

Grange Wood Fuels also purchased a Splitta from Fuelwood which allowed them to split logs from cut rings of timber and net them up neatly in their bagging system – a high output machine which is capable of up to a 100 nets of logs and kindling an hour.

The only problems now were producing enough precision cut rings to keep the splitter working to capacity and producing enough volume for the bulk trade. GWF looked at various machines and had some on demo. Some were designed for straight/light timber, and many of the machines they viewed did not have more than a 5 to 7 tonne splitting force. Also rings would jam in the splitting knife, making production intermittent. GWF needed a powerful splitting force and saw just that in the demo of a Posch 301. The circular saw and 12 tonne splitting force meant they were able to keep the Splitta fed with clean cut rings and were able to keep on top of bulk logs. They found production much faster when they incorporated a log deck and cross feed system as it was then possible to continually cut and process logs of up to 13" diameter. They estimate that 40% of the time taken in processing was lost in manually putting timber onto the 301. The log deck can now be loaded with the Botex crane and production has now become continuous.

After cross cutting the table tilts to dump the log into the splitting chamber. This allows pre-split material to be easily processed. Some machines rely on round logs rolling into the splitting chamber, but cannot always deal with split material. Also with this method, time is taken up with straightening the log.

Knife changing on the 301 takes only minutes and is adjusted hydraulically. The powerful 12 tonne splitting ram copes well with knotty rings and GWF can also drop larger rings in manually for splitting.

The log business has taken off so dramatically that GWF now buy timber from within a one hundred mile radius and keep the Posch



(Above) Matthew Alcock cuts rings on the Posch 301 which he, together with Denis Hopkins and Caroline Burman convert and bag using the Splitta (below). (Bottom) Andrew Burman in the log drying barn.



working flat out. On a good day they process around 22 tonnes of timber with the 301, which would be almost impossible without the log deck.

GWF have found that demand has increased so significantly that they have recently become the proud owners of Posch's latest machine, the K4000. "This machine has a phenomenal output rate," said Andrew, "cutting up to 18

inch material, and with a 22 tonne splitting force, it can multi split into 15 pieces." Andrew researched the market and felt the 4000 was best option.

"On my first day using the machine I three quarter filled a Marshall 10 tonne trailer in 45 minutes. I then put my wife Melanie at the controls which she quickly mastered while I craned on the timber. One hour later the Marshall trailer had been completely filled again.

"Not only can the 4000 convert big timber but it has a special arm to push bent timber into place. The infeed spiked roller system is high speed and the chainsaw blade is harvester chain with chain changing taking only 30 seconds."

Andrew is currently restructuring his storage and production systems. Now that he can produce large volumes quickly he wants to pick and choose his time slots on the produc-

tion. "I want to utilise my time better. Often we finish a job well before the end of the afternoon. It is now feasible to set up for as little as one or two hours' production and still get a worthwhile output." Andrew intends to store processed material under cover which will allow him to respond quickly if demand is high.

Why have Andrew and Melanie been so successful? "Hard work and commitment," says Melanie. "Andrew works like a Trojan and is so full of energy."

The production potential of the 301 and K4000 means that Andrew and Melanie can guarantee the supply of large volumes of both bulk and netted firewood.

They are always looking for new sources of wood supply and customers for their bulk logs and net bags.

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