



The Schubox at Wetherald Wood Components was purpose-made to accommodate a length of 3120 inside. It costs about £25 per week to run on propane, dries in 5 minutes and does away with lifting and back on trolleys.



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Nick Machin didn't believe the Schubox could work but it's banished his drying bottleneck and done away with lifting and dust contamination all for about 50p per hour.

Up here in the very heart of the Yorkshire Dales, the humidity is high and the scepticism, broad. It came as no surprise to learn that when the Askrigg-based kitchen and bathroom components manufacturer, Wetherald Wood Components, first heard about a revolutionary device that could rid them of a spray shop storage bottleneck, banish the bloom and cut their drying time from double figure hours to single figure minutes for only a few pence per day, the strength of their disbelief exceeded that of the locally-brewed Old Peculier by an appreciably wide margin. And Old Peculier, take it from me, is pretty bracing stuff.

When spray shop supervisor, Nick Machin, joined Wetherald Wood Components a few months ago his first task was to improve spray shop efficiency. "We were governed by drying time, not by the volume we could spray," he recalls. "We have three spray booths

here, two double booths in Spenny-more and a Venjacob automated sprayer for edges and surfaces. When I arrived, everything was dried on the shop floor and the Venjacob was often full by 10am. We could run two sprayers but not the Venjacob at the same time.

"We also had a dust problem - nothing that couldn't be reworked - but we usually ended up having to shut the doors and not let people out 'til they had a break. The ventilation dragged dust in with cold air and the temperature went everywhere. In winter we could lose four or five days spraying easily and there was no way we could top coat. It would have bloomed."

"I started looking at drying systems but, for the space we have, to get an economical drying facility would have been impossible and it would have filled all the space we have.

"When I first heard about the Schubox, I have to be honest," he says with a bit

components & small

of a grin, "I thought it was bull...but it's really surprised me.

"We went down to run some trials. We were very impressed but I was a bit dubious about how it would work with foiled and paper-covered products. You can't leave papers in quite as long or you run the risk of delamination, so we run it five minutes on standby heat. Now the longest period in the process is the flash-off."

Wetheralds use solvent-based stains, pre-cat lacquers, AC lacquers but, increasingly, where they are introducing new products, they are turning to compliant lacquers. "The drying time for compliant is the same as for non-compliant in the Schubox," says Nick, though they take a bit longer to flash off. The base and top coats can be done in a compliant system without a drying time penalty, he says, and the advantage the Schubox has given them in terms of stacking is immeasurable.

"We stack 20-30 products lacquer on lacquer. With a good cool-down there are no problems. Some lacquers take a bit longer but most are just a few minutes.

"We've taken out all the lifting, too. It's taken a lot of the strain out of the job. Before the products had to be taken off the trolley and lifted back on when dry, then denibbed and recoated. They run a continuous circle now. Once they're on the trolley, they stay there now. Some products we've increased volume four-fold."

Nick admits that, although it wasn't the main reason they decided to go for a Schubox, it's virtually doubled their throughput to the point where they are considering investing in throughfeed lines. Scepticism has given way to amazement. He's convinced. "The best thing people can do is try it."

Call Schubert Technical Services on 01226 360900. ♦



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