

## Press Release

14<sup>th</sup> October 2009

### **Ecochoice Helps Southend Pier Head Rise from its Ashes**

***Ecochoice supplied materials for a construction project to restore the pier head after it suffered extensive fire damage in 2005.***

Fire-damaged areas of iconic Southend Pier have been repaired in a £2.5m construction project which saw the contractor and suppliers overcome significant site challenges. The nine-month project, completed by contractor Nuttall John Martin (NJM), a division of BAM Nuttall, required sea-borne delivery of materials, including large volumes of environmentally certified tropical timber supplied by Ecochoice Ltd and partial use of offsite construction methods.



The old pier head had been closed since the devastating blaze in 2005, which destroyed part of the timber and iron structure, shops, pub, an amusement arcade and the pier's railway station.

Access to the world's longest pier (1.34 miles) was always a constraint, so NJM had to come up with a novel approach to working on the fire-damaged pier head.

"All the materials, including the hardwoods, were delivered to Leigh-on-Sea and loaded onto a barge," said Jason Parker, NJM site agent. "We would have to wait for the next high tide and then the barge was towed out to the end of the pier. "Because there was nowhere to land any materials, we had to build ourselves a platform storage area."

Main timber supplier Ecochoice, together with its Dutch partner Reef Hout, suggested prefabrication of large areas of decking to reduce on-site assembly costs and meet health and safety concerns of laying boards at height over the sea. Panel manufacture was undertaken by a Dutch social enterprise which employs people with learning difficulties.

Mr Parker said it was a challenge to source the large volumes of tropical timber required, with client Southend-on-Sea Borough Council stipulating that wood must be Forest Stewardship Council-certified (FSC) as coming from sustainably managed forests. "There were only certain timber species we could use for the job and Ecochoice came up with the goods."

Ekki was supplied from Reef's own West African FSC-certified forest and sawmill operation, while FSC-certified Angelim Vermelho, introduced into the UK market by Ecochoice Ltd came from Brazil. Ecochoice suggested Angelim as an extra suitable marine species so the timber could be delivered on time, on budget and to specification. This also meant the project would be more environmental, since strict section and length requirements were being spread across two species instead of only one.



"This project is a fantastic showcase of social and environmental responsibility, while also being cost effective," added Ecochoice director Mike Bekin.

Other elements of the project included a new station and platform ramp, rail track installation, plus mechanical and electrical works.

For further information on how Ecochoice can help your project with FSC certified civil and marine hardwoods please contact Ecochoice Ltd:

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