

Bell B40Es impress Trollope Mining on phosphate mine



Site Manager at the Elandsfontein Phosphate Mine, Mark Cockbain of Trollope Mining Services.



Bell Equipment has for a long time set a benchmark with its traditionally yellow Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) and these workhorses on the African and wider world mining and construction stage have subsequently appeared in blue, brown, white and even shades of red livery.

But now they've gone completely green too and none more so than on South Africa's evergreen West Coast.

Brothers, John and Peter Trollope, founded Trollope Mining almost by default when, fresh from university, they noticed activity at the development of a new mine close to the family farm outside Thabazimbi. Buying amongst other used equipment, some Bell 1756 and 1266 Rigid Haul Tractors with 9-cubic metre dump trailers, the brothers set about doing some bulk earthworks on a contract basis and their company Trollope Mining Services was founded in 1975.

Trollope Mining has, over four decades, made its mark in opencast mining, crushing and screening, bulk earthworks, rehabilitation, road construction and plant hire. A long association with Bell Equipment is continuing with Trollope Mining owning the first fleet of green Bell B40E and older D-series ADTs and 35 000 litre water tankers based on the Bell B40D chassis.

"The colour green is the corporate colour of our clients Kropz SA (Pty) Ltd and we're proud to be their contract miners at the new Elandsfontein phosphate mine between Hopefield and Langebaan on the West Coast," says Mark Cockbain, Trollope Mining Services Site Manager. "As a mark of our commitment to our clients, we've painted our entire fleet of mining equipment in their corporate colour, which is this unmistakable green."

"We as Trollope Mining Services have been tasked with removing and stockpiling topsoil and other soft material

for later rehabilitation before the phosphate-rich soil is mined," Mark says. "Despite the environmental stipulations contained within its mining licence, our client is committed to looking after this area where the mine is situated and has planned that rehabilitation takes place as soon as a wide strip of phosphate has been mined."

Trollope Mining Services also takes care of haul road maintenance and the peripheral services associated with opencast mining.

"We have discovered that the mining area presents unexpected challenges with some very soft sand, which makes for challenging underfoot conditions and some of our ADTs, fitted with conventional 29,5R25 tyres, have sunk into the sand," Mark continues. "To this end, we've tested high flotation tyres of a 875/65 x 29,5 size on one Bell B40E ADT and found that this truck can take a full load of 20 cubic metres where no other truck can. This has impressed us and our thinking is that despite the difficulty of finding such tyres, this would be the answer to our challenges going forward."

Three more Bell B40E ADTs, fitted with the wider high flotation tyres, have subsequently been added to the Trollope Mining Services fleet at the mine. Small greedy boards retrofitted in the centre of the truck's bin, ensure good, heaped loads of 20 cubic metres.

"In this relatively remote area, we appreciate that our production targets can only be met while our mechanical availabilities are high and for this we rely heavily on Bell Equipment from their nearest Customer Service Centre in Cape Town," Mark says. "We try and give the technical teams as much advance notice as possible and response times have been great with spares drawn from Bell Cape Town, the Bell Global Logistics Centre in Jet Park and our own head office near Bapsfontein. We also keep service kits on site."

It would seem that no matter the colour of Bell Equipment's legendary reliable ADTs, stalwart customers such as Trollope Mining Services will see to it that their client's phosphate product is mined responsibly to ultimately create a much greener environment.