



Morton Timber Co. Ltd

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THE HISTORY OF MORTON TIMBER

Phil and Sheryl Morton bought their sawmill and timber yard on North Road, Clevedon from Aubrey Hopkins in 1979.

The mill employed 4 or 5 men and milled mainly Macrocarpa which came from local blocks of land.

Production was hampered in the winter months by the muddy conditions which closed the yard to vehicles. Many a local lad who worked in the mill at one time or other would probably remember the cold mornings with only a fire in a drum at which to warm their hands.

The mill was originally started by Harry Burdett. The logs, mostly native, were often towed up the Wairoa river and then into the Ruatawhiti Stream. They could come from as far away as the Coromandel Peninsula. The logs were milled in the old pit saw which was set up at the edge of the stream.

When Phil Morton started to mill pine he increased the staff to 10-12 men in the summer and milled up to 20 cubic metres of sawn timber a day. John Bates was one of this team and is still employed at the yard today. The pine logs came from local land owners. Good plantation pines came from blocks such as Miles Adams' Matingarahi, ICI Waitawa Farms and other smaller blocks.

The sound of the saws and the smell of fresh sawdust is a thing of the past. The economic state of the industry was such that Morton's and other smaller mills could buy in timber from modern, computerised mills. The old mill still exists, and gets started once in a while.

Today the yard is busy with truck loads of timber, posts, poles, and other building materials being delivered 6 days a week. A large warehouse was constructed in the 1980s to stock all of the building and hardware requirements of the local farmers, builders and handymen.

Phil's son Dean has now taken over the management of the business.

