



Timber Talks

regular news from
WLW & PRO



Issue 197

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**Hardwoods • Machining • Worktops • Cladding • Decking • Gates • Fencing
and so much more.....**

Peter Alderson - Retires

After 40 years in the timber industry, the last 23 with W L West & Sons Ltd, Peter Alderson has reached his retirement time.

Peter started his working career in the communications industry with GEC in the Midlands as an Apprentice Electrical Fitter.

He joined our industry in timber contracting in the Midlands in the early 1970's, his first big job supplying timber for a Reservoir now known as Rutland Water.

He had been with a couple of timber companies as a buyer - Southern Counties Timber and Henry Venables, before being invited in 1988 to join W L West & Sons Ltd by David West, the Managing Director at the time, as our Round Timber Buyer.

Peter spent most of his time in the first 15 years or so working in UK woods, sourcing round timber. Through this and his previous life

in timber, Peter has built up a wide network of friends in the industry.

As the shape of the timber industry in the UK has changed in the past few years, Peter has spent a fair amount of time in France buying both round and planked timber. In addition he has been helping to manage the Sawmill. Those of you who either know him well or have had occasion to come across him will know that his attitude is very much 'can do', he goes out of his way to try to meet his customers needs.

Peter will definitely be missed by us, but will continue to work with us on an 'ad-hoc' basis when we need his round timber expertise.

Peter has been planning his retirement with Pam, his wife, for some time, with Pam retiring a little way before he has.

Pete will still 'keep his hand in' in our industry, working part time for a friend of his, managing timber.

But he has every intention in increasing the number of divots in the grass at his local Golf Club!! In addition he intends to spend a bit more time with Pam in France for leisure this time sampling a good Bordeaux!!.

We are sure that his new Managing Director - Pam Alderson will have a full agenda for him, undoubtedly, so will Charlotte and Chris his daughter and son.

Good luck Pete, Best Wishes from all of your friends at W L West & Sons Ltd.



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CE Marking in Construction - Law by 2013

CE We like to try to keep you all informed about legislative changes in our industry. One of our Directors recently attended a TRADA seminar on The European Construction Products Regulation. It appears that with effect from 1st July 2013, there will be a number of additional timber products that will have to be CE marked, this will be mandatory! It

is our understanding that this will cover any item that makes up part of the fixed fabric of a building. Much of what we all produce SHOULD be covered by 'harmonised' standards by next year. These are standards that pull all of the Euro Community standards into one for each subject area.

We are waiting for further guid-

ance from the Timber Trade Federation. We will keep you updated as this arrives.

**The Directors and Staff of
W L West & Sons Ltd would like to wish you
all a very
MERRY CHRISTMAS and a
HAPPY NEW YEAR
Lets hope its a more prosperous one!
Thank you all for your custom in 2011**



Timber Talks

Just how hard can it get?



Offer

Scottish Elm kiln dried T/T

80mm £1950.00m³ + vat

65mm £1765.75m³ + vat

54mm £1275.00m³ + vat

41mm £1220.00m³ + vat

27mm £1180.00m³ + vat

Min Qty mixed if required
0.50m³ + vat

Our trade is really quite a small trade with aggregate demand falling year on year. Exports from Africa, Brazil, the USA, and the Far East have all reduced as the global market shrinks.

Stock market jitters and the EEC in turmoil trying to support members who have not had their house in order will, as a result, drain more tax payers funds. Debts will no doubt at some level be written off.

The Stirling/Euro Relationship has held so that we can encourage exports, but this also seems odd because we export less and less as the so called recovery takes place.

In our trade the big fish get bigger and the specialist firms have a harder time. This has been compounded by the fact

that three of the four main hardwood species Meranti, Idigbo and Iroko have all had supply issues. The fourth, Sapele, has since November last year dominated the hardwood joinery trade; the bigger fish have fought like hell in a declining market for Market Share and where demand falls the price gets hammered.

