

AECB Kent Local Group

Use of Local Timber

On 19th March 2015, the Kent group visited Pierre Woodward's wood yard in St Margaret's at Cliffe near Dover for an introduction to how local timber is converted and used in building, from tree trunk to its final use.



Pierre works with many local timbers: oak, chestnut, conifer, elm, poplar and sycamore. These are cut into lengths of 3.5 to 6m, for handling and storage, then moved to a mill where they are converted to the required size, before being moved for air drying in carefully stacked piles.

Oak is used green for ease of working, although repair work is done with air dried timber. We were shown an oak frame building taking shape in the workshop with complex traditional joints, but Pierre has also developed simple jointing techniques for use with round wood, to make use of the widely available sweet chestnut of 10-15

years old. This is ideal for garden structures, being quick, strong and durable.



Pierre has a small demonstration building constructed from elm, with poplar roof lining boards, wattle and daub infill panels and a wide range of wicker baskets and chopping boards for sale.

The visit gave local members an insight into the process of timber conversion, and showed that almost any wood can be used, especially sweet chestnut which is so often simply chipped after coppicing since the collapse of Kent's paper industry.



Sweet chestnut posts were used to construct Conkers office in 2002, and had no trouble proving their strength, they have proven perfectly durable and they are fully exposed.

Services offered by Pierre include:

- Green Oak timber frames
- Local hardwood sawmill products
- Chestnut products including planking as well as poles/round wood for fencing
- Hardwood joinery skills including Chestnut round pole joinery
- Garden shelters and outbuildings