

OUTDOOR STRUCTURES

Outlasts and outperforms

November 2014 Newsletter

Written by Ted Stubbersfield

[You are a Don Quixote Ted](#)
[New Deckwood Option to Help you Avoid Arguments](#)
[Introducing the Restaurateur Decking](#)
[Pine Posts - There is a Difference](#)
[More on Leaving Plastic to Tupperware](#)
[F14 Appearance or F17, Which is Better?](#)
[Blog for Timber+DESIGN Web Magazine](#)
[Books by Ted](#)
[Bridge Quotes](#)

Dear Reader

["You are a Don Quixote, Ted"](#)



I was talking recently to my friend Jack Norton, the timber preservation guru, and he said of my newsletters that I am still a Don Quixote. "Yes I know Jack," I replied, "Getting old and silly". While he did not deny that he said that what he really meant was that I was "tilting at windmills". That is of course a reference to Miguel de Cervantes' (1547-1616), work **Don Quixote de la Mancha**. The expression has many meanings but these days it frequently means taking on an opponent you know you cannot beat. I fear that my cause of the love of timber and excellence in its external use is generally a lost cause. For those out there who share the vision, let us continue to tilt at windmills.

Incidentally, if you are having a problem with timber treatment, Jack is your man. Contact me for details

[New Deckwood Option to Help you Avoid Arguements](#)



It has become necessary to add more steps to the production of Deckwood to protect specifiers. A few months back I visited a site where yet again the builder had substituted a different timber decking for the nominated Deckwood. The Architect had done a perfect job of specification but the builder, presumably wanting to maximise his profit, purchased a generic decking. It had a dressed face and was installed in an area where there was going to be a lot of water. This is a recipe for injury and litigation. I do not know the outcome but I felt very sorry for the architect who did the right thing and has to sort this mess out before someone is hurt. This is why I tilt at windmills, It is not the litigation though that is stressful enough but it is the human suffering that goes before. I have seen enough pain in those around me and I will try hard to avoid it happening to others.

We are now introducing **120x35 Deckwood Plus**. It starts off as the same Deckwood that you know and all the technical information is still the same but we have introduced two changes to make it harder to copy and make non conformance even easier to identify. These are:

- The top surface is lightly brushed to remove any small "hairs" and
- The decking is preoiled all round with Tanacoat

This option only adds an extra 65 cents plus GST per metre to the product and is good value. So if this is the way you want to go, and I can't imagine why you would choose anything else, we suggest that you

now specify "120x35 Deckwood Plus by Outdoor Structures Australia 07 54624255". The 120x35 Deckwood is the one that is stocked but other sizes can be made to order.

Introducing the Restaurateur Decking

Nigel is introducing a new size, 110x25, to the patented decking range and is giving it the name Restaurateur Decking. It is the decking illustrated above in the centre between 88x21 LifePlus and 120x35 Deckwood Plus. As the name suggests it is intended for commercial spaces such as restaurants. Like LifePlus, It is a kiln dried product and still uses 10# screws and 50 mm joists. **Sample boards of the three deckings can be manufactured and sent to your office.** Phone Keith on 07 54624255.

