

Ted's News

March 2020

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As we face this new corona virus world, my wishes and prayers for all my readers are that you stay well, and if affected to only have a mild dose. Very importantly, my sincere hope is that there will also be minimum disruption to your financial security.

[The Drought Uncovers Some Deadly Sins](#)



West Halden in November 2019



West Halden in March 2020



Lake Apex in normal times



Lake Apex now



Sins of yesteryear have been uncovered

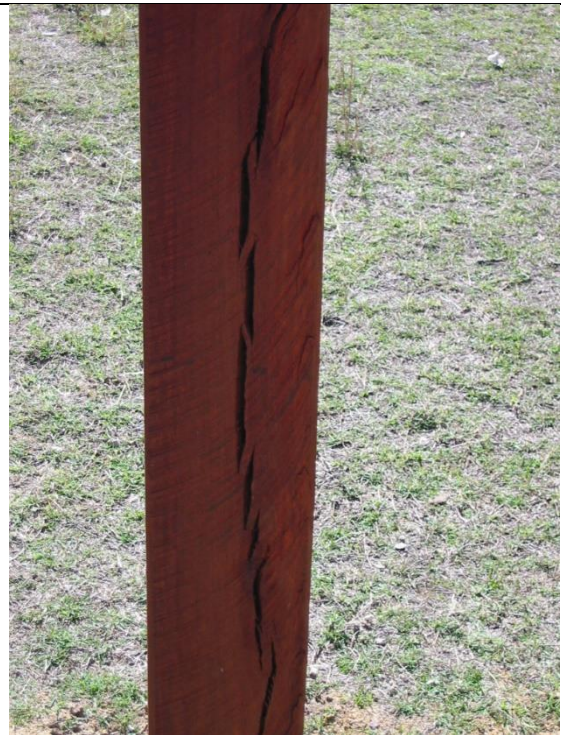
The top two images show the West Halden area at the top of the Lockyer Valley. The image on the left was from November 2019 shortly after a friend had to shoot his horses because there was no feed and the other is just a couple of days ago. Such is the visual transformation but the real situation for our irrigation farmers is still dire as the creeks have not run enough and the underground has yet to recharge. Across from my home is Lake Apex. It is great to have a water view and not have to mow the grass. Sadly, Lake Apex itself now needs to be mown. There has not been enough runoff to even put puddles in it. The extended dry has uncovered a design sin from the past which I will share with you.





viewing platform from 2005 with 16 posts 150x150, not one to grade



Natural round on two edges



Heart shake

	
50 mm and 35 mm knot group	Posts set in concrete

In 2005, the Gatton Council decided to build a timber deck at Lake Apex directly opposite my home without asking my advice - first mistake, They then engaged a builder who built quite a decent house but was not a specialist when it came to weather exposed buildings - second mistake. Finally, the timber was sourced from a mill that didn't know his standards and what was needed to succeed - third mistake. Of the 16 posts used, not one was to grade and not one was fit for purpose.

The 2000 edition of *AS2082 Timber—Hardwood—Visually stress-graded for structural purposes* required that any size under 175x175 be free of heart i.e. these 150x150 should not have had the heart in the centre. (the 2007 edition does allow it if you are not worried about how it looks and performs) The logs used to cut these pieces were so small that we have the heart in the centre and the natural round of the log on the outside of one piece. The sapwood was not even treated. The miller came to me to purchase some [Tanacoat](#) to "preserve" the timber by painting it on - Dear Lord give me strength. [Tanacoat](#) is a brilliant water repellent and UV blocker but does not contain a preservative. This can only be done in a treatment plant. The timber was spotted gum and the sapwood would turn to powder from the lyctus beetle without preservation in a Vacuum Pressure Impregnation (VPI) plant. Without the natural durability in the timber for inground structural use that meant the application was H5 so that was only CCA then.

As the timber shrinks on the outside and the centre remains the same size, heart centre timber always splits down one face and you can see how, after one month, the heart shake has developed to the point there are finger entrapments. Look at the knot size, one has a knot cluster where one is 50 mm across and the other 35 mm, a total of 85 mm. F17 in spotted gum allows a maximum of 25% of the face or 38 mm. This is way out of grade. The Builder and sawmiller had no idea that timber was unsuitable but ahh, they were cheap and why would you ever bother about independent verification of grade. This use of 150x150 with heart in was also my Deadly Sin of External Timber Design No. 5.

Look at the last post, spotted gum set in concrete. I have written enough about that not to comment further. That was Deadly Sin of External Timber Design No. 6. But I suppose I had better say something. [Here is a link to an early newsletter covering it from March 2011](#). (That right, I have been doing this for 10 yeras now and only missed one month.) As for this deck, the Council had the very good sense to stop work and cut the posts off at ground level though they could easily have had a very nice deck to look over the grass.

