



Timber Talks

regular news from
WLW & PRO

Issue 193

August 2010

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

There's changes afoot.....



Typical air drying Oak boules

With much media talk of recession, it is perhaps a good time to look towards a positive future. We have, and part of the changes you will start seeing is

a new version of Timber Talks, our regular newsletter, here in the first version of the new format.

We have recognised that we were only sending Timber Talks to a small number of our customers, included with statements. With effect from this issue, we are increasing the number that we send out, and it will change to a bi-monthly

publication. We will try to have wider contribution from all of our teams here in Selham and at our fencing division — PRO Fencing based in Farnham.

You will note that we do not have a full sheet of offers on this issue, but they will still be available in full on our web site at www.wlwest.co.uk

Offer

Hong Hong grade
Black Walnut FAS
grade SE

25mm as arising 2-
2.2m random width.
WILL contain knots
and sap

£1660.00m³ +vat
for quantities of
0.3m³ +

Retail shopping..... Yes, we have a shop.

Not everyone knows, but we do have a retail shop on site for the hobbyists, enthusiasts and budding DIY'ers. Stocking all manner of hardwoods and some softwoods, tools and woodworking machinery. You

will be able to see us at the Weal Wood Fair at Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum near Lewes, where we will have timber, wood turning blanks and some finishes and tools for sale. Pop in and say hello.

We have had to review our Saturday shop opening times, and it is now 9.00 — 1.00pm all year round. Saturday opening is for retail sales only.

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Tree Diseases

We have a number of tree diseases that are affecting our home species at the moment, including **Sudden Oak Death** (*Phytophthora ramorum*) which kills most trees it attacks. It presents itself as bleeding cancer—black in colour. It affects other species, not just Oak, and the symptoms can be varied.

Horse Chestnut Bleeding Cancer which again presents itself as lesions that bleed out of the bark. This has been around for some time, but in the last few

years has become more prevalent.

Red Band Needle Blight

caused by the fungus *Dothistroma septosporum* which is found on a range of conifer trees. The needles turn prematurely red. Amazingly this was first found in 1954! Massive areas of the West Country are now being felled. And the occasional hardwood has also been affected where it is in close proximity.

Many of these diseases are spread by wind and weather, and by felled material being transported. The Forestry Commission are placing restrictions on movement of affected timber. More information can be found on the FC's tree pests & diseases page at www.forestry.gov.uk

We all need to be aware to prevent wide scale issues.

Timber Talks

What makes a good trading position?



We're not quite like Wall Street!!

Offer

Douglas Fir Sleepers.
FSC Home Grown
125 x 200mm 2.4m

5+ @ £20ea +vat
10+ @ £18.70ea +vat
20+ @ £17.50ea +vat

What is the pure definition of sales? This is where the need of the seller is greater than that of the buyer

When sales take place, what key factors make it work? The aim is to get the buyer and seller to the same point to enable all communication to be as open and as full as possible. Grey areas and surprises do not make the best sales platform, what makes the buyer buy is a key part to the performance of the trade. Empathy and knowledge are key.

In any sales deal there has to be certain criteria which make the trade work, *Offer and Acceptance* which is where the details are laid out for both parties to see the terms of the trade. *Performance* of the deal

means it can take place and it's not a factious set of circumstances. *Legality* in the deal means it has to be bound by law and performed within the legal frame work of contract law. *Consideration* is the term applied to an exchange, usually of monies for goods

Wherever these actions take place (it could be in seconds) the above constitutes a deal being struck.

There are some parts of the deal which flavours the contact in more depth, for example; in the trade side of our work it is assumed that the buyer knows what they are doing from a professional point of view. It also relies on the seller and buyer asking questions which help establish the details from which a trade can be carried out.

Timber is a natural product and therefore can be an awkward product. With all the best will in the world it can have implications which make it difficult. Just look at Black Walnut, a very poplar species traded but it has knots and sap wood and cannot be bought without these natural features unless it is veneer quality.

Knowledge in our trade is vital and getting to understand the materials and their unique characteristics is important to ensure a trade can take place. Ignorance will lead to problems, so the buyer and seller being at the same point just before the deal can take place is a 100% requirement to enable the trade to take place. Assumptions are a risky business.

Timber Supply — the current position.



French Timber

The French Sawmills have closed for holidays, but we currently we have stocks of KD boules in 27mm, 34mm, 41mm, 54mm, 65mm, 80mm and AD 100mm. Included in this is the mother of all 41mm "staircase" boules at 8.3 meters long! After a 3 year search we found 17m³ of 54mm pippy Oak which varies from light pip to Dalmatian Dog!

A shortage of softwood continues to push prices up. The demand for pulp has fallen as a result of the world market conditions and an increase in recycling paper. As well as sawn timber, pulp chips are a vital part of the forest harvest in Finland and Sweden and one cannot be produced without the other. If the wood chippings is not turned into pulp it starts to deteriorate after several

days, in that it heats up and starts to decompose. Forest owners are leaving the trees growing to protect their investment and as a consequence there are shortages. A UK softwood giant used to keep 9000m³ of stock available. Currently this is down to 1300m³ which is why a lot of customers have moved over to Poplar as it is cheaper than Un-Sorted Redwood.

American timbers have seen similar price increases and shortages are not helped by the dollar exchange rate. One big consolidation sawmill we deal with has 24 kilns and takes its timber from small farms and Amish Mills within a 200 mile radius. 60% of these mills have stopped production and they only have 11 kilns in operation, which will have a knock on effect in the future. We've got a regular contract for 1" American White Oak (our

bread and butter) that has seen a price increase of 31.6% since last September!!