Pine Posts - There is a Difference

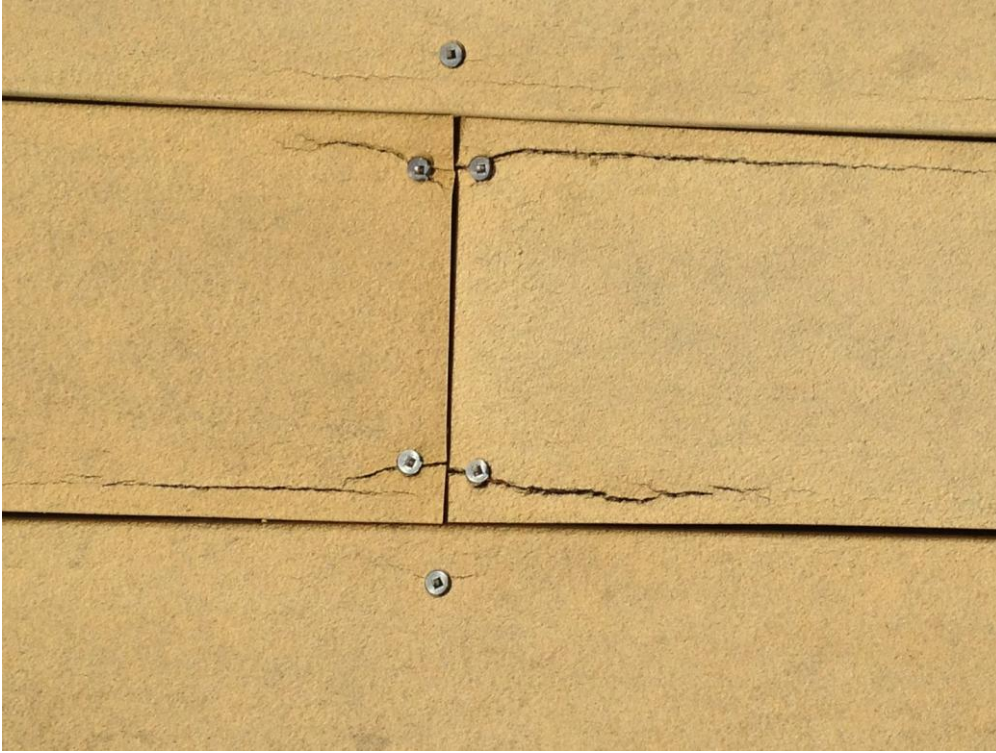


If you had asked me before a recent consultation I would have said unequivocally that CCA treated pine posts were one of the success stories of the timber preservation industry. I have never had any problems but obviously this client has. Again it is a case of using the wrong product in the wrong place. The posts were only 125 mm in diameter which means they were H4 (in ground non structural) rather than H5 (in ground structural). To go from a H4 to a H5 application is a 60% increase in chemical content. These posts really did not have a chance of succeeding.

When we built boardwalks we normally used 150 mm H5 posts. Now, we were purchasing the posts so we could control whether we purchased H5 or H4 (This size is available in both treatments) and furthermore we purchased from a supplier that certified there was the required amount of sapwood in relation to heartwood (minimum of 20 mm sapwood band). So I suppose it is no surprise either that ours worked. The correct sapwood content is very important. There was a time when CCA treated peeler cores from ply mills entered the market. They looked for all intents and purposes like Koppers logs but having no sapwood could only be coloured and so failed quickly. Having your 150 mm post certified as to having the correct amount of sapwood is very good and requiring a certificate to the effect should be part of your documentation.

There is a lot to be said for bypassing 150 mm altogether as you do not know what treatment you have once you cut or bury the stamped end. At least with 200 mm it is only available in H5. I may not have gone totally silly in my old age but I am getting a lot more cynical.

[More on Leaving Plastic to Tupperware](#)



One of my readers sent me images of another plastic deck that is going to be replaced with timber. In this case the customer insisted on having plastic decking. We can assist you with evidence if you find yourself in this a predicament. The problems with timber are quite easily sorted and we can guide you through it. In case you missed it [here is a link to last months newsletter which showed a deck where timber was chosen over plastic.](#)

[F14 Appearance Grade or F17, Which is the Best?](#)

One of our suppliers charges us the same price for F14 Appearance grade as he does for F17. Recently I was asked which one was better. For equal money, F14 appearance grade is most likely better purchasing if you are prepared to run the gauntlet of possibly larger knot size and it would be probably be stronger than an F17. But it is still not a perfect specification for many applications as it does not deal with heart and allows too large a knot for it to be used as handrail and decking. Most importantly it still does not deal with shrinkage, stability and durability. You will only get this by nominating one of the true royal species. [See the November 2011 newsletter for how to specify handrails.](#) below is a comparison of the two grades.

