

The log business had taken off so dramatically, Andrew said, that he now bought timber from a one-hundred-mile radius and kept the Posch working flat-out. 'On a good day, we process around 22 tonnes of timber which would be almost impossible without the log deck', he added.

GWF, finding that market demand had increased so significantly, have just become the proud owners of Posch's latest machine, the K4000. 'This', Andrew commented, 'has a phenomenal output rate, cutting up to 18in material and, with a 22t splitting force, it can multi-split into 15 pieces'. Having researched the market, he felt that alternative machines were not up to the job.

'On my first day using the machine, I filled a Marshall 10t trailer in 45 minutes. I then gave my wife, Melanie, a go and she quickly mastered the controls while I craned on the timber. One hour later, the Marshall trailer had been completely filled again'.

The 4000 can not only convert big timber but it has a special arm to push bent timber into place. The infed spiked roller system is high-speed and the chainsaw blade features harvester chain which can be changed within a mere 30 seconds.

Returning to the HHL/GWF trailer chapter of the story, John Wilson points out that the idea of a multi-purpose unit fitted with a timber crane was not new ('they have been available from Germany for quite some time now'). The main drawback, however, had been the price.

'Good quality they may be but every job has its budget and they are often too expensive when added to the Unimog or tractor which has been sent out to tow it'.

Botex manufacturers EFM had recently begun fitting cranes to used agricultural tipping trailers to provide a genuine all-product carrier. 'We had made a few removable bodies to fit on our Euro 11000 in the past', John said.

However, these – while effective – were a bit on the expensive side and removing the body was not always as straightforward as intended. The unit was also a bit bulky which also made it heavy (not always ideal when travelling over someone's garden!).



Logs await processing on the log deck.

'Our first opportunity came', he continued, 'when Andrew Burman spoke to us at the APF show. He required: 'A big lifting Botex on a tipping trailer which could carry machinery to site and return with any waste produce including wood chips, stones, soil or, indeed, large pieces of timber. He already had the Marshall trailer and a deal was struck on a crane with fitments'.

The standard trailer drawbar was removed and replaced with a heavy-duty Botex equivalent. The chassis was strengthened as was some of the main beam channel. Standard Botex fold-down legs and pto pump and tank were fitted. As can be seen in the photo-taps here, John commented, 'Andrew handles some pretty serious timber which he brings back to his yard. It is then broken down using his 30t Posch horizontal Splitmaster and then put through his Posch 301 firewood processor and Fuelwood Splitta'.

'I like to keep my yard tidy', Andrew says. The split billets are stacked in long tidy rows

which utilised space and helps the wood to dry quickly. Some of the timber he lifts is very big and heavy. Wouldn't that damage the trailer sides? 'The Monocoque solid sides are remarkably strong and do not easily damage, he said.

'Although the big wood can be tipped out, I now tend to lift it with the crane and tip the smaller material out after. This helps to protect the trailer and, at the same time, allows the wood to be stacked in a tidy fashion. I did consider buying a tractor fitted with the crane but, to be honest', he continued, 'I prefer the combination I have because – as it has its own pto pump and tank – I can utilise it in the yard on whatever tractor is available at the time'.

Taking up the story, John Wilson said: 'Some users do have a crane mounted on a Fastrack or a Valtra/Valmet. We recently sold a Valmet 8150, with a roof-mounted 560TL, to Ian Logsdail of Oswestry. Ian had a trailer specially made by A.W. Trailers of Hereford. The trailer was built with chipping in mind and

Melanie Burman with Posch K4000 – heart of the firewood processing operation.

