

**“A CAT HAS NINE LIVES, WELL I’M LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE ENJOYED TWO – LIFE BEFORE PREMIER AND LIFE WITHIN IT – AND FOR ME THE LAST 10 YEARS HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN THE BEST OF MY LIFE.”**

**GARETH JOHNSON**

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Premier Forest Products Limited imports and distributes a diverse collection of timber and timber-based sheet materials for UK consumption. The company's wide range of products includes Green Tree, Brazilian, Far Eastern and Chinese plywood, Russian softwood, hardwood plywood, MDF, chipboard, fibreboard, machined softwood goods and carcassing timber, all stored and received at warehouses within Premier's Newport Docks' Head Office and the Birmingham site. Premier believes that timber is one of the earth's most important resources – protecting our natural environment and providing a renewable source of materials. We are committed to responsible stewardship of the forest biome by promoting the sustainable trade in timber and timber products from well-managed forests.

# FOREWORD

The UK consumer demand for sustainable timber is hard to categorise and even more difficult to predict. Consumers want maximum choice and lowest cost – but we are also prepared to pay extra for organic fruit and vegetables. 5% of all coffee sold in the UK is now Fairtrade, thus guaranteeing a fair price to the producer, yet cheap clothing from the sweatshops of Asia still flies off the shelves of Primark in the high street.

Confused? You are not alone in the timber industry! The ordinary consumer seems oblivious to timber certification, and unwilling to pay any price premiums, yet they tut loudly when Greenpeace uncover another government building site with controversial timber from the last rainforest in the SW Pacific.

Regardless of such inconsistencies, the UK timber trade is rising to the challenge of

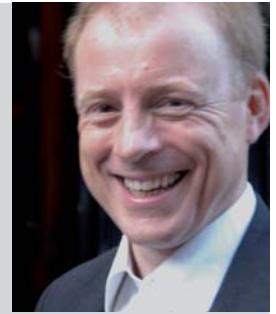
sourcing legal and sustainable timber. Why? Well the argument is blindingly simple - we want to establish timber as the sustainable building material of choice and therefore need to protect its reputation wherever it is questioned. The result is that trade is steadily sifting out questionable suppliers, managing that risk for customers and even taking on some of the cost of sourcing timber from well managed forests in partnership with organisations like the Tropical Forest Trust. Over 40 UK traders are checking their suppliers using the TTF's independently audited Responsible Purchasing Policy.

The results of this work speak for themselves - UK trade is now importing substantial volumes of certified timber; we conservatively estimate that at least 59% of UK softwood is certified, 35% of our hardwood and 19% of our plywood and panel products. To sell this timber as certified nearly 3000 timber outlets in Europe (over 500 in the UK alone) are now audited under the Forest Stewardship Council scheme, including many big retailers and merchants. This is an amazing success story and something to consolidate and capitalise on.

Timber traders such as Premier Forest Products are leading the charge for sustainable timber. One of the first to support the TTF's Responsible Purchasing Policy and China Action Plan, Premier has a system to help its suppliers get certified. By securing a brand new South American source of FSC plywood, with its tough environmental and social standards – they have gone the extra mile and they can walk the walk as well as talk the talk.

UK government timber procurement policy is increasing UK demand for such timber, and it is being copied in our building industry (through Ecohomes and the like) and in other European markets. Premier is well placed to take advantage of this emerging market segment and I wish them every success and many repeat orders from satisfied customers.

**Andy Roby**  
Head of Environment and CSR  
Timber Trade Federation  
London



## PREMIER NEWS

# PREMIER SCORES A PERFECT TEN

Fifty-seven year old Gareth Johnson is arguably the most highly trained specialist in the timber industry. The Operations Manager at timber importer and distributor Premier Forest Products is about to celebrate his 10th year at the award-winning company that he joined following a 'thirty-one year apprenticeship' at one of the industry's largest importers. In fact, so impassioned is he by his job, that he refers to his time since joining Premier as the 'very best of his life'.

And while this level of job satisfaction may be unusual, for Gareth it's a fundamental part of why he is proud to be the longest serving staff member at Premier, and why he is looking forward to his next ten years at the organisation.

### Gareth Johnson comments:

"A cat has nine lives, well I'm lucky enough to have enjoyed two – life before Premier and life within it – and for me the last 10 years have certainly been the best of my life. When I joined the company there was a £3 million turnover. This has now reached £30 million and I'd like to think that I played a part in accelerating this growth. The ethos at Premier is to empower all staff, from the most junior up, to feel that they really can make a difference. We have a very informal management structure, and the directors are

very approachable, and that's why as a company it's such a great place to work."