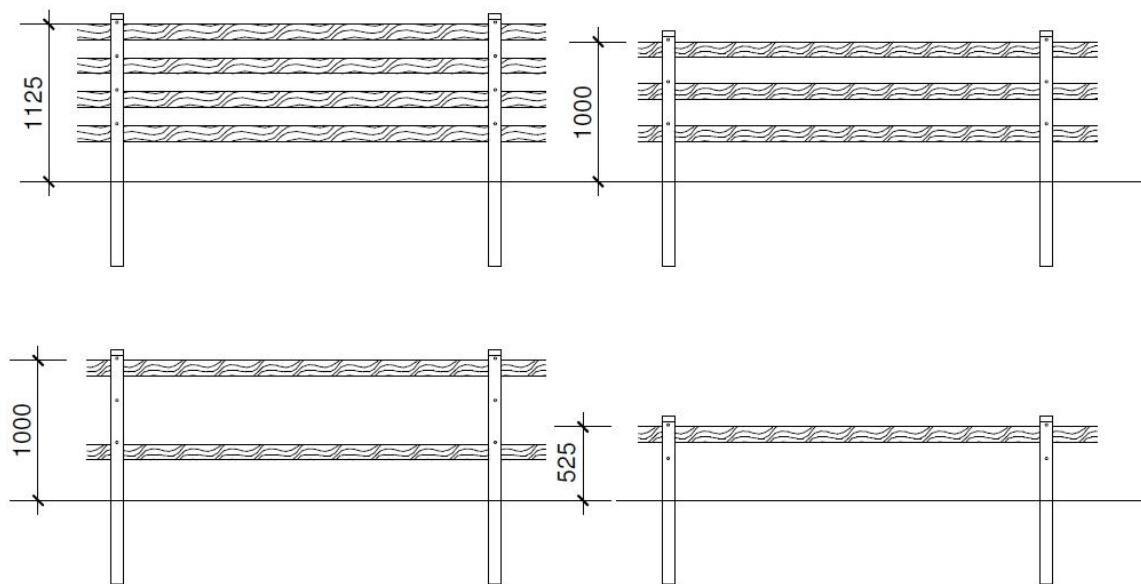
GRADE COMPARISONS APPLY TO SPOTTED GUM		
Fault	F14 Appearance	F17
Fractures and splits	Only end splits are allowed	Only end splits are allowed
Sawing tolerance	+ or – 3 mm	+ or – 3 mm
Unsound knots, holes	Not permitted	One quarter of face
Sound Knots	One third of the face	One quarter of face
Borer holes	unlimited (up to 3 mm)	20 per 100x100 mm (up to 3 mm)
Termite galleries	Not permitted	Enclosed - not permitted, open - as for want and wane .
Slope of grain	1 in 8,	1 in 10
Heart	Permitted in limited species to be one sixth of cross section.	Permitted to be one ninth of cross section.

Tight gum veins	unlimited	Unlimited
Loose gum veins and included bark	Not permitted	One sixth of the length and 3 mm max. measured radially Not extending from face to face
Gum pockets	Not permitted	Length: Up to three times the width plus 300 mm Width on one face: one third of the width up to 12 mm
End splits	One and half times width but not exceeding 150 mm in aggregate (per end)	Width but not exceeding 100 mm in aggregate (per end)
Checks	Up to 1 mm wide and one half the length	Up to 3 mm wide and one third of the length
Rot	Not permitted	3 mm deep and 150x100 mm per 2.0 m length
Went and wane, Lyctus susceptible sapwood	Not permitted	One fifth of the cross section

[New Barrier Fence Here](#)



The dimensions of the Australian version of the fence built by our friends at [Kurata Co., Ltd](#) in Japan for the Nihon Daira Zoo near Shizuoka have been settled upon. They are summarised below in the drawing below. If you have any interest contact me or Keith Smith.



Timber Induction Course eligible for CPD Points

I have checked the guidelines for Engineers Australia and the Board of Architects Queensland and I am eligible to award CPD points for the induction course or individual presentations. These are available to deliver at your office or university.

Timber Preservation.

Hardwood Grading.

Timber Decks – Designing for Durability,
Utilising Small Diameter Hardwood.

The Seven Deadly Sins of Timber Design.

[Blog being written for Timber+DESIGN Magazine](#)

My ninth blog written for Timber+DESIGN web magazine is whether to use lineal or set length decking for commercial decking. [Here is the link](#) Timber+DESIGN is a very useful magazine for those interested in timber that has been used imaginatively.

[Click here for a link to the website of Timber+DESIGN magazine.](#)

[Blog on surface finish of decking](#)

[Blog on whether decking should be a product in its own right](#)

[Blog on whether plastic decking all its cracked up to be](#)

[Blog on H4 and H5 treatment](#)

[Blog on whether to use stainless or galvanised fasteners.](#)

[Blog on using the correct decking fastener.](#)

[Blog on timber finishes on external timber](#)

[Blog on whether to use 50 or 75 mm joists](#)

To be on the mailing list, contact Kay Phillips [through this link](#).

Next month's blog is expected to be on collapsing decks.

Bridge Quote Requests

If there is any doubt that OSA make the best kit bridges in the country look at the [Berrinba Wetlands Project](#) . Not all bridges are equal. After encountering three bridges in one month that did not meet the Bridge Code I wrote the [May 2012 newsletter](#). Refer to it when assessing the suitability of quotes.

[Steel bridge Quotation Request Form](#)

[Timber Bridge Quotation Request Form](#)

More information:

If you have timber road/rail/heritage bridge issues,

we suggest you talk to:

Mr. Dan Tingley

Senior Engineer

Wood Research and Development

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Corvallis OR 97333

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