

Sawmill Turmoil.

The New Year hasn't started so well for some in the timber industry. Gunns, the big timber company based in Tasmania, has had a pretty tumultuous time over the past few years. Most people are aware they are behind a new pulp mill just out of Launceston. This mill has been the centre of a lot of argument and it's future is quite uncertain at the moment. In an effort to secure support for the project Gunns has made an exit from the mainstream hardwood industry in Tassie and now only harvests plantation hardwood for its wood chips. On one hand this has opened up a few opportunities for others but many people have been adversely affected, losing jobs, facing uncertain times. On top of that the chip market in Japan has collapsed and the chip mill at Triabunna has suspended operations until they can rescue some sales. The flow on effect is that some sawmills, notably McKays near Hobart, have had to let some staff go as they are struggling to move their residues which were previously taken by the chip mill. This situation is a result not so much of the political situation but the economic one. Either way the Tasmanian economy is going to take another blow. There are some out there who would shut the industry down completely but I'm guessing neither they nor their friends and family work in the industry. Gunns have now sold all their sawmilling interests off in Tassie and the Victorian mill at Heyfield is on the market with negotiations underway, though I hear they have stalled a bit. The warehouses in Sydney and Brisbane have shut, right on Christmas leaving quite a few without a job for 2012. Fortunately a number have found new positions and we wish the rest of the former Gunns employees well. Some good news is that the old Jarrah mill in WA that was closed last year is about to start production again under new ownership. This will open a few options for sourcing Jarrah again which tightened a bit when the mill shut. Tas Oak and Vic Ash supplies are

still OK although the distribution is not as good as it was and we have been advised of new price increases that will take effect any day. At Monaro Timber we are trying to keep ahead of the game by anticipating timber requirements early. If you have any need for Tas Oak, Vic Ash or Jarrah let us know and we can chase it up for you.

Timber Trumpet!

A wooden trumpet that can be played like a real trumpet has been created by a South Gloucestershire wood turner. The beech wood trumpet, handcrafted by George King from Alveston, is made up of 120 wooden parts and took over a week to hand turn and build. Mr King, who only started the hobby in 2007, said he was "quite surprised" when it was played for the first time last week.

He said: "It amazed me, it plays far better than I thought it ever would." It took Mr King over a week to wood-turn and build his playable wooden trumpet. After dismantling a "borrowed trumpet", Mr King worked out how to create his wooden replica through a process of "trial and error". "I'd seen a trumpet and thought that's a challenge - I can do that", he said.

New Stock.

We are currently well stocked with Brushbox and Spotted Gum Flooring. This material is on hand and available for immediate delivery. Merbau decking is due any day, 50mm Brushbox and 38mm Blue Gum is also coming. We have some Vic Ash 285 x 19 dressed that will work for all sorts of furniture projects. Most other stocks are in good supply.

That's all for this month. *Regards Shaun*



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