

# Ted's News

## December 2020

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### [Index of Newsletter Articles](#)

Are you aware that there is an index for the newsletters from 2015 onward? [Here is the link](#)

### [Welcome to the Wonder Years](#)



Well, I have reached my three score years and ten. Sobering thought that according to the Good Book I am now living on borrowed time. In fact, I am beginning to look rather suspiciously at the expiry date on my Medicare card. If you were thinking of a [consultancy](#) or [CPD work](#), perhaps sooner rather than later might be good idea. As one of my birthday cards said, welcome to the wonder years, "I wonder where I left my glasses," or "I wonder where I left the car keys"

But seriously, knowing that I had a different approach to timber that resulted in long lived structures that age gracefully and knowing I won't be around forever gave me a sense of responsibility to write it down in my guides. They are good useful document and can help you avoid

the traps that others have fallen into. Check out the *Timber Resources* section at the end of this newsletter. This poor old mind of mine still can't yet understand why someone will build a deck for hundreds of thousands of dollars and will not spend \$50 on a guide to the pitfalls and a design check list. But that is old age for you.

## Choice of Paint Colour is Important



A new destination opened up recently in my hometown, Gatton. An accomplished 20-year-old pastry cook opened a truly amazing café come restaurant in a renovated 136-year-old home. But this section is not to discuss her almond croissants but the colour of her handrail which is black. Now, there is no mistaking, it looks good, but it is not good practice. In all matters with timber, accepting its strengths and beauty along with its ease of use comes with the need to accommodate its weaknesses. In this case it is the need to use light colours when painting the exterior. This is mentioned in Timber Queensland's Technical Data Sheet 2 - Finishes for Exterior Timber where it says: *Dark colours absorb more solar radiation than light colours, and can deteriorate the finish and the timber faster in service. White pigments reflect the maximum amount of ultraviolet light possible, and provide the best protection to both the timber and paint film.*

[You can find all the Timber Queensland Technical Data Sheets on the Wilson Timbers website.](#) Note that my recommendations only vary in relation to their guide Timber Decks Commercial, Industrial and Marine [e.g. I do not recommend 50 mm joists if face fixing.](#)

## Iconic Timber Bridge Restored in Paradise

Not a paid advertisement



Restored South Arm bridge at Brunswick Heads



Not a top fixing in sight

My friends at Timber Restoration services never cease to amaze me, and this bridge restoration at Brunswick Heads is no exception. Brunswick Heads on the Northern

NSW coastline is a small idyllic town, separated from the ocean shore by the tidal Simpsons Creek. The old timber bridge spanning the river is an iconic symbol of the town, symbolising the progress of the town from a logging shipping port to a popular tourist destination, renowned for its surfing and picnic spots. The bridge was built to transport rock wall boulders for the south wall breakwater construction and the local community loved the character of the bridge.

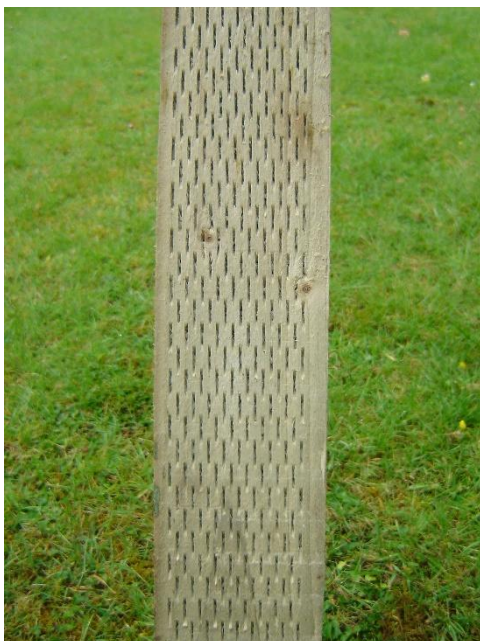
The South Arm bridge has 7 spans, is 6.15m wide and 63m long, supported on timber piles that have been encased with concrete sleeves and sand to protect them from marine borers (*Teredo navalis*) damage. With a community heavily invested in environmental issues, recycling and natural well-being, it made perfect sense for Byron Shire Council to restore and upgrade the bridge back to its former glory.

