

**MINUTES OF THE 5th MEETING OF THE
WOOD ADVISORY GROUP
Held on 28th November 2007 at**

**The Health & Safety Executive, City Gate West, 1st Floor,
Tollhouse Hill, Nottingham NG1 5AT**

Present

Tony Kaye
Mark Murphy
Bryan Woodley
Sandra Jacobs
Tony Hollyer
Bob Gunn
Godwin Kudawoo
Alistair Bromhead
Nick Bartmanis
Michael Lee
David Sulman
Tim Small (Chair)
Brian Coggans
Wendie Drammeh

Representing

WMSA
Trussed Rafter Association
UK Timber Frame Association
The Saw Doctors Association
UK Woodchain
G.M.B.
Furniture Industry Research Association
British Furniture Man. Association
EEF – West Midlands
British Woodworking Federation
UK Forest Products Association
Principal Inspector, Woodworking - HSE
Inspector, Woodworking - HSE
Minutes Secretary - HSE

APOLOGIES

Richard Lambert - British Woodworking Federation
Alun Watkins - Furniture Ind. Research Assoc
Mike Marchant - UK Woodchain
Jon Gibson - Institute of Machine Woodworking Technology
John O'Connell – resigned - British Inter. Freight Association
Phil Davies – TGWU

SPEAKERS

Jeremy Bevan – HSE
Graeme Walker - HSE
Kate Field - HSE

ACTIONS AGREED:

1.	(Min 2.3) Mr Gunn agreed to provide an update on the outcome of the MP's & MEP's meeting held the previous day.
2.	(Min 2.4) Mrs Drammeh to send copies of Migrant Workers Presentations to members.
3.	(Min2.5) Mr Small agreed to compile basic questionnaire for members to inform him of their experiences employing and working with, migrant workers.

4.	(Min 3.1) Mr Coggans agreed to relay suggestions & improvements in the example Risk Assessment document to the authors and to request a link is inserted to the woodworking web page for further information.
5.	(Min 4.3) Mr Small agreed to investigate and report back to Mr Kaye on the number of wood dust visits undertaken by HSE's HSAO's.
6.	(Min 4.4) Mr Small to speak with Ms Field to discuss the revised guidance and involvement of WAG members.
7.	(Min 6.1) Mrs Drammeh to distribute Trussed Rafters Presentation to members.
8.	(Min 6.3) Mr Bromhead to give a presentation on the work done in his sector at the next WAG Meeting.
9.	(Min 7.2) Mr Small agreed to pursue holding next WAG Meeting at Derby College.
10.	(Min 8.1) Mrs Drammeh agreed to check SIC20 and 36.1 codes for Woodworking and advise members accordingly.
11.	(Min 8.1) Mr Coggans agreed to send updated statistics to members.
12.	(Min 9.7) Mr Small agreed to contact the Timber Decking Association to invite them to join WAG.
13.	(Min 9.10) Chair agreed to distribute Wood Dust programme findings & statistics to members.
14.	(Min 9.11) Chair agreed to send Moving Goods Safely Statistics to members.

1.0 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies from - Richard Lambert, Phil Davies, Alun Watkins, Jon Gibson, Mike Marchant, John O'Connell. The Chairman announced John O'Connell had resigned from the committee.

2.0 MIGRANT WORKERS PRESENTATIONS – Graeme Walker & Jeremy Bevan

2.1 Mr Bevan outlined the broader policy issues and set out how HSE's work fitted in with the wider government agenda. Mr Walker set out some of the practical steps that HSE has been taking and highlighted some of the key issues / debates that WAG members should be aware of:

- There's a lot we don't know. The key question is 'are migrant workers at any greater risk than native workers'? The problem for HSE is that RIDDOR reports don't collect information on migrant status
- Research hasn't really shed much light on things either i.e. numbers, where and which sectors?
- The Government is interested because it believes there are clear moral, ethical & legal imperatives to do so – a spin off will be creating a level playing field for good employers
- The reality is that Government has been playing catch-up since the barriers to free movement with the EU came down in 2004
- A new Migrant Workers web page is under construction on HSE's website – it's intended to be a resource for both workers and employers alike. It should be up and running in early 2008.
- As with any system, the key player in making any system work is the

quality of first line supervision.

- We want to know what your experience is in your particular sectors in terms of numbers

2.2 It was clear from subsequent discussion that there is no one easy way for businesses to manage this issue e.g. is it better to translate instructions, training / induction material (as TRA members have tended to do) or insist on certain standards of written & spoken English as a prerequisite for employment (as Timber Frame members have tended to do)?

2.3 The Chair noted the need to cut costs was a key driver for all industry in employing temporary and migrant labour, but that there were often hidden costs associated with doing so e.g. greater training requirements, cost of translating instructions / procedures etc (and possible ongoing costs involved in this solution.) Ultimately, industry needs to be realistic about these costs and what's involved in managing the issue. Mr Woodley noted another key factor for firms is a shortage of certain key skills in certain sectors in the UK wood and furniture industries. More generally, many indigenous workers also have poor literacy and numeracy.