Indeed this 'approachable' ethos, may have something to do with the fact that Gareth himself, in pre-Premier days, was responsible for training some of the Premier Forest Product directors when they themselves were learning the ropes of the timber industry.

"I witnessed the three Premier directors at the very start of their timber industry careers, and in fact I helped train one in my sales team, and convinced another to join the office I was working from at the time. Obviously things have changed immeasurably since those days, but the one constant is that each of the directors is still as enthusiastic and passionate about the

Right: Gareth and Premier's three Directors marking the anniversary. Gareth was presented with a box of premium champagne on Friday 31 March.



industry as they were all those years ago. Indeed I think that's what has made Premier so successful – the fact that we're constantly looking at new and different ways of doing things means that as a company we're constantly evolving and our customers reap the benefit of this."



# URGENT ORDER... IT'S CHILD'S PLAY

AT PREMIER WE KNOW BEING LET DOWN BY A SUPPLIER CAN HURT YOUR BUSINESS. SO IF YOU'VE BEEN LET DOWN, OR EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T, CALL US – THE BUILDER'S MERCHANTS EMERGENCY SERVICE.



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PREMIERNEWS

# HEALTHY BENEFITS

## PREMIER FOREST PRODUCTS LAUNCHES GREEN TREE PLYWOOD, AN FSC PLYWOOD FROM CENTRAL SOUTH AMERICA

“Growing public awareness of forest destruction and degradation has meant that our customers and the industry as a whole now expects quality products at a realistic price which also have increasingly important green credentials. That’s exactly what Green Tree Plywood is.”

**TERRY EDGELL**



Far left. Terry Edgell, Director at Premier Forest Products. Left. South American model appreciates the new environmentally friendly plywood

A Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited Central South American Plywood was launched in the UK market this month. Green Tree Plywood, which is imported and distributed by leading independent timber importers Premier Forest Products, has been welcomed by FSC and Greenpeace, and fulfils an industry need for a quality and cost effective sustainable plywood product.

After nearly a year of research and development work, Premier’s first containers of Green Tree Plywood arrived in the UK at the beginning of October, and the company is so confident of the market demand of Green Tree Plywood that they have committed to over 1,000 cubic metres in forward order quantities in an exclusive supply deal. The new plywood will also be supported by a promotional campaign featuring a South American model.

Terry Edgell, Director at Premier Forest Products, says:

‘The demand for fully certified Plywood which meets social, economic and ecological needs has never been higher. Growing public awareness of forest destruction and degradation has meant that our customers and the industry as a whole now expects quality products at a realistic price which also have increasingly important green credentials.

That’s exactly what Green Tree Plywood is. There quite simply is nothing else like it in the marketplace. We’ve invested heavily in the product not only because we’re convinced its what our customers want and need but also because as a company we recognise the importance of responsible environmental practices.’

FSC UK Construction Advisor, Beck Woodrow, comments; “Premier Forest Products’ commitment to sustainable timber is very welcome, and a clear answer to those who say that FSC timber is hard to find or vastly more expensive. As FSC’s Construction Advisor, I deal with enquiries ranging from multi-million pound projects to local authority renovation, so knowing that we have such dedicated and knowledgeable suppliers as Premier on hand is very encouraging and gives assurance that it is possible to put environmental policies calling for FSC timber into practice on site”.

Patrick Venditti, Greenpeace’s Senior Forest Campaigner, adds; “Buying FSC is the best assurance of environmentally and socially responsible timber sourcing. We’re pleased that Premier Forest Products has responded to environmental concerns with this move to FSC certified product.”

And, so committed is Premier to environmental

excellence that the company, unlike many timber importers, has committed to purchasing significant quantities of Green Tree Plywood to make it a viable brand choice for those customers committed to environmental purchasing.

Over the past 2 years, Premier has stepped up its environmental activity, undergoing the rigorous processes that this entails. Premier has recently been through the scrupulous BM TRADA certification process, and were pleased to be awarded with FSC and PEFC Chain of Custody certification. To achieve certification, companies must undergo an assessment from an independent, qualified and accredited expert who verifies in writing that the wood flow from forest to business follows and meets the exacting requirements of the certification scheme.