Margins for the long term become non existent, and the species fight enables Sapele traders to sell what volume there is into the market at below replacement cost. How stupid is this? Rising prices on forward contract mean that this rise has to be passed on. Otherwise the return on that stock investment will buy less timber the next time around.

The market at the moment is dominated by short term, short

thinking market traders.

The pressure for Sales v Margin is always difficult and the customers we do have and are loyal to us demand keen prices and keen attention [rightly so too].

But the issues will come to a head when the end user has to face up to the fact that the discounts and margin slashing will have to slow down to return to some kind of order and stability. This is not high street retail garment trading, it is timber that takes years to grow, time to dry, time to process and time to stock. It is not pile it high sell it for less than it costs you. The trade and users must get real. The end user needs to be educated In a positive way.

A Peep into the past - A Salutary lesson – does bulk oak dry out?

In the 1970's a small church which nestled under the downs close to Midhurst was deconsecrated and pulled down. Materials salvaged from the church were sold off and the purchaser of the oak beams from the roof brought them into our sawmill at Midhurst to be resawn. Jim West, who looked after the mill at that time asked what finished sizes were required as he would have to make allowance in the resawing for shrinkage.

The new owner looked aghast

at Jim and said "these beams have been in the roof of that church for three hundred years and before that they were in a warship. They are as dry as a bone, they will never shrink." Jim said O.K. but I would like you to be here when we saw them and to check the measurements as they come off the saw. This he did and took the beams away on his lorry a satisfied man.

A number of months later Jim had another visit from the

beam man who said that he had come to apologise because he had not believed the "expert". All of the beams had now shrunk in their cross-section from the resawn sizes.

We still get asked if we supply "Kiln Dried" oak beams and we are still not believed when we say that it is not possible to kiln dry any thickness greater than 3 inches or 75mm successfully.

FSC or PEFC for Government & Local Authority work?

It has come to our attention this month that many of you who are quoting for work that is for a government department or even local authority department, may be receiving instructions that are misleading. We have recently been asked specifically for FSC timber for a job that is ultimately for a government body, we were told that PEFC was not good enough as the scheme was not as good as FSC. This is totally untrue and very misleading,

it could also prevent you winning a contract!!

If you require assistance with what is or is not acceptable by the UK Government, an organisation called **CPET—Central Point of Expertise** on Timber was created some time ago. They will assist you through the environmental minefield of supplying timber and timber products into Government departments and local authorities.

A couple of our team have been to CPET seminars, and

interestingly, at the event our people attended, the bulk of people there were from Government departments, and by us giving the suppliers side of the story certainly opened some of their eyes.

The **CPET** website is:
www.cpet.org.uk

They can be contacted on:
01865 243766.

Give them a call if you have any queries, better a phone call and successfully win the contract than not calling and losing it!!

Normal Service Resumed!

Apologies for the gap between issues, this has been for various reasons. You haven't missed a copy.





WESTS WOOD SHOW 2011

Our Wood Show was conceived in 2005 to promote and celebrate everything wood. This the 7th year continued the theme.



Ken Wood from Storrington brought along his sticks, we found Ken through Amberley museum.

Unfortunately an old friend of ours Nick Agar was unable to demonstrate at the show, but arranged for a mate of his - Mick Hanbury to visit us. Mick demonstrated some very different techniques keeping our visitors interested.



As you may have read in the last issue, we have very strong links with the

furniture section of Chichester College, again they overwhelmed us with the quality and fantastic ideas of the stu-



dents, I keep repeating this, but the quality really does keep improving year on year.

2nd year furniture. It is not just the quality of the workmanship, but the ideas of these students, where do they get the ideas from?

Time to invest in a future heirloom? Peter



Furlong chats to potential customers about his handmade Rocking Horses. Truly

a labour of love.

Mike Smith and his wife have visited us in previous years as customers, last year after a chat with one of our directors, we invited him to exhibit his bow making skills. His wife was busy weaving on looms that he also makes.

