

Hanson puts faith in Bell Equipment in historic 15-machine deal

Bell Equipment UK has completed a major deal with Hanson for the supply of 15 machines, representing the first time that the renowned construction materials company has used Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) and Wheeled Loaders.

This historic order has seen two ADTs and 13 Wheeled Loaders deployed at Hanson sites producing aggregates (crushed rock, sand and gravel), asphalt, cement, concrete and building products.

The deal reinforces the rising reputation of Bell for the quality of its engineering and service support; indeed, it owes to Bell successfully demonstrating in the field that it far exceeds outdated market perceptions of the brand.

Discussions began after Hillhead 2012 when Robin Piper, Bell Equipment's National Accounts Manager, met with Chris Hope, Continuous Improvement Manager at HeidelbergCement, Hanson's parent company. At that point, no Bell ADT or Wheeled Loader was in use within the Hanson UK business.

According to Hope, awareness of Bell machines amongst colleagues was not high, with little direct experience of using Bell products and a poor perception. Piper offered

to implement a number of site demonstrations of Bell ADTs in order to prove that the reality of using Bell would be a positive experience – and so it proved.

While Hanson purchasers went elsewhere on that occasion, there was enough feedback from site managers for Chris Hope to note that Bell was now a definite option in the company's future plans.

At the same time, tests conducted by HeidelbergCement in Belgium revealed exceptional performance results for Wheeled Loaders from John Deere – the company which manufactures the Bell range of Wheeled Loaders.

As a result of these tests and demonstrations, Bell was invited by Hanson to tender for its 2014/15 purchasing period. This is the latest step in an ambitious programme of investment in new plant, following a long period post-2008 when the downturn necessitated a freeze on purchasing.

"The brighter economic outlook of recent years has made it essential that we have equipment capable of meeting growing demand, and we had a remit to replace a sizeable number of machines nationwide with the focus on key sites and applications," explains Chris Hope. Bolstered by the exceptional feedback of the previous

tests and demonstrations, Bell secured an order for 14 machines, with Hanson citing the willingness of Bell to determine the optimum machines for each site as a key factor in the company's success.

As part of the process, Bell surveyed the sites where machines were needed. "The suggested spec was based on a like-for-like comparison with the existing machines, but since much has changed in terms of machine performance since those models were purchased," confirms Chris Hope. "Developments in technology mean that we could go smaller without compromising on performance and, indeed, achieve greater cost-efficiencies."

Servicing was another key reason for Bell Equipment securing such a large order. "We have opted for a full repair and maintenance package, covering everything aside from consumables. We have real confidence in the ability of Bell to deliver ongoing machine support," adds Chris Hope.

Deliveries were staggered throughout late 2014 and early 2015, with the last completed in June-July.

The aggregates and asphalt divisions took the majority of machines, with seven machines – a Bell B40D ADT and six Bell L2606E Wheeled Loaders – located across five sites. Hanson Concrete took

the first L1506E Wheeled Loader in August 2014 and four Bell Wheeled Loaders (three L1706E and one L1506E) went to Hanson's packed products division.

The final three machines - a B25E ADT, plus L2106E and L1204E Loaders - were specified for the building products division. That part of the Hanson business was sold in March 2015, but the company is still providing technical and administrative support including machine orders.

All of the machines had to meet the strict requirements of the Hanson and MPA 'Safer By Design' protocol, which calls for extensive alarms, sensors and work lights, in addition to an improved integrated access and egress system that can be retracted and locked into place when not in use.

Since delivery, the machines are performing well. "Quarry Managers are traditionally the most difficult people to please, so they'd certainly let me know if there are any problems," comments Chris Hope. "It's clear that the Bell machines have settled nicely into our fleet and that operators are getting on with them."

Robin Piper from Bell Equipment adds: "For Hanson to take the bold step of purchasing so many machines is testament to the quality of Bell ADTs and Wheeled Loaders. We have worked hard as a company to improve perceptions of performance and reliability and Hanson's commitment proves that, once a company has the opportunity to see a Bell at work, they buy Bell."