Most importantly, to increase the longevity of this iconic bridge, TRS has built the bridge without a vertical bolt being installed, preventing moisture from tracking down from the top into the girders and headstocks. Even the treated hardwood transverse deck has been locked down with M16 coach screws installed from underneath, producing a hex head-free deck that is free to drain with nowhere for water to penetrate the timber elements.

The transformation of this bridge is unbelievable – it is a classic beauty that together, with the good construction practices used to build it and Council's commitment to regular maintenance, this iconic structure will last another 80 years. For more information [contact Davide Maggiolo](#), the project manager on 0428 227 175. [For more projects visit the TRS website.](#)

[Follow this link for the full story with before and after images of the restoration of the bridge and substructure.](#)

### [Feedback on Incising Article](#)



Professor Philip Evans of the Department of Wood Science at the University of British Columbia, a regular reader commented on my [article in last month's newsletter on Incising](#). "A while ago I reviewed the subject of the positive effects of incising on checking of wood. Its a benefit of incising that's often overlooked (in comparison to the beneficial effect of incising on preservative penetration). [I hope the paper is useful to you.](#)"

Also, Jeffrey J. Morrell, Director of the National Centre for Timber Durability & Design Life at the University of the Sunshine Coast said, "I have incised very poorly treated CCA treated Douglas-fir timbers in a 35 year old retaining wall in

Oregon that are perfectly sound. Not exactly Far North QLD- but definitely comparable to Victoria/Tasmania. Incising definitely works."

### UTAS wants your Moisture Content Story



The image shows recycled spotted gum cladding which the builder assumed was dry but after installation shrunk so much that it came out of the groove. Hence my maxim, "Only trust your mother." Timber sawn from 100-year-old girders will behave just like green off saw timber from a mill as the member is just too large to dry. If you have ever had a moisture content problem, you would

understand that it would be time well spent helping to help bring about improvements in this area of supply.

[In a recent press release](#), Professor Gregory Nolan, Director, Centre for Sustainable Architecture with Wood at the University of Tasmania said. "Seasonal variations in temperature and humidity can regularly affect timber and wood products with impacts occurring along the supply chain." UTAS is currently inviting industry participation in an online survey of timber and wood products workers. All timber milling, fabrication, joiners, builders are retailers are encouraged to share their experiences with timber's moisture content. [Follow this link for the project information sheet with directions to the online questionnaire.](#)

### Need a Timber Consultant or Expert Witness?

I have over 40 years' experience in the industry and can assist you with many of your timber needs.

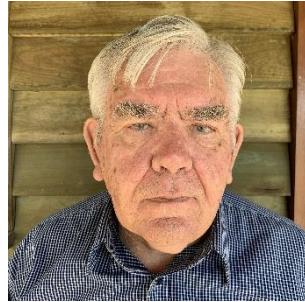
**Inspection** – I can assess timber products on their performance, fitness for purpose or cause of failure. I also examine whether best practice was used in design and construction. I have recently completed inspections on boardwalks, bollards, support beams and external timber furniture.

**Grading** - Quite literally, I have written the book on the subject. Recent experience has shown that up to 30% of timber supplied may not be to grade.

**Design** - I can provide detailed technical drawings and advice. I can also review already prepared drawings.

**Reports** - I have authored many books on timber and can prepare a report providing recommendations and practical instructions on to how to rectify issues.

Please note as I am now employed a Senior Timber Consultant with the firm BCRC all large and complex consultancies and requirements for an expert witness will be handled in conjunction with them. Existing consulting arrangements remain unchanged and I am also available to assist on small projects. For more information see [www.bcrc.com.au](http://www.bcrc.com.au)



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