

MOBILE SAWMILLS

Taking the sawmill to the log

Mobile sawmilling has come a long way since the days of the 'saw pit'.

Taking the saw to the timber is not a new idea; in fact it dates back to Egyptian times. The term saw pit comes from the days when pairs of men took their saw into the forest where the trees were to be felled, and dug a pit. The luckier of the two was the top man who, as the name suggests, stayed on top of the pit. It was his job to lift the saw and guide it along a mark made in the log. His unlucky partner was the pit man and he was actually in the pit pulling the saw down to provide the energy to cut the wood. The saw only cut on the down stroke. As you can imagine he got the short straw as he would be covered in the falling sawdust.

As with all things the technology improved over the years but the saw pit in some form remains even today in some areas.

Thankfully bringing timber to a central location for processing is now very much a mechanised operation and the new 'portable' sawmills of today are only updates of mechanisms that have existed since the days of pyramid building. The many portable sawmills available can now cut timber with speed and accuracy on site, a vast improvement from the days when sawing in a pit and hoping to process a single log in a day was the goal.

Davies Implements Ltd have been distributing the LumberMate and LumberLite sawmills, manufactured by Norwood, since August 2006. The LumberMate Pro MX34 is a successor to the very well known LM2000 – a proven, reliable, accu-

rate, versatile and easy-to-use mill. The concept behind the design of the Pro MX34 was to make milling easier, faster, bigger and more productive.

The LumberMate Pro MX34 has a maximum diameter capacity of 34" with a maximum board width of 28". The track length is 20 feet, but the bed can be extended to 40 feet with 4-foot extensions.

The Pro can quickly be assembled onto a trailer package and, thereafter, can be transformed from a mobile to static mill, and static to mobile, in a few minutes. The Pro is supplied with several power options including single- and three-phase electric and 16 and 23hp petrol.

There are many new automated features that have been designed on the Pro such as the single action, four function operator control which automatically operates the sawhead locking, blade-lube flow, clutch engagement and blade-brake engagement. In addition, the Pro boasts Quick-Lock log clamping and Quick-Click 1" indexing. At a small additional charge, there are Quick-Click 3/4", 6/4" and 8/4" indices.

The other noticeable change is the new ceramic blade guides. There are many reasons for the change, the main advantages being that they are more durable than bearings and rollers and blade life is extended by 40%. The Pro is compatible with 1 1/4" and 1 1/2" blades.

Norwood has also changed the track, providing a super strong construction that uses twin double-plated commercial-grade rails. Prices start from £6,530 plus VAT for the basic Pro MX34. There are many optional extras including the trailer



Wood-Mizer LT70 arriving ready for work.

kit that comes with support legs, levelling feet, toe boards, lapside and shingle kit, log loader and rotator kit, sharpener, tooth setter and more.

Mills are delivered to the end-user in a kit format but the mills can be supplied pre-built at an additional charge. Video footage can be viewed at www.daviesimplementsltd.co.uk.

Davies Implements 01267 237726

Exclusively available throughout Europe from Just Saws, the Hudson range of portable sawmills provides four machines with cutting capabilities of 18" to 36" wide, allowing them to mill raw timber into any bespoke size. Being very simply constructed, these machines can easily be transported allowing them to be manoeuvred into position close to the worksite. The mills come with appropriately powered Briggs & Stratton engines.

The smallest band mill, the Oscar 18, is so portable that most quad bikes can tow it almost anywhere.

The top of the range Oscar 236 uses a 12-volt winch to control the height of the sawmill head and features a 23hp Briggs & Stratton V-Twin overhead valve engine, allowing wood up to 900mm (36") in diameter to be cut very quickly.

Optional road trailer packages are available for all models.

Just Saws 01428 661222

Wood-Mizer continues to invest in improving the productivity of its range of band sawmills – all based on thin-kerf blade technology for less waste and higher yield.

The LT15, for logs up to 70cm in diameter and 5.4m in length (extra bed sections can be added to allow virtually unlimited log length), is now available with power feed for forward and return movement of the head, providing better productivity compared with manual feed where the head is moved by the operator turning a handle.

In addition, the company's electronic 'Setworks' control can be added, which allows desired board thickness to be preset by the operator, after which the head moves automatically to the correct position for each cut through the log.

The LT15 and smaller LT10 can be equipped for further processing with the addition of Wood-Mizer's moulder-planer on the same bed. The moulder-planer can be fitted with straight or profile knives for machining straight sided or shaped beams and boards for construction and other applications.

Now, an advanced model of the



(Left) The 6.5 metre single-piece framework is incorporated in all of the Pezzolato range of sawmills.

(Right) The Oscar 236 uses a 12-volt winch to control the height of the sawmill head and has a 23hp Briggs & Stratton V-Twin overhead valve engine.

moulder-planer with 'Setworks' and power feed is available, ensuring consistently accurate results and better productivity.

