

Ted Stubbersfield

February 2016 Newsletter

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[A Reminder About Hardwood Posts in Concrete](#)



A reader recently sent me this image commenting that whoever put this post in does not read my newsletters. Hardwood and concrete do not mix. I have seen ironbark rot off at groundline in 14 years when set in concrete. Remember, use natural earth if suitable, fine crushed rock or no fines concrete. This is one of my [Seven Deadly Sins](#). So, seeing how easy it is to go wrong with a timber post, wouldn't it be better to use steel?

Well, No! It is even easier to do things wrong with steel. This image, supplied by David Tacon of Allinspect, shows a rusted steel post. He told me that this will be the second time the steel posts will have to have been replaced in 22 years and the homeowner is not happy! A tar epoxy style paint would have made a big difference. One such replacement paint is PPG's Sigmashield 880/Amerlock 880, a two-component, high-build, polyamine adduct-cured



epoxy coating and is mentioned as a standard which should be met or exceeded by the paint you specify/use. To have given it a fighting chance the concrete should have been 50 mm above the surrounding ground and sloped away from the post. As well, a lot of the posts used these days are duragal type product with a coating thickness of only 100 to 135 grammes per m2 where you should be aiming for 500. If you want to know more about the problems of steel posts I am sure David would be happy to talk to you and share his experience. His phone number is 1300 254 677



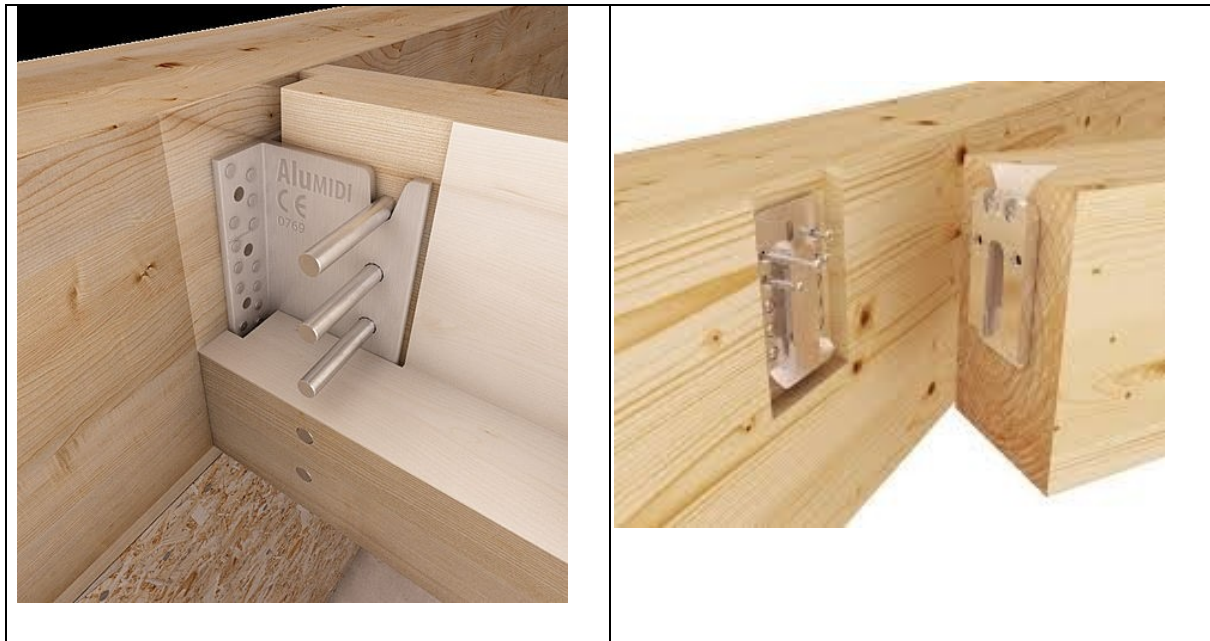
It is not all that difficult really. The image to the left is of some posts on a house my grandfather built over 100 years ago and are still going strong. They are de-sapped ironbark just put back in natural soil. Remember, concrete is your enemy with hardwood especially, as is not using durability one in ground timber. H5 treatment these days does away with the need to de-sap.

Report on Timber Queensland Seminar, February 25.



Timber Queensland held another CPD seminar on the 25th entitled *Design & Build: Timber Floors, Decks & Battens*. There were about 190 in attendance. I spoke on Battens, Colin McKenzie on decks and Robert Clague of NS Timber Flooring spoke on, obviously, timber flooring. Timber Flooring has got a lot harder than it used to be when the timber was milled locally, dried locally and used locally. What was new ground for me was the presentation by Silvia Pugnali of Rotho

Blaas Australia, an Italian manufacturer of specialty fixings and brackets. In my CPD session on timber joints I mention specialty concealed fixings that can be purchased in Europe. It was more of passing interest than of something that was going to have practical use due to availability. In Silvia's presentation she showed these brackets which are now available in Australia. It created a lot of interest. Here are some images. Her mobile is 0481 249 196.



If you are within easy travelling distance of Hamilton you really need a very good reason not to attend these meetings. Even an old hand like me came away with a better understanding. Here is the [link to be on the mailing list](#) for future events (see timber education alert).

