

Timber Talk

Tunncliffe's

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A Tough Year

It has been a tough year for the New Zealand building industry. According to the statistics on building consents issued we are at a 10-year low. At Tunncliffe's we have seen a serious slowdown in sales to the primary building sector using products such as interior door jambs and window reveals for the aluminium joinery. It is good to see that timber joinery generally holds up better during a downturn. We suspect people are looking to alter or renovate their existing homes, which involves a lot of older style buildings including timber joinery. Also the upper end of the market generally seems less effected during times of economic slowdown, building projects in this sector often include timber joinery. However it does not mean that all joiners have been busy this year at all times. The work load is often variable or "patchy", the market is hard to read.

Forecasts are not great while we have been promised improvement for the last two years. But there is still enough reason to stay optimistic as in other areas of the world



economy business seems to be more effected by a downturn than for us here Down Under.

We have seen significant pressure on timber prices and other costs this year but have chosen not to increase our prices since 1st May 2010 considering the weak market.

The big project at our Edgecumbe site was the building of our new timber storage shed, we could no longer deny the fact that we were running out of space.

Progress within CTS Ltd on designing and testing exterior timber joinery to include double glazing and meeting performance standard NZS 4211 has been slow again this year. Like last year the market situation has been such that the participating companies had to focus on their day to day business. The last couple of tests will be done in the first two months of the New Year.

Further down in this Timber Talk we discuss the Durability of ThermoWood®230. Earlier this year we received the test results of our 7 year old durability trials at Scion in Rotorua (Former Forest Research Institute) which are very favourable. Our sales of ThermoWood®230 have seen consistent growth this year with more and more joiners recognizing the benefits of this new timber species. We have now included the ThermoWood®230 Weather-Seal Mullion to our standard product range. We have been working on introducing 50mm Clears to the market but are not quite ready yet, watch this space... We also found increased interest from



Christmas Break

At Tunncliffe's we finish the year on Thursday 22 December 2011, back in full swing on Monday 16 January 2012.

Tech-teachers at Schools to use our innovative "Green Timber" for outdoor furniture projects.

The beehive boxes are going strong as ever since we started making these in 2003. This industry is in a lift due to high demand of Manuka Honey and the market for pollination of horticultural crops. Our export to Australia is growing slowly but surely.

Managing Director Daan Olthuis decided to establish the Tunni Honey Apiary around the back of our factory aiming to produce some Tunni Honey in the season coming up.

We would like to thank our customers for their support in 2011 and wish you all a safe and happy Christmas.

New - ThermoWood®230 Weather-Seal Mullion

We have been making the ThermoWood®230 mullion for the last two years when there was a specific requirement for a "straighter" product for example when longer lengths are being used in tall joinery frames. Our mullion is a two piece laminated product, which over a length of 6.3 meter is prone to some bending. The added stability of the ThermoWood®230, which is twice as stable as the traditional kiln dried Radiata pine makes the mullion light, stiff and straight, exactly what joiners likes to use.

Change in the Weather-Seal Groove

Based on customer feedback and the manufacturer of the mostly used weather-seal we will be increasing the width of the weather-seal groove in all our standard profiles from 2.7mm to 3.0mm. This involves several changes to our production process. The change will be gradual over the next couple of months.



Durability of ThermoWood®230

The big news for our ThermoWood venture this year was the results from our ongoing durability trial at Scion in Rotorua (former Forest Research Institute).

The trial was established in January 2003 at Scion and consists of several tests setups such as decking, lap-joints and flat panels, fully exposed to the weather.



The exposure is extreme when compared with real-time applications such as joinery. The ThermoWood®230 in the trial is unpainted and in the full blazing sun all day. In April 2008 we were experiencing a draught, on inspecting the lap-joints, when opening them there were clearly wet patches visible. The decking boards are

nailed on 100 x 50mm H4 CCA bearers, they are like 1 m2 panels sitting straight on the dirt with the grass growing under and in between. When lifted during the same draught there was a moistures Walhalla for snails...

In summary the update from the scientists after 8 years of exposure is as follows:

"In above-ground tests ThermoWood®230 is slightly more durable than H3.1 treated radiata pine and Macrocarpa heartwood. These are both included in Table 2A sections 2A1-2A3 for weatherboards, fascia, barge and coverboards, plus 2A5-6 for exterior joinery and timber reveals for aluminium windows. Therefore ThermoWood®230 should be an acceptable substitute in low-moderate decay hazard situations for those species listed in NZS 3602:2003, Table2, sections 2A1-3, 2A5 and 2A6."

You can find full copies of Scion's letters on our website:
<http://www.tunncliffes.co.nz/thermowood/thermowood.htm>



It is impossible to classify ThermoWood®230 according to the hazard classes as there is no chemical involved. ThermoWood®230 is a new naturally durable timber species. Above comparison proofs that ThermoWood®230 performs better than H3.1 Radiata pine and a naturally durable timber like Macrocarpa we are all familiar with. The properties of increased stability (ThermoWood®230 is twice as stable as traditional kiln dried Radiata pine) and the fact that it has increased paint adhesion (due to the fact that all resin has been removed during the heat treatment process), are adding to the durability of the exterior joinery product.

In our following Timbertalk we will look closer into the durability of exterior timber joinery in general and the use of ThermoWood®230.

Making Space

We had to bite the bullet this year, we could no longer deny the fact that we were running out of space. Storage space encroaching production area is a problem as you lose efficiency and need to make room, whether the market is buoyant or not...

We are proud to say that we have seen some growth at Tunncliffe's over the last 6 years.

However it followed a period of downscaling due to the fact that we stopped exporting commodity type mouldings into Australia in 2004. Since then we have been focusing on the domestic market only and in particular branching out in niche markets. Diversification and servicing niche markets means we have to hold more stock due to the variety of sizes in both treated and untreated timber.

Another reason for increasing our stock holding capacity has been the change from H3.1 LOSP (Light Organic Solvent Preservatives) treated

Radiata pine to H3.2 Tanalised Ecowood in our joinery product range. The H3.2 product not only has a longer lead time but it is best practice to let the timber season for a while before machining it to its final size. The H3.2 treatment is water-born; the timber has to be re-dried before it can be further machined into high quality products. By the time it arrives in our yard the timber has undergone several processes. It was cut from a log, kiln dried, treated and then kiln dried again. The timber shrinks during the first dry, swells up again during treatment, and then shrinks again during the second drying which is causing a lot of stress in the fiber. The more time it has to reach its equilibrium the better.

In the meantime we have been adding on our ThermoWood® Kiln, stock and products.

The 441 square meter shed is good for holding approximately 500m3 rough sawn timber for which you need 12 truck-and-trailers. It went up in June and the building process itself took just under three weeks.