Green Tree Plywood is available in a range of sizes, from 4mm – 25mm. In addition to the commercial grade, marine grade specifications will soon be added to the range - expected to be another industry first for plywood from this region. For further information please contact the sales team at Premier on 01633 254422 or e-mail [info@premierforest.co.uk](mailto:info@premierforest.co.uk). More information on Premier and Green Tree Plywood can also be found on Premier’s website, [www.premierforest.co.uk](http://www.premierforest.co.uk).



# FLEXIBLE DELIVERIES..... IT'S CHILD'S PLAY

**AT PREMIER, WE DON'T DICTATE DELIVERY TIMES – YOU DO. WE HAVE OUR OWN FLEET OF LORRIES TO PROVIDE A SERVICE THAT'S AS FLEXIBLE AS YOU NEED IT TO BE.**



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**PREMIER NEWS**

# NEWPORT SCHOOLS SCORE CASH PRIZES WITH PREMIER

Newport High Schools scored cash prizes this October when the winners of a wood work competition, sponsored by leading independent timber company Premier Forest Products, held its presentation ceremony.

Although a number of schools entered, St Joseph's RC High School in Newport walked away with the top £350 prize, best project in Year 11 was won by Leigh Davies from Hartridge High School, Year 10 was won by Shane Fisher of St Julians RC High School and in Year 9 there were two winners Grant Thompson and Natasha Probert. Each pupil was awarded £50 for their winning pieces of work.

The ceremony was held at The Holiday Inn in Newport. The presentation, hosted by Premier Forest Products, and attended by the Mayor of Newport was a prestigious event and a fitting conclusion to a successful competition.

Premier Forest Products wanted to give the

school pupils the opportunity to be creative, think about their local communities and to become more aware about the possibilities of working with wood. Competition entrants were required to create something out of wood that will improve their local environment- such as a piece of street furniture, a modern art sculpture or a toy for their local play group. Entries were astounding and ranged from a toy train to a car sub bass box.

During the afternoon Premier Forest Products presented a cheque to the winning school and also cash prizes to individual pupils entries. There was also an opportunity to view all the short listed entries that were on display during the afternoon. Following the event, entries were displayed for a week in the Civic Centre in Newport.

Nigel Williams, Director at Premier Forest Products said; "Myself and the team at Premier were very impressed with the quality of entries, all of which have been of an extremely high calibre. The amount of work and effort that the entrants had put into their projects is phenomenal. The entries this year have truly set the standard for this competition for years to come."



Left. Grant Thompson from St Josephs RC High School and other pupils from the school, with Nigel Williams Director at Premier Forest Products and the Mayor of Newport admiring a wood work model of the transporter bridge, Grant's Year 9 winning entry.

## PREMIER BOOSTS SALES BY TRADING WITH SWEDEN THROUGH NEWPORT'S DOCKS

Leading independent timber importers, Premier Forest Products, is set to boost its sales and bolster Newport Docks' economy thanks to its launch of new shipments from Sweden.

Scandinavian vessel **Stina** arrived in Newport's Docks this summer laden with a range of the finest European white wood sourced in Sweden. It was the first of several regular shipments of higher grade, higher specification timber products from Sweden into Newport. The vessel, which can accommodate 2,500 cubic metres of timber, contained a combination of regularised and treated carcassing timber, kite-marked batten and CLS framing timber. The carcassing timber has been Kiln dried, graded to C16/C24 and planed. The packs are well presented and look clean and bright.

Premier is the only company in South Wales importing this type of product from Sweden into Newport, and the shipment has already attracted a lot of interest in the building trade. The company's sales team had orders confirmed for a third of the timber onboard the vessel before the vessel had even left Sweden.

Much of the shipping to and from Newport's Docks has ceased in recent years, however Premier Forest Products feel it is important to keep utilising local opportunities whenever possible. Paul Ford, Softwoods Director at the company, said:

"This is an exciting initiative for us and for Newport. Shipping via Newport's Docks is a great way for us to import large quantities of quality timber practically to our front door, helping us to efficiently supply the quality timbers to the South West and Wales. It is also a great way for us to support the local economy and ensure we can bolster our stocks while keeping our road mileage lower.

"I will be going out to Sweden shortly to organise future cargo into Newport, and the sentiment of our customers and our sales team is that this type of cargo will continue to be in high demand for the foreseeable future."