In some areas supplies of American White Ash are being affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. This beetle pest causes significant damage to ash trees and has already destroyed entire stands of these Ash trees. The insect is a native of Asia and was probably introduced into the USA in imported wooden packing material in the 1990's. It was established as the cause of death in Ash trees in 2002. There are twenty two species of Ash in the United States, (sixteen native) and the Emerald Ash Beetle attacks all of them. It is estimated that more than 7.5 billion Ash trees are growing in U.S. timberlands and if the Emerald Ash Borer continues to disperse it poses a substantial risk to supplies of sawn



Emerald Ash Borer

News from PRO Fencing

We have been seeing softwood prices increase over the past 6 months, this is partially because of the closure of Scandinavian sawmills due to lack of demand in the pulp industry. 70% of the softwood goes for pulp, and they will not fell for the 30% in other industries. Steel prices have also risen in the previous 6 months and we can expect to see both of these products continue to

rise after the summer holidays. Funnily enough concrete prices have stayed static.

We have recently completed 180m of steel palisade security fence at Woking College.

In the short term we are quite busy, but please, continue to send us your fencing and gate enquiries. We are able

to supply and fix many fencing solutions, from the various security fencing products that are now available, to ball courts and timber fencing. We have been manufacturing bespoke timber gates for many years. So if you have a gate to replace and you would like a similar style, it is pretty certain that we can copy it for you.



Woking College

Sales—Who's Who

Who are the people here to help you with your purchase? *Joyce Aird* is our internal sales person who works with *Chris Harris*, our external sales person for the area east of the A3 trunk road through West & East Sussex, Surrey, South London and into Kent.

Karl Jennings is another internal sales person and partners *Mike Dalman* who works in external sales West of the A3 trunk road down to the West Country. Merchants and enquiries out-

side these areas are looked after by *Simon Smith* and for all admin queries relating to sales *Carol Talman* is the person to be sought out.

From the Retail point of view this is dealt with by *Jo West* and *Fred Fisher*, they have a huge ability with regard to helping those who need information on timber and machinery for DIY and hobbyist requirements.

Martin West, *Colin West* & *Chris West* manage our fencing division under the

banner of PRO Fencing. They look after all of the fencing and gate supply and fix part of our business.

Gerard Magill is our sawn timber buyer and is responsible for goods in and out of the business. *Peter Alderson* is our round timber buyer and our sawmill manager.

In forth coming Timber Talks we will go into more detail about some of the people mentioned. It will become clearer just how many years experience we do collectively have in our business.

Offer

Concrete 8' Posts
£5.00ea +vat

Concrete Gravel
Boards 6'
£3.00ea +vat

Approx 30 of each

Call PRO Fencing

Calling Customers — a speedier solution

Our yard foreman has commented that customers who use our 'book to collect' service have found a speedier turn around. This has resulted

in them being served more quickly and has avoided bottlenecks when calling customers arrive all at the same time. A speedy turn around

for you and we can prepare timber for your visit. Ask your sales contact to book you in. Time does cost us all money in the long run.

A peep in the past

Before the first World War, and before a permanent site had been obtained to run the business, *Walt West* — that's *W.L.West*, had secured a contract to fell timber on top of Cocking Hill on the South Downs. During the course of the timber felling campaign, he would leave *Stedham*, where the family then lived,

and walk with some of his sons (he had twelve!!) to Cocking, some 5 miles. Then up the hill some 5 to 6 hundred feet climb and another half mile to the site. Having set up and got ready for the day's work, he would then give the youngest son, who was about twelve years old, money to return to the village

of Cocking to buy beer for their lunch. The youngest always complained that he had to walk up and down that hill more than was needed, but nobody took so much notice of time in those days



Cocking Hill on the South Downs Way

Big enough to cope, small enough to care — a family run business.

W. L. WEST & SONS LTD

And finally.....



Lodsworth Larder on opening day

Offer

WLW Ledged & Braced Doors

Hand made in Euro Oak.

0-5 @ £180.00ea +vat

6-10 @ £173.00ea +vat

10+ @ £167.50 +vat

Two coats of hard wax oil
allow £5.50m² x 2
sides +vat

We regularly get asked to be involved with charities or charitable giving in some way, shape or form, and our company ethos is only to support those we feel have an impact on our local community or will help one of our team. Recently almost all charity has been curtailed as we have had our own employees on short time working and reduced wages, so we felt it was immoral to then support a charity.

But one project that we had already agreed to when the recession bit harder was The Lodsworth Larder. This was a scheme in our local village to open a village store again. The village lost their local store some years ago, and along with many

villages in the UK a group of villagers got together to form a group to undertake this project. Built on the grounds of The Hollist Arms, and very much supported by the proprietors — George and Juliet Bristow.

We were asked to get involved with the project and agreed to mill and machine the Oak for the floors and the beams used to support the building. So early in 2009 we went up into the local woods with Ben Laws (of Channel 4 Grand Design fame) and selected the Oak that would be used for this project. Ben is a woodman, and as he understands how timber works and its characteristics, he was easy to work with.

The Oak was cut and air dried prior to kiln drying ready for machining into flooring and the beams cut to specification.

The build seemed to be speedy in its construction and the project opened to the public on 7 November 2009 in glorious sunshine.

We have just learnt that the project has won a Public & Community Award from the Sussex Heritage Trust.

Well done to all at the Lodsworth Larder

www.lodsworthlarder.co.uk

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



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