

# Ted's News

## October 2022

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Learn from my four decades of experience with these CPD training sessions, some of which are available in eClassroom.

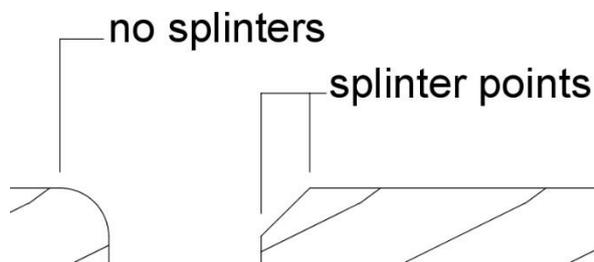
Topic 1	Timber Preservation	
Topic 2	Hardwood Grading	
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Topic 4	Utilising Small Diameter Hardwood	
Topic 5	The Seven Deadly Sins of Timber Design	<a href="#"><u>eClassroom link</u></a>
Topic 6	Timber Joints	

Topic 7	Architectural Timber Battens	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 8	Timber 101	<a href="#">eClassroom link</a>
Topic 9	Boardwalk Design (recommend delivered with Timber 101)	
Topic 10	Timber Handrail Design	

[Click here to learn more about these courses](#)

Are you aware that [Wilson Timbers/Outdoor Structures](#), who I am affiliated with and are suppliers of quality timber, will have me come to your office (in person or remotely) and deliver one or two of my CPD sessions for free? The only condition for in-person presentations is that, with travel, we can do it in a day from Brisbane in Queensland. [Contact Stuart Madill by email to arrange a time](#) or call his mobile 0403 385 707.

### Should I Arris or Pencil Round Edges?



Factory-produced timber is generally pencil rounded but on-site it is quicker to just whip out the planer and arris the edge. So, should I take the trouble to set up a router with a pencil rounding bit? In my guide [Timber in Playgrounds](#), I discuss best practice in construction, and what I have to say about

arris is, "Splinters in rough sawn timber are invariably found on the corners while the edge of square dressed timber are very sharp and can cause injury. Frequently playground timber is arrised using a power plane, but this is not recommended as instead of one edge that can splinter the asset owner ends up with two. Edges and ends should be pencil rounded using a router to remove the corner. My practice was to use a 6 mm rounding over bit on sizes up to 150 mm and 10mm on larger sizes."



Another factor in favour of pencil rounding is that you get a better paint build-up at the corners compared with an arris. This handrail is on my home and I will have to deal with that much sooner than I hoped.

As for the guide, I could hardly say it has been a best seller. Asset owners are still happy to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a playground and not spend \$55 for the guide with a checklist to ensure they are not purchasing an expensive money pit. Seriously, there should not be a landscape architecture firm or council in the country that does not have a copy.

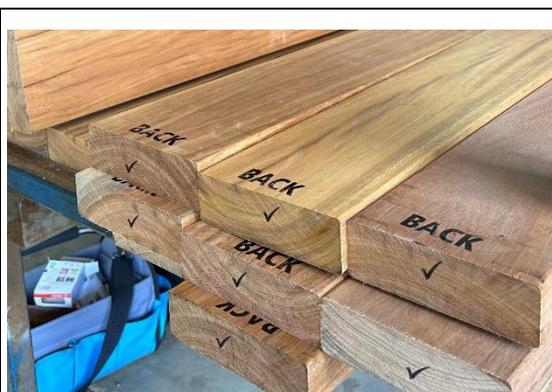
### Structurally Sound Does Not Mean Fit For Purpose



I took the above picture at the Opera Bar at the Sydney Opera House. Imagine a woman planning on having a great night out at the opera yet having it spoiled through her expensive dress being snagged on this piece of timber. "Not Happy, Jan," as the advertisement went. It matters not a whit whether the timber is structurally sound, some timber applications have requirements that go far beyond whether it will break or not. But even this piece of timber was perfectly suitable if the defect had simply been rotated out of sight.



Clint Fletcher and I grading seat slats



Marking slats for placement

When it comes to applications like external timber furniture, the most important job is usually assigned to the person who is the lowest paid in the whole process, i.e., the person assembling the furniture. Fortunately, there are some companies that are aware of this risk. This month I was asked by Lindsay Toppenberg of Naturform to go to C&B Architectural Timbers and, with the manager, Clint Fletcher, grade some seat slats for a high-profile project. Both these companies have had the wisdom to purchase my guide, [External Timber Furniture](#). Like the guide to playgrounds, invariably designers believe there is no value in owning the only book on the subject

or consulting its design checklist or its product-specific timber specifications. Surely, specifying house frame timber is good enough.

A range of factors influences the placement. When choosing the "back" i.e., the side hidden from scrutiny and contact, I considered:

- Chipping out, where some timber is torn from the surface during dressing,
- Which side had the most surface checking,
- Which side had the most treatment visible, and
- Which had the larger natural feature.

Timber which was already of a high standard, (I only rejected one piece) will be presented in a way that will be even more pleasing. Seriously, you do need my [External Timber Furniture](#) guide.

### Timber that is Almost Too Good



Deck being constructed in Forest Hill, Queensland



Timber framing delivered for job

On the way back from the grading job I passed through the town of Forest Hill and happened to come across one of my old customers, Peter Heenan, who was building a deck. Now Peter is one of those dying breeds of old-school carpenters that can build a house from the ground up, hang a door, pitch a roof, and have pride in their work. His framing was produced by the mill that I used to take turns about with the quality awards and their standard has not dropped. The timber was ordered as F14 and every piece was F22! Every piece I saw, if the species were correct, would have been suitable for park furniture. I expect the homeowners have little idea how fortunate they are.

Now surely this goes completely against what I was saying in the previous segment? Partly, but it goes to show that there is a big difference between suppliers and the personal ethic behind them. If your designs are going to be built by the lowest tenderer working from a low timber specification that is going to be purchased on price, you can't expect this quality.

### Need a Timber Consultant or Expert Witness?

I have over 45 years of 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.

**Trainer and Presenter** – I can provide tailored training to meet your CPD needs and also have experience at lecturing to universities and presenting at conferences.

Please note as I am now employed as 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) or [download their capability brochure here.](#)

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