

Marthall Tree Products

News Update May 2008

Tradecard week --- W/c 23rd June for 1 week

If you've never tried Thunderbolts or Timberlocks now is a great opportunity to do so. In conjunction with your tradecard we are offering a 20% discount on both these items during the above week. Plus all other items purchased at the same time will receive an additional 2.5% discount.

There will also be exclusive special offers including our current 'Gate deal' which includes a 9' sawn gate, 2 gate posts plus ironwork all for £87.00 Nett plus VAT!!

2007

2007 seems now but a distant memory. It was certainly a year of 2 parts. From immediately after the New year holiday until the end of August the best word to describe activities in our yard was to liken it to an 'Onslaught'. With prices rising monthly, two incidents of featheredge rage and being accused of ruining someone's life due to not having same in stock, it was the most chaotic period I've ever known.....But are we going to suffer the same with some items this year ??????

As if the switch was turned off on the 1st of September business stopped. Sawmills who had been increasing prices suddenly started reducing them. One mill who we deal with actually reduced their prices 8 times in 6 weeks and their fax offers became so confusing that I nearly thought of finding a night school course to see if I could understand what the final price actually was.

2008

The year started quietly and only kicked off during the final days of January. As usual we had ordered our 100,000+ stakes and scheduled them in for delivery. Due to the slow start we had to put some deliveries back as we had simply ran out of space.

As the year has progressed two areas of concern have now come about..... Firstly due to smaller logs being used in wood burning power stations and biomass plants there is a shortage of small round stakes and, yes you've heard it before, Log prices for material that is available is more expensive. Thankfully our stocks stood us in good stead but we have now run out of some items and finding the replacements costing more than our original selling price! The main casualty is probably the 5'6" x 3" m/turned which we have had to increase to £1.40 having previously been £1.20. Other items increased are 6' x 4" m/t, 7' x 5" and 8' x 6". Please check price and availability on rounds.

It is rather ironic that many of the sawmills who were charging the highest prices last year are now the very same mills offering lower than market or sensible prices. As I say sawlog prices have changed very little, if at all. Some mills would advise prices have increased slightly. So how can these mills offer cheap prices now when they couldn't last year? The simple answer is they can't. Unfortunately over the years I have found the fencing supply industry to be one that likes to shoot itself in the foot. There could never be any question of there being a Government investigation into cartels in our industry. Prices which take 30 weeks to increase can decrease in 30 days even though costs to produce haven't come down. Some would say that this is simply commercial forces, but how many fencing stockists found themselves with expensive stock from last year now having to be sold at a loss due to their suppliers slashing prices.

I asked one mill owner why these prices were being offered. The answer was that this was cheaper than knocking off the night shift and that even the largest sawmills need a minimum amount of cash throughput. Since some mills cut blind, therefore building up stocks of one particular size, they are then obliged to try to move them on.

If you are one of those who is taking advantage of these offers we would ask you the following question. Are you taking these offers from a mill that was trying to work with you last year? Or is it a mill that wasn't keeping you informed and constantly changing prices and letting you down. If the answer is from the latter then should you really be working with them now, even if you are getting a good offer.

The second big big problem this year is steel prices which increased 10% in March, April and May. We understand that there may be further increases in June, July and September.

Again because we try not to change prices we recently enquired about, and took delivery of, £30,000 worth of steel mesh items having received a written quote. We were particularly pleased as it would have meant being able to hold our prices until the end of May or possibly June. When the invoices arrived and we noticed pricing errors which we queried.

It transpired that the UK agent for these manufacturers had dropped a major bollock when he did the pricing. The end result is that our welded mesh, line wire and some stock netting has increased in price without being able to give you any notice.

Having said this, our prices remain very competitive with our C8/80/15 now £47.93 Less discount. Full revised list enclosed.

Talk is that steel prices will continue to increase all year and shortages are being advised. Betafence advise that due to no wire available that they will no longer offer 5mm Galv. Chainlink.

New face

We are delighted to advise that Marthall Tree products will be joined by James Purcell from the 1st of June. James is the second piece of the jigsaw to shape the future of MTP. He has a long experience in timber & fencing sales and he will be calling on you soon to discuss your requirements and to see if there are any products which we offer that we can supply you with.

Over the years we have developed a loyal and large customer base. One of the things I have realized is that some customers still don't realize just how much of a variety of products we now offer. An example of this is a Lancashire based customer to whom over the years we have supplied chestnut and, more recently, chainlink.

Lovely people, pay well, but what about the posts, staples, nails etc. We ARE competitive on all those things but don't seem to have the opportunity to discuss other requirements with this customer. So James main role will be to make sure every customer knows exactly what we can supply. It may take a little time as there are 832 of you!!!

New Items

Taking of what we supply did you know we now stock a range of cuprinol products, wheelbarrows and, after much demand, concrete posts.

Our main area for the concrete products isn't ready yet but for now we have:-

2.4m 8' slotted inters £7.75

Ditto Corners £11.45

Plain base panels £5.82

Watch this space for more news and take care when pricing jobs over 1 month away!!

Fuel Prices

Due to the continued increases in fuel we have found it necessary to increase each of our delivery band prices by £5 with effect from Monday 19th May. Where possible any existing quotes where this is the only item increasing we will honour the price quoted.

This appears to be a global problem beyond the control of any government but surely any government worth its salt would look at reducing fuel duty, let alone reduce any further additions.

Our government doesn't have to hurt itself in the process either. When Diesel was 80p per litre then the vat thereon was 14p. With our recent invoice at £1.04 the vat is 18p. So fuel duty could be reduced by 4p straight away. Maybe if we weren't involved in pointless conflicts around the world, which we are never going to win, then our government wouldn't need to raise as much revenue. Will this country ever find a government that's prepared to stand up, be counted and think firstly about Britain and its own people.

Inflation

On a happier note we can all at least rest assured that inflation is about 3%. Well at least Gordon says it is. This despite double figure percentage increases on materials on a near monthly basis and tarmacadam has increased 3 times also this year.

Late News

Diesel at Mere On the A50 now £130.9 litre,...£1.50 by August ????

Stop Press----- Now £135.9 (28/05)!!!!

Cherry

All of you will at sometime either spoken to or been served by my colleague Cherry. Sadly Cherry suffered a stroke on Tuesday 27th.

At the time of writing she is feeling better in herself but still has no movement or feeling in her arm.

We will be putting a card at our Enquiries window for customers to sign during the next few weeks. Via her family we are passing on everyones best wishes and hope and pray for her speedy recovery.

Update- 13/06- Cherry now at home having all sorts of therapy with some feeling in the arm, speech still up and down.