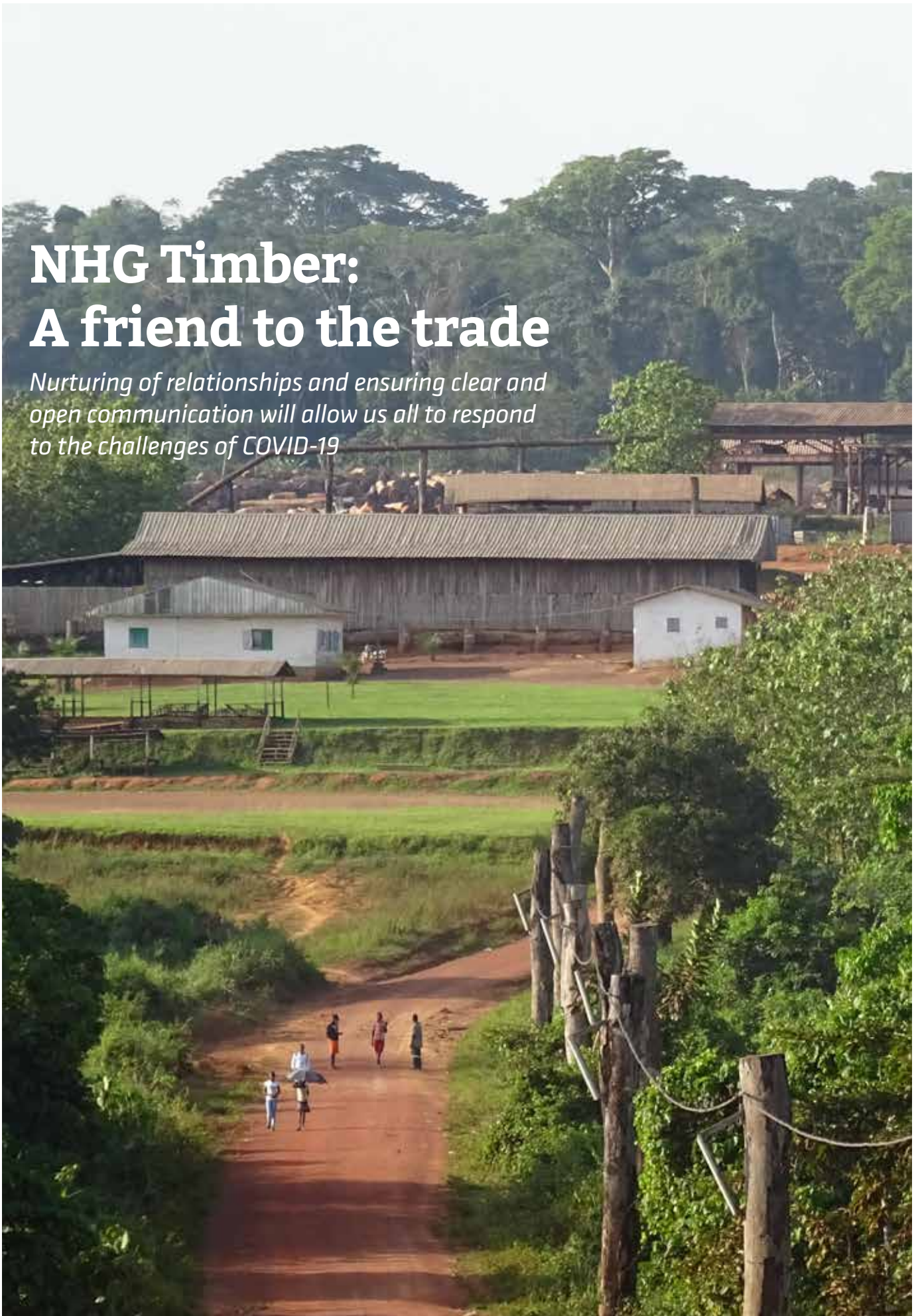


NHG Timber: A friend to the trade

Nurturing of relationships and ensuring clear and open communication will allow us all to respond to the challenges of COVID-19