Pyrography is another craft that was on show, painting with fire so to speak. By applying a hot wire to the paler hardwoods, this creates a tiny burn mark, which when linked to an artistic skill, produces a pleasing picture.



HMS Victory

HMS Victory, the flag ship of Her Majesty's Royal Navy, is undergoing repairs to her hull. We have recently cut some very large baulks of Teak to enable some special structural items including knees and beam ends to be manufactured. One of the Teak Baulks was put into stock down at the Dock yard in 1963 and the other in the early 1970's.

One of the Baulks looked stunning but cutting into the Baulk it exposed a huge hollow pocket inside of the beam! No way could you have foreseen this from the outside of the Baulk. It's quite amazing after all this time that this defect was only now discovered.

All main masts have now been removed for repair. The majority of the rigging has also been removed

for survey and replacement, along with the associated blocks made of Elm and Ash, some of which will need to be replaced/repared in the near future.

The dockyard is employing a specialist firm of boat builders who will take on the huge task of replacing a large proportion of the hull planking. The Teak was bought some years ago, all exported under special licence from Burma and Thailand. We did not have any involvement in this.

The ship is a 1st rate ship of the line which means it has over 90 guns to fire on three decks, it had a crew of approx 830 persons from boys of junior school age to pensioners by today's standards. Similar to the number of crew of the then valiant HMS Ark Royal. The Air Craft

Carrier, now for sale is reputed to be on E bay ~ how sad is that.

The supply of timber to this Great Ship is always a pleasure because it has great meaning and great importance for future generations. Odd to think it was saved from target practice off the Solent in the 1920's by a British Army Officer who campaigned to save her! This is thought to be one of the biggest conservation projects ever started in the UK and is still going on today.

Interestingly, we have been supplying timber to Victory for many years. The 1851 census records show that the West family was in the timber industry 200 years ago, around Nelson's time !!!!



Teak Baulk

Offer

Cedar of Lebanon T/T
20mm £885.00m³ + vat
unique and rare
0.50m³ +



And finally.....



Offer

Opepe

1 x 4.80m 150x150mm

£95.00 +vat

2 x 4.80m 100x100mm

£42.00 ea +vat

1 x 4.80m 100x95mm

£38.00 +vat

To clear, in one lot excellent beam material high strength classification

Last issue we told you about the new European legislation that we now know will become law in 3rd March 2013.

Many of you may think that it will not impact on you, wrong! The legislation will impact on everyone who trades in timber or timber derived products. This includes finished products. The regulation is Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 and is available on the European Commission website (after a bit of searching!!).

Most of you will be buying your timber within the EU boundaries and as such will be what the legislation lists as 'Traders', this means that you will have to be able to trace your supply routes for the timber purchased and the customers you sold to on demand of the enforcing agency. The enforcing agency will almost certainly be DEFRA.

If you buy timber or timber products outside of the EU boundaries, you will be deemed an 'Operator' and as you are placing the products for the first time into the EU market, you will have to have a suitable Due Diligence system in place.

As we told you last issue, the TTF have been taking a strong lead in working with DEFRA on this legislation, and all TTF members are part of the TTF Responsible Purchasing Policy which meets the requirements of the legislation.

If you would like more information on how this might impact on your business, have a look at: www.ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm

For some years we have been actively seeking timber forests that appear to be well managed. However we are not foresters and there are times when it is difficult

for us, firstly to make an assessment, and secondly to prove to third parties such as NGO's (Non Government Organisations) that the forest management is acceptable and also good quality.

In the early 1980's an environmentalist once told suppliers of the need to make sure that the path of the wood from well managed forests to the end product is "unadulterated". An interesting use of the word!

Systems exist that help this whole process by providing and auditing the Chain of Custody of timber. We have certification for both FSC and PEFC.

Where possible and when the required timber is available, we buy timber covered by these schemes, it is not always possible, not all species are currently covered by the scheme. More species and countries are being certified all of the time, so the

Go to www.wlwest.co.uk for our normal monthly offers



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