the previous issue of NS, we have had several enquiries about CE marks, which become compulsory from July next year. To clarify: CE marks are only required on products for which there is a European (CEN) standard. So tiles will have to be CE marked but natural stone worktops and fireplaces will not.

## Marketing

**Alan Gayle is a sales and marketing consultant specialising in the construction industry. In this column he offers advice on how to make an impact in the market. He continues his look at digital marketing**

Following on from last month when we looked at blogs, I maintain the digital theme this month with a discussion about email marketing.

As anyone who has looked into email marketing will know, it is a vast subject.

A quick search on Google will give you dozens of websites offering advice. In fact, it has become a whole new marketing discipline in itself.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) offers two courses just on email marketing and the IDM (Institute of Direct & Digital Marketing) offers two courses and a professional qualification in it.

These professional organisations respond to the needs of the market and have created these courses to satisfy an ever growing demand. Make no mistake: email marketing is big business.

Email marketing's biggest attraction is also its biggest downfall. It's cheap.

It doesn't cost much to use Constant Contact or Mail Chimp and put together an e-mailshot for yourself.

Unfortunately, many DIY marketers don't count the far bigger cost of devaluing their brand to existing customers or being regarded as spam by potential customers.

It can be a risky strategy if you don't know what you're doing. I've seen some really terrible e-mailshots from companies that I held in high regard.

On the other hand, we have all received well-written, effective e-mailshots or newsletters from suppliers, trade bodies and others that we find interesting and informative, so there's no question that the concept works.

The downside is the huge volume of information flying into our inbox every day. For a newsletter to be read it has to stand out from the dozens of other emails vying for our attention.

In my experience there are two schools of thought.

One says blitz your prospects and clients with your emails at every opportunity. Email them at least once a month and if possible once a week. Tell them everything about your latest projects, changes in legislation, staff news, industry news, new materials, special offers and anything else you can think of just so long as you keep your name in front of them.

The other school of thought is to email less frequently but make the content more relevant.

I am firmly in the latter camp because in the construction industry if you email people too often they soon get tired of hearing from you and they just switch off (or become

disengaged, to use the proper marketing term).

If you're sending people self-indulgent drivel which is of little interest to them (not to you, but to them!) they will either stop opening them or they will unsubscribe. It's called 'email fatigue'.

Incidentally, the same thing is true for journalists who are bombarded with irrelevant (or badly written) press releases by DIY marketers. After three or four, the journalist just puts all the press releases from that company in the bin without even opening them because experience suggests they will not be worth opening.

So it's important you don't get a reputation for sending boring or irrelevant information.

I have known of two building product suppliers that have emailed their customers with irrelevant content and have seen dozens of customers unsubscribe.

As a result, the suppliers' entire domain name gets caught in the customer's spam filter so no-one from the supplier - not production, not accounts, not even the MD - can then get an email through to that customer. Not good!

Having said all that, when it's done properly, email marketing can be very effective. I do a lot of it for my clients and it



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invariably works well. But your content must be relevant to your recipients, you have to be consistent and you must have permission to send the emails.

We've run out of space this month, but I will continue with this topic in next month's column, when I will go into the primary objectives for email marketing in the construction industry, the importance of keeping your message simple, the AIDA process (which will be explained next time) and how to analyse the feedback data (called analytics) to assess your return on investment.