

**Urgent Bedtime Reading!!**

**22/10/08**

**Go to bed NOW and please read.**

Treatment concerns.

Those of you who have been receiving our Newsletters from many years, and who keep the information sent, may recall receiving a booklet regarding the 'New Generation' treatment. This was the one showing a graph comparison of the rates of decay in the old and new treatments. It would be handy to also have this in bed at the same time.

At the time, you may also recall, I was suspicious of said graph, as it clearly showed 'New generation' treated timber decaying rapidly between years 9 and 10 were the graph, conveniently, stopped.

In the past few months we have been hearing rumblings regarding this new treatment. With various claim and counter claim being made by the chemical manufacturers and users. As these comments are contradictory we are going to stick to the facts.

During our first 17 years of trading we received 3 complaints due to failed posts. In each case it was proven that the posts had failed due to being in constant contact with water. In 1 case the concrete had been finished off in such a way as to create a hollow for the water to rest in.

In the past 12 months we have had 4 complaints, 3 on sawn posts and 1 on round posts. In the case of the round posts the posts are being used as a retaining wall back filled with soil which is being kept moist and is the probable cause of the problem. In 1 of the 3 sawn

cases the customer is unsure of the exact date so is not certain if these are New or Old treatment. In the second case a section of posts in the middle of a fence failed were in a dip in the ground level near a stream. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final instance was more straight forward in that a customer was moving a fence temporarily and noted rotting at the end of the post and alerted us. This post was sent off for laboratory testing and the results are still awaited. However, here lies an additional problem, this test costs 4 figures.

The wood protection association recently produced a 4 page leaflet regarding comparisons in numbers of failures between the two generations of treatment. It stated, that it had noticed no difference in the numbers of incidents brought to it's attention. Our response to this was that, as with crime figures, not all incidents are reported. If a test is going to cost 4 figures then it remains more economical for a supplier to replace a few posts than to do a test. It is very unlikely that the WPA would even be notified.

We recently sent out our annual enquiry for 100,000+ stakes and were horrified to be offered a Pointed post treated to Hazard Class 2. When we queried the logic of this the manufacturer, a potential new supplier for us, replied that this was normal for the UK market.

For clarity these are the hazard classes.....

HC1 Above ground ,covered. Permanently Dry. Insect risk.

HC2 Above ground, covered .Occasional risk of wetting

HC3 Above ground, not covered. Exposed to frequent wetting.

HC4 In contact with ground or fresh water. Permanently exposed to water.

We are sure you will agree that the above, coupled with the concerns over the general performance of treatment is one for concern. As one supplier stated 'with CCA treatment we had an excellent product. If an error was made or a mill decided to cut corners then the product would back you up, but with this new treatment everything has to be done to the letter because otherwise the product won't offer the same support'.

## **What steps we have taken**

With immediate effect we have introduced a system of traceability.

On round timbers we have purchased a particular given size **only** from 1 manufacturer. We now know that between certain dates where an item was produced. So if in a few years time a problem happens we will know exactly who the manufacturer was.

On sawn timbers we have allotted certain sizes to our mills, with the vast majority of items being produced by our main supplier A Diamond & sons. Many of you will already associate their name with one of quality and service.

All ground contact timbers are treated to HC4.

There is a down size to this of course. Every year there is a run on a particular item. Recently this was 1.8 x 100mm m/turned. As a result we pulled supplies from different sources and ended up with 4 different manufacturers' production in the yard at the same time. So if we were to have a problem who would we approach. Would it be a case of drawing the names out of a hat or rolling a dice. So if a supplier commits to producing a quantity of a given item then runs out a raw material half way through, we won't simply be able to source elsewhere without clearing existing stock, otherwise our system will be contaminated.

With regard to sawn timbers we will no longer be accepting any imported timbers and we won't so easily be able to accept bulk bargain 1 size offers.

## **Our Recommendations to you**

In a perfect world it would be lovely to think that all our customers get 100% of their products from ourselves. We are, however, realistic and realize that while a percentage of customers do indeed buy in this way many of you will not. Here are some increasingly important things to consider.

Take care when receiving guarantees. One manufacturer is currently offering a 15 year guarantee with 2 ' asterix\*\*'.

The small print uses words like 'Indication, Should & Normal'

Beware of offers which are too cheap.

Ask for confirmation of the treatment hazard class if something appears too cheap. Request the treatment certificate afterwards if you do decide to buy.

Keep your records for as long as long as you offer a warranty. We would suggest 10 years.

Currently we burn all our records after 7 years, which is the current liability for keeping records for tax reasons.

From now on, starting with our 2004 records, we will keep records of all order and supplies for 10 years, so if a problem happens we can trace the manufacturer.

If you receive a call from a client, in say 4 years, you too will need to identify who your supplier was and when. EXACTLY WHEN!

The first question we will ask is 'Did you buy this from us?'

Secondly, 'Have you your original invoice or acknowledgement of order?'

Only then can we start the process of identifying who actually made the item.

Create a system, that suits you, that shows where goods were bought from for which particular contract and when.

## **Conclusion**

We will continue to keep you informed of any developments in this matter. But, only relating to the facts and not rumour or hearsay.

We will offer full support in any problems you may have, but hope that by having good control of quality supplies that these problems won't arise.