

# the bulletin

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**Strong Reliable Machines  
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**BELL**

**HEAD OFFICE - RICHARDS BAY, SA**

Telephone ..... +27(0)35 - 907 9111

**SA CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES**

- Bloemfontein ..... + 27(0)51 - 4327855
- Cape Town ..... + 27(0)21 - 3809000
- East London ..... + 27(0)43 - 7321415
- Empangeni ..... + 27(0)35 - 9072500
- eThekweni (Durban) ..... +27(0)32 - 9471637
- George ..... + 27(0)44 - 8780930
- Jet Park (Johannesburg) .. + 27(0)11 - 9289846
- Kimberley ..... + 27(0)53 - 8410710
- Kuruman ..... + 27(0)53 - 7123072
- Middelburg ..... + 27(0)13 - 2468900/1
- Mthatha ..... + 27(0)47 - 5314905
- Nelspruit ..... + 27(0)13 - 7552110
- Newcastle ..... + 27(0)34 - 3756190/1
- Piet Retief ..... + 27(0)17 - 8261523
- Pietermaritzburg ..... + 27(0)33 - 3869319
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- Rustenburg ..... + 27(0)14 - 5921160
- Steelport ..... + 27(0)72 - 3460025
- Tzaneen ..... + 27(0)15 - 3071129
- Vryheid ..... + 27(0)34 - 9815541
- Wolmaransstad ..... + 27(0)18 - 5962319

**AFRICA CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES**

- Harare (Zimbabwe) ..... + 263 242 447374
- Kitwe (Zambia) ..... + 260 962 249 900
- Matsapha (Swaziland) ..... + 268 251 874 96/7
- Mazubuka (Zambia) ..... + 260 962 249 900

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- Botswana (Gaborone) ..... + 267 395 2291
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- Malawi (Blantyre) ..... + 265(0)997 757 938
- Mozambique (Maputo) ..... + 258 8439 88084

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- Namibia (Windhoek) ..... +264 81 250 2949

# insidetrack



Dear Customers

I trust that you have all had a good start to the year despite the cloud of COVID-19 that continues to hang over us. By all accounts it looks like 2021 will be another challenging year as we cope with effects of the pandemic and I wish you, your families and businesses strength and resilience.

The changes to our John Deere arrangements, announced in August, have taken effect and Bell transitioned to a non-exclusive dealer last month (March).

Many of you will be aware that BESSA has recently been appointed the distributor for the full range of JCB construction equipment, as from 1 May 2021. More information will be communicated closer to the time, but we are confident that this will lead to an invigoration of certain product lines and offer a better value proposition to you, our customers.

While some may find these significant changes unsettling, I think it is important for all our customers to understand that Bell, and our international OEM partners, all fully appreciate our joint obligations to provide full support for the life of any units sold, and will honour these obligations to our customers. If you have any concerns or questions, please engage with us to fully understand how we will be going about meeting these commitments across the entire product range.

In this magazine we once again deliver a great cross-section of stories about our different products and industries. Throughout there is a familiar and pleasing thread of customers who are satisfied with the performance of their products and the reliability and efficiency of our technical support.

At Bell we understand the importance of getting these basics right and we commit to intensifying our efforts in the areas of product quality and customer support to ensure that we meet or exceed your expectations. For example, those of you who follow Bell Equipment South Africa on social media will have seen that we now provide direct parts delivery, free to your door, to promote convenience and social distancing.

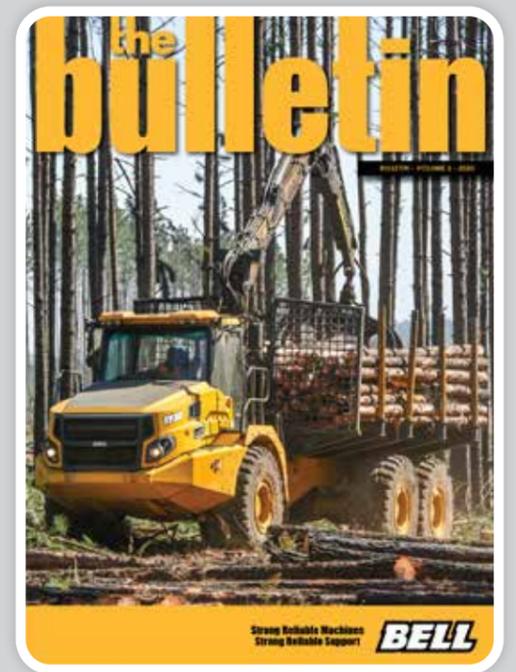
Going forward we will continue to look for opportunities to make our customers' lives better. I thank you for your ongoing commitment and support of Bell and I am confident that working together we will be able to grow and prosper.

Yours sincerely

Leon Goosen  
Group Chief Executive

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**Cover picture:** Somusa Forestry is impressed with the fuel consumption of the Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder. Read more on page 32.

Published by the Marketing team for Bell Equipment customers and friends worldwide.

