

New Bell B20E proves its effectiveness for Scotland's leading plant hire firm, AB2000

It's a Scottish SME success story; AB2000 Limited, Scotland's largest privately-owned business operating in the field of plant and equipment hire. Year after year this firm has grown to impress and prosper based on the principle that careful investment can lead to considerable expansion.

From its head office and main workshop facility at Cambuslang in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, AB2000 is a plant hire firm that, since becoming incorporated in 1995, has developed a trusted reputation for its reliable ability to perform, whether that means supplying clients with specialist rail and machinery movement solutions, operated crane hire, or reliable plant hire equipment; from a fleet which includes vehicles from by Bell Equipment UK.

Over the course of two decades, and under the carefully planned direction of Managing Director Adam Bruce, AB2000 has built its

operation extensively, leading it to now include several 'trading divisions'. These comprise its core construction plant and equipment; mobile crane hire - as well as test weights and equipment moving - railway; mobile concrete pump hire; and soil stabilisation; and a dedicated division covering the north of the country.

Before starting AB2000, Adam was the proprietor of his own operation, Adam Bruce Plant Hire Ltd, and prior to that was an owner/driver of a Drott & Hymac excavator himself. With over 55 years' experience under his belt, Adam has used his knowledge and capabilities to

continually invest in the AB2000 firm, its staff and equipment, and has subsequently made the company one of the most successful privately-owned and operated plant and equipment hire operations in the country.

Under his leadership the firm has ridden the storm of the economic downturn, and achieved a steady growth of turnover, profit, and operating margins since 2013, due to Adam's commitment to continually diversify the services his firm offers, expanding resources and investing in the plant and equipment AB2000 has available to hire. "Diversification has worked

effectively for AB2000," Adam explains, "enabling us to remain successful, and recover quickly following the difficult period of the recession. We have expanded into new sectors and consolidated business with existing clients; effectively creating our role as being a one-stop-shop for all our clients' plant hire needs.

"We are fortunate enough to have a formidable team of talented sales managers, staff and operators, all working to make our business succeed. Over time we have continued to source new products, chosen to renew our fleet regularly, but most of all diversify - using acquisitions and creating new divisions whenever the right opportunities present themselves."

Adam cites the recent example of a mobile concrete pump acquisition, a procurement which led staff to join AB2000 from the Dunne Group after it ceased trading. The purchase of the mobile crane division and staff from Motherwell Bridge was also a turning point for the company, with both ventures enabling AB2000 to secure valuable equipment, capable of bettering its customers' on-site needs.

Adam's business strategies have served his company well, and the list of accolades achieved under his charge has been impressive. At present, his firm is positioned as 59th within the 'Britain's Private Companies with the Fastest Growing Profits' listing - an annual Sunday Times Profit Track 100 league table sponsored by BDO, which comprehensively ranks Britain's private companies based on 'fastest-growing profits' over three years.

Further building the picture, in 2014 AB2000 was awarded the Scottish Business Insider's fastest growing SME award, and in 2015 was ranked the second most successful SME in Scotland, then last year the firm impressively reported sizeable profits of £4.1 million.

Back to the present, and this notable operation has continued its annual

investment of £10m - a sum earmarked to secure the purchase of new equipment designed to expand the fleet, as well as replace older machines. The company has also reported an annual profit increase of more than 75 percent. And, should this momentum continue, the firm will be on-track to further increase turnover, margins and profits well into 2018.

As for the fleet itself, AB2000 has in the region of 420 machines that combine to form a taskforce of operated and non-operated plant-for-hire. This includes 1,5 tonne mini-excavators, heavy equipment including dozers, tracked excavators of up to 55 tonnes, wheeled excavators, articulated dump trucks of up to 30 tonnes, soil stabilisation equipment, rollers, 180 degree machines, road brushes, tele-handlers and rotators.

One of the firm's more recent acquisitions has been the 'new to market' B20E - a more compact piece of ADT kit that fits the bill for smaller applications.

It's the latest addition to a generous portfolio of 42 Bell machines. AB2000 already carries the B25E and B30E ADTs, which have shown themselves to be reliable workhorses when regularly set to work amongst bulk earthworks, quarrying, road building, pipe line laying, and crushing and screening tasks.

The B20E joins the Bell Equipment lineage, and has been chosen 'because in some circumstances, a smaller ADT is exactly what's needed, to enable a contractor to do more'.

This particular model is currently being put through its paces on a house building site in Glasgow, stripping overburden and performing general excavation tasks, within a constrained area.

"It's a very effective machine," says Bill Marsh, Director and General Manager at AB2000, "and great for use on smaller sites, as it's so easily manoeuvrable - particularly when space is tight.

"It's easier to move between houses, and owing to its lower axle loads and wide tyres, doesn't cause damage to site roads. I've certainly been impressed so far."

Bill knows what he's looking for when it comes to machine capabilities, and knows what to expect from Bell. He takes the responsibility for sourcing, purchasing and selling AB2000s plant fleet as well as overseeing the service department. His previous experience of Bell ADTs stems from a period when he worked within the UK open cast mining industry, and became familiar with the machines, their durability and reliability.

"The majority of our Bell trucks are used within the core plant division. However, we've brought the B20E onboard with a mind to primarily deliver in the construction plant fleet, with the option to potentially bring the vehicles on board within our railway work, or on contract sites.

"The machine we own right now is performing well, and an order has already been placed for a further four units of the same model, with an option to then secure an additional five.

"I'm confident the B20E will continue to do well, as if it comes from the same mould as its forerunners, it will prove to become a machine associated with dependability, lower operating costs and good residual values."

The future for the B20E at AB2000 looks set. By taking its place within a plant hire firm that continually invests and identifies prospects, the vehicle will have every opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities to construction teams around the country. As for the future of AB2000? Expansion continues to feature as a mainstay priority. It's a firm that has successfully proven that by continually identifying business opportunities and expanding into opportune areas, the right investments soon deliver growth.