Migrant workers often tend to be concentrated in particular sectors / sub-sectors, to the extent that these areas can become 'ghettoised' (which itself brings other problems) e.g. Polish workers are concentrated in tree planting side of forestry, but less so in other parts of the industry.

Mr Gunn gave a TU perspective. The TUs have been active in seeking additional funding from EU for further teaching of English as a foreign language. He had attended a meeting with MP's & MEP's the previous day on this matter and was awaiting the outcome of this. Mr Gunn agreed to provide an update on the outcome of this meeting.

Mr Bromhead noted there were pockets of migrant workers in furniture manufacturing who were generally highly skilled and motivated. Often they worked in close knit 'cells' or teams, and tended to regard health and safety issues, including provision of PPE as the team's responsibility, rather than the employers.

The difficulties in managing workplace transport risks where foreign hauliers with little or no English bringing timber from abroad were also noted.

Leaflets IND(G)414 & IND(G)410 were given to members. Business Link website has further guidance on the wider aspects of employing migrant workers. (www.businesslink.gov.uk)

2.4 **WD** agreed to send copies of both presentations to members.

2.5 **TS** agreed to compile a basic questionnaire for members to complete and return to him with their experiences of migrant workers. He would then send the comments to Mr Bevan & Mr Walker.

3.0 EXAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENTS – BRIAN COGGANS

3.1 Members had received by e-mail a draft 'example Risk Assessment' for a small to medium sized woodworking company. A general discussion took place on the draft. Some minor anomalies / suggestions were flagged up including the wording of the title. It was also agreed that a link to HSE's woodworking webpage should be added at the end of the Assessment. Mr Coggans to feedback comments to the Better Regulation Unit for incorporation in the final draft.

4.0 LEV in WOODWORKING – KATE FIELD from HSE’s DISEASE REDUCTION PROGRAMME

4.1 Ms Field gave an overview of HSE’s planned campaign targeting various aspects of the Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV). This is a wide ranging initiative covering a number of different industries, including woodworking. LEV is often the most effective means a firm has for controlling exposure to hazardous substances, yet too often it’s poorly designed, installed, maintained and inspected. The net result is that it is often a far less effective risk control measure than it should be. The aim is to bring about a significant and measurable improvement in the coverage and effectiveness of engineering exposure controls, particularly LEV in the UK.

As well as users, HSE is also targeting suppliers and those with test / inspection roles. Both HSE’s free and priced guidance is being thoroughly revised and updated and will include information for those who have LEV and also advice for those who are looking to install it so that they can be ‘intelligent customers’. The revised guidance is to be officially launched on May 6th 2008 – World Asthma Day. It is estimated that 10% of all UK businesses have a respiratory risk and wood dust is the 5th largest cause of occupational asthma.

The campaign would also include a direct mailing element of the key messages and information to companies – WAG members were asked to promote the campaign through their company/trade association newsletters. Detailed training for HSE Inspectors is planned prior to the campaign and each inspector is to be supplied with a kit including a dust lamp and a basic anemometer. It is hoped using these for practical demonstration purposes will be very effective in getting the message across to duty-holders.

4.2 Mr Kaye suggested Ms Field visit the WMSA website where manufacturers of LEV are listed and for her to approach those manufacturers for assistance.

4.3 Mr Kaye asked Mr Small how many wood dust visits HSE’s HSAO’s had carried out since the discussion at the last meeting in June. Mr Small said he would get back to Mr Kaye with the numbers but the visits had only commenced in October 2007. (Note - This initiative is not connected to the DRP initiative Ms Field had spoken about).

4.4 Mr Small agreed to speak with Ms Field outside the meeting regarding the revised guidance.

5.0 Lunch

6.0 TRUSSED RAFTER ASSOCIATION (TRA) – PRESENTATION BY MARK MURPHY

6.1 Mr Murphy gave a presentation on trussed rafters, the manufacturing process, some of the key H&S issues and some of the things the TRA have done to promote safety and health within the industry. Mrs Drammeh agreed to distribute the presentation to members after the meeting.

6.2 One key issue to emerge (with relevance to other parts of the sector) concerned the safety aspects of loading and unloading vehicles. Mr Coggans referred members to HSE’s website where various case studies can be found: www.hse.gov.uk/fallsfromvehicles/casestudies.htm

6.3 Mr Small suggested at future WAG meetings a member should give a presentation on health & safety in their industry. This was welcomed and Mr Bromhead agreed to give a presentation at the next meeting.

7.0 OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

- 7.1 This topic was to be presented by Mike Marchant from UK Woodchain. Mr Marchant was not able to attend so Mr Small read out an e-mail statement from Mr Marchant. A short discussion ensued, after which, it was agreed to defer this item until Mr Marchant could present it himself.
- 7.2 Foundation degrees are now available at a number of universities, including University of Derby, which has now secured the necessary funding from DfES. It was suggested the next WAG meeting could be held at here so members could see, at first hand, what these course looked like and sorts of facilities involved. Mr Small agreed to pursue the possibility of holding the next meeting at the University.