For the mid-range LT40 sawmill for logs up to 90cm diameter, an optional twin-blade edger is now available, increasing productivity by one third. The edger has one fixed and one moveable blade, the latter adjusted from the operator console to achieve the desired width of board. Laser lines project over the board to aid adjustment of the blade to remove wane, and feed speed can be smoothly controlled.

The large LT70, which cuts logs up to 95cm in diameter, comes with a 42hp turbo-diesel engine as an alternative to the 18.5kW electric motor, and takes just 10-15 minutes to prepare for cutting after arrival on site. Now, Wood-Mizer has given mobile operators another option for profitable activity by offering an edger with a petrol engine, allowing wane boards from the log to be converted into higher value square-edged boards.

As the only sawmill manufacturer that also makes its own blades, the company has added blade widths to its existing range of DoubleHard, SilverTip and Stellite-tipped RazorTip blades for Wood-Mizer and other makes of sawmill.

Wood-Mizer 01622 813201

The Pezzolato range of sawmills is now imported and supported in the UK by Sussex-based Saws (UK) Ltd. Saws has 25 years' experience in dealing with all types of sawing solutions and has also supplied the well established Forestor Sawmills for many years.

Pezzolato have been manufacturing their sawmill equipment since 1976 and have also produced many

headrigs and other major components for Forestor on the old range of sawmills. The structure of the 6.5 metre single-piece framework and the whole headrig design is massive, even on the entry level machines.

Pezzolato mobile machines start with the Timber Queen S5 (80cm capacity, 32mm blade) manual machine with petrol engine or 3-phase motor, which is now stocked in the UK. Also included in the range are the Timber Queen HD6/7/8 and the Mini Profi range. At the top end are the Maxi Profi higher production machines (up to 6 cubic metres an hour) running double-edge blades of 110mm and the Super Profi with log diameter up to 1500mm. All machines are fully hydraulic and static or mobile.

Saws (UK) 0844 880 4511

Marshall Agricultural Engineering are the agents for Serra sawmills who launched the competitively priced entry level Alpine KE90 sawmill in 2010. At that time it was only available with 3-phase electric drive, which was a limitation in the UK market. Since then Serra have completed testing with internal combustion engines and are now able to supply this mill with a petrol engine which now makes the sawmill ideal for customers who plan to provide a mobile sawmilling service.

This sawmill is aimed at the smaller professional user and cooperative groups who require fast, accurate cutting. Available in static or mobile configuration, it has a 4.8m cutting length, which can be extended if required. The main frame is anodised with powder-coated log supports. The shortest distance between the log supports is 25cm, allowing logs from 0.6



The Serra Alpine is now available with a petrol engine in the form of the KB90 model.

m in length to be cut. Additional equipment for log handling can be fitted at a later stage.

As with all Serra mills, a wide band is used for cutting. This allows much greater sawing speeds and greater accuracy in comparison with narrow band mills.

Next in the range is the Montana which is also available in mobile and static configuration, with 2 standard cut lengths of 7 or 9 metres and 90cm log diameter. Power options are either electric or a Kubota diesel engine.

The Bavaria SL range, models 110i and 130i, are high capacity machines. These have angled saw heads and hydraulic saw tensioning, all of which helps to produce a fast and strong cutting action. A fully automated cutting system is available along with digitally programmable saw positions and joystick control.

Africa models SL130S and SL160S are heavy duty sawmills designed to handle large diameter hardwoods. Some revision in the past year has

made them even stronger. A full range of hydraulic accessories for the safe loading and handling of logs on the mill are available.

All Serra sawmills can be supplied with optional board removal systems. A Duett edger can also be integrated into a production line.

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The Alaskan chainsaw mill comes in a range of sizes to suit different size saws. The small log mill fits to saws from 14" to 20" and clamps at only one place on the bar. This gives maximum milling width for smaller chainsaws. The smallest Alaskan is 24" long and is suitable for saws with bars up to 30". Mills then continue in increments of 6" all the way up to 72".

To complement the horizontal mills, the mini mill works in the vertical position. This is useful for making posts and taking the sides off larger logs all without having to turn the log.

Ripping chain is used to give a smoother and less grabby cut when milling planks. Granberg ripping chain is specially adapted with scoring cutters and clearing cutters. Oregon and Stihl chain is simply refilled to 10 degrees. All ripping chains work well when correctly sharpened but more attention must be paid to tooth shape, tooth length and depth gauges. When cross cutting, a chain may be dull and still get through the wood. With chainsaw milling the chain must be correctly sharpened in order to work and margins for error in chain sharpening are far smaller.

Chainsaw mills can be very efficient at planking wood providing both bar and chain are well maintained. An advantage of chainsaw mills is their portability and relative small cost in getting started.

Alaskan Mill UK 01590 681259



Alaskan 48" milling large sequoia.