## INDUSTRY NEWS & GOSSIP

**WHICH INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE COMICALLY FELL OFF HIS BICYCLE IN CENTRAL LONDON AND BROKE HIS COLLARBONE?**

**WHICH SOFT WOODS DIRECTOR WAS RUSHED TO HOSPITAL AFTER MISTAKING A BOUT OF INDIGESTION FOR A HEART ATTACK?**

**FOR ANSWERS CALL PREMIER...**

## COMPANY PROFILE

### Jo Walker

**Favorite film?**

Hm. Probably Spiderman! It's the ultimate popcorn superhero movie for slightly overgrown kids.....



**Who do I most**

**admire?** Sir David Attenborough as he's inspired generations to have a fascination and respect for the natural world. He's got the best job in the world. Er...behind working for Premier of course....

**If I won the lottery...I'd travel the globe seeking the ultimate fishing experience (only if the weather's nice though), pausing only to buy a whisky distillery in the highlands and play video games until my thumbs seized up.**

**If I were stranded, the thing I would most wish I had would be My xbox 360...assuming it was sellotaped to my fishing rod. Yes there's a pattern developing here. Oh, and my lovely Wife and kids (looks nervously over shoulder)**

**Worst working day at Premier?** The day I looked at a photograph of myself in the sales office recently and felt compelled to ask the PR company to airbrush some extra hair in to make up for a worrying deficiency...

**Best working day?** Any day where you've got both happy customers and happy directors! And yes, it does happen!

**Achievement I'm most proud of?** Being given the all-clear from Cancer and going on to have two great kids.

**Three words to describe me?** 'Happy', 'polite', 'ears' (!)

**Three words other people use?** Hopefully 'happy' and 'polite' ...and alas, almost certainly 'Ears' too (though 'thinning' is a distressing possibility...)

**Motto?** You've got to laugh...



# ALL SHAPES AND SIZES... IT'S CHILD'S PLAY

AT PREMIER, WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON SOURCING UNIQUE PRODUCT, FOR YOUR  
UNIQUE BUSINESS NEEDS. SQUARE PEGS INTO ROUND HOLES? THAT'S NO PROBLEM.



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# SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS FOR PREMIER

Newport based Premier Forest Products, one of the UK's leading timber importers and suppliers, has gained itself yet another prestigious accolade, and has become one of the first timber traders in Wales to be awarded with a PEFC and FSC Chain of Custody certification with BM TRADA Certification Ltd.

Premier, which imports premium timber and timber products from around the world, has become an innovator and a leader within the timber trade in Wales, and has now added another notch to its belt by gaining this certification.

Under the PEFC and FSC schemes, BM TRADA awards certification to companies that import timber from certified sustainable forests. Companies must undergo an assessment from an independent, qualified and accredited expert who verifies in writing that the wood flow from forest to business follows and meets the exacting requirements of the certification scheme.

Company Director Terry Edgell, commented, "We are delighted at achieving Trada Chain of Custody certification for both FSC and PEFC products. Having held Chain of Custody for nearly three years, we felt it was time to upgrade and review our systems. We felt that market leaders TRADA brought with them considerable experience and industry respect,

and were suitably resourced enough to keep us fully informed and up to date with evolving certification issues."

Terry added, "Such an implementation of change first required the formation of an environmental team, made up of 6 members of staff (that included 2 directors). To strengthen the team we also appointed an environmental and chain of custody consultant to help us police internal issues and help us resource independently any topical issues of the day."

"Under the teams recommendations, we pursued the new chain of custody certification and were delighted that all our employees embraced the issues involved enabling Premier to pass our initial audits without any corrective action requirements."

Alasdair McGregor, BM TRADA's product certification manager, said, 'Chain of Custody is becoming more and more a prerequisite for doing business in timber. By achieving this certification, Premier Forest has shown itself to be a strong advocate of sustainable forestry practice.'

**"Chain of Custody is becoming more and more a prerequisite for doing business in timber. By achieving this certification, Premier Forest has shown itself to be a strong advocate of sustainable forestry practice."**

**ALASDAIR MCGREGOR**

## COMPETITION TIME

Keep your mind active at your desk with a Premier Forest Products limited edition branded Jenga style game. Premier Forest is offering readers of Quarter Cut the opportunity to get their hands on this mind boggling puzzle. All readers need to do is book an appointment with one of Premier's sales representatives on 01633 254422 or 0121 331 4010. The first 50 will then be sent the game in the post.



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