8.0 HSE CURRENT ISSUES – TIM SMALL

- 8.1 Mr Small gave a short presentation on the most recent accident statistics for the woodworking industry (SICs 20 and 36.1 – wood and furniture respectively). In general, the downwards trends evident in last years statistics are continuing with the exception of 'struck by moving / falling object' which has shown a slight upturn – there is no clear reason for this, so it may be a statistical anomaly.

Pleasingly, reported major accidents arising from machinery have shown a substantial fall from a high point of 178 in 01/02 to 99 for 06/07 – a 44% fall. Mrs Drammeh agreed to clarify which woodworking industries are included in SIC20 and 36.1 and advise members accordingly. Mr Coggans agreed to send details of the statistics to members.

9.0 ACTIONS FROM MEETING HELD ON 18th JUNE 2007

- 9.1 **(Min 2.4) Mr. Coggans & Chairman** agreed to speak with the Construction Sector in HSE to ascertain if any of their loading and unloading clips can be modified for use on the woodworking website. Mr Coggans said he would still consider members' suggestions.
- 9.2 **(Min 2.6) Mr. Murphy & Mr. Small** agreed to discuss the possibility of endorsing TRA's document outside the meeting. **Done.**
- 9.3 **(Min 2.9) Chair** to send members draft of best practice questionnaire. The Chair agreed to check whether this had been carried out.
- 9.4 **(Min 2.10) Mr. Coggans** to send the Chairman the draft health & safety plans he had received from members to date. **Done.**
- 9.5 **(Min 2.14) Chair** agreed to summarise the Greenstreet Berman Report and send bullet point list to members by the end of July. This had not been done by the Chair but the full report would be on HSE's website in the coming weeks.
- 9.6 **(Min 2.21) Mr. Kaye** agreed to send details of the Saw Doctors Association to **Mrs. Drammeh** for them to be invited in to future meetings. **Done** - Ms Jacobs from Saw Doctors was present at the meeting.
- 9.7 **(Min 2.21) Members** to inform Chairman of any organisations they feel would benefit from becoming part of the group. **Done.**
- 9.8 **(Min 3.1) Mrs. Drammeh** to send a link to the pages when they are 'live' to WAG members. **Done** – item discharged.
- 9.9 **(Min 3.1) Mrs. Drammeh** to distribute the noise presentation to WAG members. **Done** – item discharged.

- 9.10** (Min 4.1) **Chair** to distribute slides of wood dust programme statistics to members. Chair said these statistics would be available in the next few days and would arrange for them to be distributed.
- 9.11** (Min 5.1) **Chair** to update committee on Moving Goods Safely Programme once he had spoken with a colleague. The Chair explained that the statistics were currently being compiled and agreed to send them the following week.
- 9.12** (Min 6.1) **Members** to send Chairman details of initiatives and projects they are involved in with their members. The chair thanked members for their feedback. Item discharged.
- 9.13** (Min 6.1) **Chair** to arrange for HSE initiatives and events to be sent to members for circulation and inclusion in newsletters. Ongoing.
- 9.14** (Min 6.2) **Chair** to send accident and ill health statistics slides to members. **Done** – item discharged.
- 9.15** (Min 6.3) **Members** to send Chair suggestions for research projects before end of June. Done. The Chair thanked members for their very useful suggestions and explained that HSE is seeking to focus on fewer, larger more generic pieces of research – consequently, smaller / more specialised projects will have to be ‘re-packaged’ for them to be viable.
- 9.16** (Min 6.4) **Chair** agreed to send members a link to the mechanical engineering community site. Not done – the Chair explained how there didn’t seem enough relevant information for Woodworking industries on the site so hadn’t sent the link.
- 9.17** (Min 6.4) **Members** to send Chair thoughts on whether a Communities site was something the group wished to support. The chair said he had not received any feedback from members so would not be pursuing the matter.
- 9.18** (Min 8.1) **Chair** to investigate HSE’s line on buying secondhand machinery from internet sites. The Chair had sent members details of HSE’s leaflets on the subject.
- 9.19** Mr Kaye spoke about British Standard 848 part 3 on CNC Machinery. Following a fatality in Germany caused by a loose cutter striking an operator, there has been much concern about the levels of protection offered by the plastic ‘skirting’ around the tool head. Although not explicitly designed to retain flying cutters, certain countries (Germany in particular) were keen to pursue this. TK will be attending the CEN committee as UK rep to discuss this standard in January 2008 and will update WAG in due course.
- 10.0** **AOB** - There was no other business to discuss.
- 11.0** **DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**
- 11.1** The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 2nd April 2008. Possibly at University of Derby (venue to be confirmed).