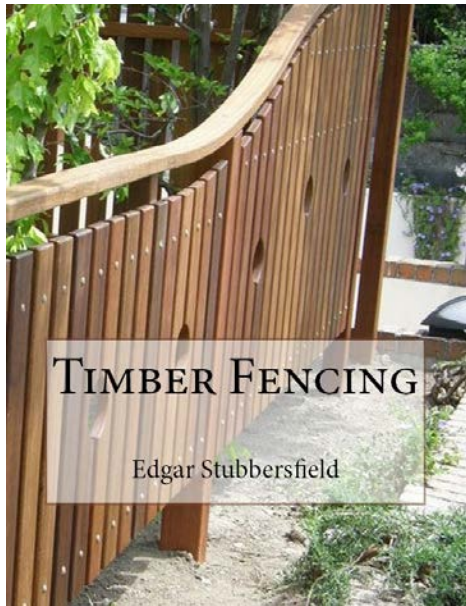
Fencing Brackets (Not a paid advertisement)

I was about to hit the "publish" button on Amazon and finally put my timber fence book to bed when I thought I had better have another look for fence bracket suppliers in Australia. In the UK there is an embarrassment of riches in this field but I could find very little here. Lo and behold after several unsuccessful searches beforehand, this time I found a Brisbane company, Maclock, that makes a comprehensive range. I met with the owner, Barry McConnell and he advised me that some Bunnings stores are stocking them but their IT people should be congratulated on the completely successful way that they have hidden them on their website.



A good bracket can speed up construction considerably but remember that timber treatment manufacturers stipulate that they should be stainless within 8 k of the coast and hot dipped galvanised thereafter. Other nailplate manufacturers require all external plates to be stainless. Fortunately, these are available in 316 stainless. If stainless is unavailable a good heavy coat of a tar epoxy style paint would assist. The downside is ensuring contractors use the more expensive version. Barry can be contacted on 07 3390 8399.

Timber Fence Book Finalised



The book on fencing, but for one image I cannot find, is complete. It covers hardwood, pine and cypress fences. Fences are a trap for architects and landscape architects as you are designing in an area where there are no standards, widespread ignorance among contractors (not my readers of course) and a huge variation of quality and performance. If you are a professional designer who has to provide certainty and repeatability in your fence designs, you need this book!

Do you like the fence on the front cover? It is a pity you have to go to Japan to find designers who appreciate the possibilities of spotted gum combined with customers who will pay for it. Image courtesy of Kurata Co. [Click here for more of their fence work.](#) I would like to hear of good fence

projects that can be added as case histories. What is next? Joints? I have also done a bit more on utilising small diameter hardwood.

What Do You Do With a Good Idea?

(Not a paid commercial)

When I closed OSA back in 2012, I misplaced some of the documentation on the patents and registered design for Deckwood. Our Patent Attorney was able to help of course and incidentally it does not expire until 2019. My recent contact with the attorney and the fact that I have successfully marketed patents and received grants prompted me to share some practical advice with you on how to proceed with your great idea. So you have an idea on how to make a better widget, what do you do next.

You already have a gut feeling which is why you thought about it in the first place [now, do your homework and confirm or disprove your initial thoughts](#), and with the internet it is very easy.

Consider:

- is it novel
- if not entirely novel is it a significant improvement on what exists
- can enough widgets be sold to warrant the effort?:

Once you have satisfied yourself that you have something worth pursuing, initially a Patent Attorney would be engaged to undertake a preliminary novelty search costing about \$1500. Once it has been established that there is no obvious prior art, you would then go to an [Australian Patent Application](#) which will give you a year's protection worldwide and cost about \$5,000. This gives you a year to market the idea before patents have to be taken out overseas, which is where the large expenses are incurred. If your idea is not worth \$6,500 it is probably not worth proceeding with. If the product can be licensed quickly, most of the future costs can even be

deflected to the licensee before they are incurred. If you are only interested in the Australia market, you can bypass the application and go straight to an innovation patent but it only gives 8 years protection in a very small market. I have been very happy with my Patent Attorney, his details are:

My Patent Attorney is

Dr Ewen C Wynne

Wynnes Patent & Trademark Attorneys

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ADDRESS: Unit 4, 27 Godwin Street, Bulimba, Brisbane, QLD 4171

Before you get carried away spending money and time, you have to have in the forefront of your mind applying for grants. It is not that hard to get a grant and there are more now than when I used to apply. There is no single path to receiving a grant. There is a multiplicity of funds available; even from overseas though usually on a dollar for dollar basis and some will even backdate the research already done. Basically, any project with a "Wow Factor" can obtain a grant. From day one, have a notepad beside your desk and record every minute you think about it, every postage stamp, ever kilometre travelled and every "in kind" contribution. You will be shocked how quickly your expenses mount up. You need to plan your strategy for your grant early on and I would talk to a professional sooner rather than later. I used to do the applications myself but it is probably best to use a professional now. The person recommended by my Patent Attorney is:

John Dunleavy

Intertrade Advisors Pty Ltd,

P 07 3238 8503, F 07 3003 1863, M 0412 077 311 E john@intertrade.bz

ADDRESS: Unit 10, 913–915 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley Qld 4006

Don't think the world will beat a path to your door if you invent a better mousetrap. The hard work starts with marketing. Being an innovator can be a very frustrating and heartbreaking path to tread as you will find that people prefer the same old buggy whips grandfather used,.

[How to Get People to Specify your Products](#)

Want some tips on how to get people to specify your products? [This powerpoint might give you a few pointers](#). I delivered this talk at an international timber treaters conference in Sydney and has a lot to say about innovation.

[A Mortgage Broker that Helped Us](#)

Not a paid commercial

A while back the ANZ bank was giving us a lot of grief. Despite having good assets, a regular income and never missing a payment, It was not good enough. Our accountant put us in touch with a mortgage broker who put in the extra effort and rescued us from their clutches. He

has has since become a good friend. I keep hearing more stories of people who need a friend like this so I am happy to give him recognition in my newsletter. His details are

Tim Rombouts, Rural and Metro Mortgages, Ph 0427 466 414 E. tim@ruralmetro.com.au