You can read more on this and the other sins in my book, [the seven deadly sins of timber design](#). It is only \$33.00 for the PDF. Hard copies are from Amazon. Seriously, what I don't understand is when someone is going about a project in timber that will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars that they do not invest one of my relevant books, spend say \$55 and learn what the pitfalls are and how to avoid them. That is not to mention the full day courses.

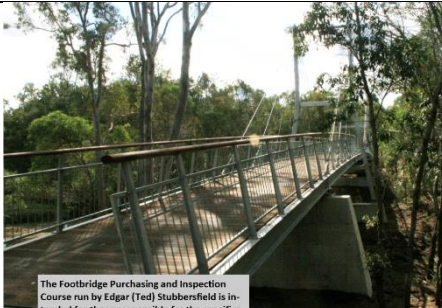
Next month I plan to have a section on how to use heart in timber correctly, because it can be used effectively.

[On Line Training](#)



Face to face training is going to be difficult for a while yet. There is a CPD course, Outdoor Timber: Design and Specification, up on [Eclassroom](#). The material on architectural Timber Battens has been finalised and will soon be up on the site as well.

Full Day Courses

 <p>The Footbridge Purchasing and Inspection Course run by Edgar (Ted) Stubbersfield is intended for those responsible for the specification, purchasing and ongoing maintenance of footbridges. The course will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare an appropriate specification• Assess suitable product to purchase• Recognise where corners are cut• Ensure value in purchasing• Know quickly where to inspect• Recognise suitable timber for bridges <p>I can offer valuable assistance to your organisation by empowering your people to recognise an appropriate low maintenance footbridge from one that requires expensive rectification over a shorter life span.</p> <p>On retiring from Outdoor Structures Australia, a company I founded in 1997, I have been concentrating on publishing guides on external timber and steel use and educating professionals in that field. You can now take advantage of my experience gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in exposed timber applications. This knowledge was developed initially through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I acquired a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and steel structures including bridges.</p> <p>With over 40 years experience of supplying timber and timber and steel products, I have supplied some outstanding low maintenance footbridges. Conversely I have also witnessed many structures that simply should never have been purchased.</p> <p>This course is centred on a checklist that can be used as a specification and also a confirmation that common shortcuts that affect longevity have been addressed. Through hundreds of images the importance of each line of the check list is explained. Participants will recognise what good practice is and how important it is to ensure it is used.</p> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0414 770 261 Email: edgarstubbersfield@gmail.com</p>	 <p>The Coastal Deck Design Course run by Edgar (Ted) Stubbersfield is intended for those responsible for the specification, purchasing and ongoing maintenance of boardwalks and decks with emphasis given to the more difficult coastal environment. The course will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare an appropriate specification• Assess suitable product to purchase• Recognise where corners are cut• Ensure value in purchasing• Know quickly where to inspect• Recognise suitable timber for decks <p>I can offer valuable assistance to your organisation by empowering your people to recognise an appropriate low maintenance deck or boardwalk from one that requires expensive rectification over a shorter life span.</p> <p>On retiring from Outdoor Structures Australia, a company I founded in 1997, I have been concentrating on publishing guides on external timber and steel use and educating professionals in that field. You can now take advantage of my experience gained building low maintenance steel and timber bridges.</p> <p>I have extensive expertise in exposed timber applications. This knowledge was developed initially through a number of formal research projects followed by years of observation. I acquired a deep understanding of the issues relating to designing, supplying and constructing fully weather exposed timber and steel structures including decks.</p> <p>With over 40 years experience of supplying timber and timber and steel products, I have supplied some outstanding low maintenance decks and boardwalks. Conversely I have also witnessed many structures that simply should never have been purchased.</p> <p>This course is centred on a checklist that can be used as a specification and also a confirmation that common shortcuts that affect longevity have been addressed. Through hundreds of images the importance of each line of the check list is explained. Participants will recognise what good practice is and how important it is to ensure it is used.</p> <p>Contact Details Mobile: 0414 770 261 Email: edgarstubbersfield@gmail.com</p>
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I have been collecting images and case studies of good and bad practice for over 20 years and learning from those images. I now have an unmatched library of do's and don'ts of external timber use. This vast collection of images allow me to clearly explain design issues in my two full day courses, one deals with footbridges and the other with coastal decks. These are incredible resources going into the close attention to detail that is required for a weather exposed timber bridge or deck to succeed.

These are serious courses that are unmatched in the value you will extract from them by delivering expensive infrastructure that ages gracefully and with little maintenance. They both start by going through a design checklist and explaining, line by line, why you must attend to that point. They then look at a number of case studies, showing good and bad practice.

[Click here for footbridge course brochure](#)

[Click here for coastal decks brochure](#)

Call me to discuss your training needs. These courses, which are eligible for CPD points, will give you an incredible understanding of good timber use. Call 0414 770 261 or [email me](#).

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 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



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