

Marthall Tree Products

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A Day in the life of Marthall. (Through the eyes of Emma)

Marthall is not one of those jobs where you can say every day is the same. Every day is very different! Yes, there are the routine jobs that have to be done, but we can safely say each day contains some laughter or entertainment.

A typical day starts with the daily commute to work normally involving some idiot attempting to overtake us on Chelford Road, only to immediately get stuck behind a stone truck that's in front of us, of which has probably been ordered by Alan Goodwin from our aggregates department.

Some of our customers must like paying us a visit, they are waiting for us when we arrive, normally they are desperate for the toilet and we do kindly let them in, fingers crossed there is some toilet roll left!

Priority jobs in the morning involve switching on the kettle, setting up the tills, attempting to get everyone motivated whilst they queue up to make a cup of Colombian coffee from our new brew machine. When we got the first sales figures from the brew machine 34 had been sold to our customers 256 to staff. Some of the staff are going to have to re-mortgage their house due to their new coffee addiction, at one point I was horrified at discovering the husband owing £30!

Early morning phone calls are the norm with the usual cries of "has your driver left yet?", "Can you fit me in for a delivery today?" or "I'm on my way please can you have ready?" These are normally handled by Colin or Dave whilst I dive into the back to get out as much stock as possible before opening up and the morning rush at 8am. I normally come out covered in dust from head to toe just as Boss Dave walks in. This is followed by cries of "look at the state of you, you're a senior executive (no idea where I got that name from) what are we going to do with you!" At the opposite end of the scale I have my 'dizzy cow' moments. Having asked Mr Gallimore to give me an example of a dizzy cow moment for this article his response was "when are you not." So, as I was saying, mornings, by this point I have already forgotten about my attempt to make a brew, I smile sweetly and the boss kindly makes me one but I have to watch he doesn't attempt to use yesterday's teabags. Soon after Alan Goodwin arrives with his usual warm welcome eager to start the day.

The last job before we open is to discuss if any celebrities have died in the last couple of days to update our very popular 'dead wall'. The wall is much talked about, especially at the start of 2016 when an abundance of deaths led to the wall filling up and us having to set a two week since date of death limit! I also couldn't quite believe how many people recognised the king of Thailand.

8am the morning rush. I can count the customers that are always in at 8am on one hand, so regular it doesn't feel right if they aren't there! As most of you have gathered I'm terrible with names and even after 3 years here I still get them wrong, normally to the sound of laughter behind me, it's not rude I'm just a bit useless putting names to faces! Don't forget we don't actually know your real names in many cases you are 'Mr. Tatton (aka Chris Vincent) Strike or TCL.'

Talking of names, I can safely say that all of the staff have gained some fantastic new ones over the last year. Sometimes we just don't have the heart to correct people, so we just respond to Natalie, Gemma or Tim, Tony & Simon. The best bit is the embarrassment and bright red cheeks that follow when a colleague kindly points out that your name is Emma, to the lovely man you have let call you Natalie for the past two weeks. Even better is when you take the brave step to point out your name is Colin Not Simon and get the reply "no problem thanks Simon." Occasionally members of staff are described by customers in conversation. For most of the summer "the one in white sunglasses" simply meant Lee. 'The tall one' used to mean Tom but now the more varied heights amongst the Marthall staff means we cannot be sure if the is correct. "The boss's daughter" (normally they mean me) tends to lead to some confusion and raised eye brows as he only has a son, incidentally also named Tom, which led to some entertaining conversations when he joined us for work experience. Both were quickly renamed Big Tom & Young Tom. Big Tom however keeps being referred to as 'Old Tom' at the grand age of just 27.

We pride ourselves on knowing our customers well. Even to the point that certain customers always forget something when they come in. We try to help with the following questions. Anything else? Are you sure? Not forgotten anything? Postcrete? It's like walking into a room for something and picking up something else except the item you came in for. We normally see them return within the hour and the shuffle of shame as they come into the shop.

Every day, without fail, toast is to be made at around 10am along with another cup of tea. If this hot beverage is made by Alan you can be assured that if you get distracted it will still be hot and drinkable at 11am, he is the master at making liquid lava. I really should get around to timing how long he can hold it in the palm of his hand waiting for us to take it from him. I'm also thinking that the chance of 3rd degree burns should be added to our risk assessment.

Some of the day involves ordering stock, blink and the shelf is empty. I am most definitely looking forward to the new shop we are planning which should see our floor space double, along with new offices, tills and a more organised shop layout. Along with the recent tarmac that has taken place it might see the end of "Is the dust is free with this today" question.

Some of the day is spent translating the various difference descriptions of items to allow us to give you what you need. For example, T.A.N.T.A.L.I.S.E.D timber become tanalised timber once the extra T has been removed. A sloping hand gesture becomes a weathered top and 'please can I have some sawn planed all round timber' is normally clarified with a walk across the yard to the desired item.

Our years of experience allows us to help our customers build a bridge for the cows, calculate the amount of concrete required for the Mother in Laws grave, build a suitable fence to keep the Great Dane in the garden & suggest a suitable gravel that the neighbourhood cats won't crap in.

Lunch time comes and goes quite quickly, rotating the lunches as best we can. When it is super busy we are lucky enough to be treated to the occasional sandwich from the boss or we even share a Pizza or chips. When Frank gives in and agrees to eat something unhealthy with us all, that nugget of information spreads like wild fire, amazing how something so small can be headline news amongst staff but it is as rare as seeing pigs fly whilst wearing a tutu. Lunch time is also the moment when a customer will come in and say "your quiet in here today" having not realised they have just timed their visit right and have missed the 'Alton Towers like queue in the aisles'.

Busy afternoons sometimes mean we suddenly run short of change and that normally means you will receive Bahco carpenter's pencils instead of the required 50p coin, after all you can never have too many pencils. The lack of pencils in one's workshop is also echoed with the lack of pens in the office. Many of you will be aware of us chaining a pen to the counter as a finally resort to prevent it from going 'walk abouts'. By the afternoon there is normally one pen between the four of us, half decapitated from being stood on or chewed, but very much loved as it is the final one. The lack of pens situation finally came to an end when out of utter frustration the chained counter pen was ripped from its shackle and promptly lost within the hour. 'Young Tom' was on his final day of work experience and having experienced the most frustrating part of working at Marthall he handed in his parting gift, a box of pens!

As the day draws to a close you may hear the mutterings of the yard lads quietly praying that no one comes in for 20 concrete posts, 15 panels and half a pallet of postcrete at 4.45pm but even if you do we will endeavour to take care of you and get you loaded up ready for another busy day tomorrow.