The COVID-19 Pandemic is a bolt out of the blue that has seriously disrupted global business. The timber sector has not escaped, and this has led to a period of huge uncertainty, unpredictability and worry for our suppliers and customers alike. NHG is a global trading company and so has a wide-ranging view on how these challenges have changed people's behavior in different markets. One common theme is that, despite the feeling that businesses cannot recover easily from such a shock, it is the nurturing of relationships and ensuring clear and open communication that will allow us all to pull out of this situation together.

When lockdown first hit the U.K. in March and affected other areas of the world in April and May, the first priority was to ensure that goods already in transit could be received and paid for. Many companies saw their sales reduce to almost zero overnight and were very concerned about the pipeline of future orders getting shipped. Initially, it was a question of space to handle the inevitable extra stock, but where possible, NHG worked with both customers and suppliers to schedule forward commitments so that the flow of materials could be smooth, always ensuring that all involved were fully updated with the latest information from suppliers and shipping lines. There were of course very few fresh enquiries, but in the circumstances, this was very understandable.

As the weeks went by it became clear that some segments of the timber market were doing rather well - in Europe enforced home working stimulated demand for timber for home offices, and worldwide the millions of people in lockdown took up home construction tasks, fueling the demand for products such as decking and fencing. In the Middle East, whilst some projects were delayed, others were accelerated while the labor was still available to get them completed.

As lockdowns have started to

ease, our regular clients with whom we have been in close contact, have begun to plan ahead once more, despite our inability to travel to meet them in their offices or at the Dubai WoodShow. We are handling increasing levels of enquiries for African hardwoods, and some projects using American hardwoods and beech are coming to the fore.

During such difficult times, it is inevitable that there have been companies willing to dispose of stock at low cost to generate cash, but a few months down the line, this behaviour has changed. Trading companies have either withdrawn, or companies like NHG Timber have stuck with it and continued to offer service and support to their partners, even if that has meant getting fewer new orders or having regular business disrupted.

We are not out of the woods yet, and regional second spikes of virus infections could amplify the impact on business, but what we have found is the value of our personal relationships with suppliers and clients, and with clients in the Middle East in particular, these having been forged for 25 years. We consider our clients to be our friends, and like all friends, we are there for them when they need us, particularly when times are difficult.

NHG Timber specializes in tropical and temperate timber sourcing worldwide with a special focus on West Africa. Many readers will be familiar with NHG logos adorning packs of Sapele, Iroko, Dabema, Kossipo and many other timbers in various markets in the Gulf. This success has been built up not only on a deep and practical product knowledge, but also on forging long-term relationships with clients based on mutual respect and trust.

**This article has been written by Stuart McBride, Director, NHG Timber. For more information and to learn more about the company, please visit www.nhgtimber.co.uk.*



Hardwood Lumber

NHG Timber specializes in the supply of hardwood lumber from West Africa, North America and Europe. These are available in fixed dimensions as well as standard sizes, and Ben Goodwin, Guy Goodwin and Stuart McBride have the in-depth knowledge and experience of their supply areas to be able to source practically any desired hardwood product that clients require, along with providing advice and support. New ideas for grades, species and specifications are suggested on a regular basis.

Softwood Lumber

Echoing the company's European sales, species such as Western Red Cedar,

Douglas Fir and Southern Yellow Pine are sourced from NHG's North American network of suppliers.

Finished and Semi-finished products

NHG can supply a variety of products such as hardwood decking, machined profiles, molding blanks and finished sections to give clients a fully bespoke hardwood service from expert and experienced producers.

Logs & Boules

Market trends are progressively realizing the importance of added value, but NHG still has a good business in log supply, and sources African and American logs for those buyers who wish to control their own yields.