Address correspondence to:  
The Bell Bulletin  
Marketing  
Private Bag X20046  
Empangeni  
3880  
South Africa

T: + 27 (0)35 907 9297  
E: bulletin@bellequipment.com  
W: www.bellequipment.com



# TauSadi blazes a path for women in mining and invests in Bell B40Es



**“We’ve each been in the South African mining industry for over a decade and have learnt that Bell Equipment sets the benchmark for ADTs in these conditions with its local design and build, which points to high local content and above all, availability and great reputation.”**

*Molebogeng Mogashoa*

**In the animal kingdom when a pack of lions stalk a herd of antelope, it is the female of the species that does the hunting. To say that the serenity of a grazing herd of springbok or impala would be disrupted is an understatement.**

Now if the current Mpumalanga coal mining world seems to be an orderly place, some male contract miners better watch out because two highly qualified female engineers are about to upset their seemingly serene world.

By their own admission Silindokuhle Sithole and Molebogeng Mogashoa are those disruptors. The pair met while studying towards respective Masters’ in Business Administration (MBA) degrees at Pretoria University’s Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). Both are process engineers with post-graduate qualifications in engineering and had worked up to management roles for the same international mining company, though in different commodities, before deciding to get out of their comfort zones to make a difference in the lives of others.

“We had noticed that most emerging contractors and new businesses wanting to serve the mining industry had little or no business acumen or mining experience, which often made it challenging for potential mining clients to offer opportunities within their revenue generating core mining activities,” Silindokuhle says. “Molebogeng and I had created a company under the name of TauSadi with ‘Tau’ being the Tswana name for a lion and ‘Basadi’, which are women, to set us apart and bridge this gap amongst emerging contractors.”

“The high unemployment rate, gender inequalities and the need to run businesses sustainably in South Africa came to the fore and we looked to where we could make a difference,” affirms Molebogeng. “We also believed, and still do, that women are capable and can make a success of a variety of services to the mining environment in what is traditionally a man’s world.”

The reality hit home once both had resigned from their salaried jobs in 2016 and they were working from the campus of the business school while completing their MBAs. A short-lived contract doing stockpile management and loading trains ended after a month due to unforeseen circumstances on their clients’ side and by then they had converted a remote farmhouse in Mpumalanga into an office.

“We survived living off our savings and meagre pension funds. It was tough going but in 2018 we got our foot in the door of opportunity when we landed a six month contract on a coal mine stripping topsoil and hauling it to a stockpile for later use in rehabilitation,” says Silindokuhle. “We must have done something right because after the initial six months the contract was extended by a further three months and then even further.”



**TauSadi partners, Silindokuhle Sithole (left) and Molebogeng Mogashoa (centre), with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter.**

"This project had started in 2019 and after the initial six months we were told we were outperforming our targets and we were given a second project to perform mine rehabilitation services on behalf of the client. To do this work we were renting in earthmoving and haulage equipment. Although we didn't make much profit, we saw this as beneficial in the long run to keep our foot in the door and to build a positive reputation that we could deliver more than what we had promised."

Come the new year of 2020, and with a longer-term contract, both Molebogeng and Silindokuhle realised that they now needed to procure their own fleet of yellow machines to make it all worthwhile. They successfully arranged finance through a bank linked to their now longer-term

contract and their choice of haulage equipment fell on four Bell B40E Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs).

"We've each been in the South African mining industry for over a decade and have learnt that Bell Equipment sets the benchmark for ADTs in these conditions with its local design and build, which points to high local content and above all, availability and great reputation," Molebogeng says. "The Bell B40E ADTs perfectly matched our business model in terms of targeted volumes and cycle times."

The TauSadi partners appreciate that reliable and accessible technical back-up is key to ensure sustained delivery to clients through maximum mechanical availabilities. That Bell Equipment's

Middelburg customer service centre was so close by further justified their choice of the Bell B40E ADTs. The four Bell ADTs were bought with extended warranties to 10 000 hours on their wet drivetrains and hydraulics and TauSadi Mining and Engineering has the added peace of mind provided by a service contract with Bell.

"Bell Equipment's response times are good as was shown when there was an issue on coolant levels when we first received the Bell B40E ADTs which was very quickly resolved," Silindokuhle points out. "Although we work on dry rates with a limit on our fuel consumption in place, we're both pleased and impressed with the fuel consumption of the B40Es at 24,5 litres per hour."

"One's mining equipment and its performance is such a major part of your reputation and to this

end we'll look to replace loading and haulage equipment with new models at around 15 000 to 16 000 hours," she adds.

The two partners of TauSadi Mining and Engineering are blessed with high energy levels which translates into much forward-thinking ambition. They are keen to diversify into mining other commodities such as precious and base metals and not put all their eggs into one basket.

"We're looking at providing the full mining package from planning to process engineering and would love to own a mine and not only do contract mining," they say. "Our ultimate aim is to own mining rights and therefore the entire mining value chain, and having an original equipment manufacturer and supplier such as Bell Equipment that appreciates this is a bonus."



# Lowest cost per tonne productivity has Tomahawk sweet on their UltECO 6

South Africa's picturesque Nkomazi district lies tucked in between the borders of Eswatini, Mozambique and the Kruger National Park and, with its abundance of fertile soils and water, it's a really good place to grow sugar cane and a host of choice fruit and vegetables which are mostly exported.

This is where one finds Tomahawk Farming Operations and the name rings true when one drives onto the estate through lush fruit orchards, as there is no doubt that serious precision farming is a way of life here. Tomahawk Farming Operations produces sugar cane, citrus fruits, pawpaws, litchis, mangoes, bananas, and vegetables such as gem squash and butternut.

The land on which Tomahawk Farming Operations lies was the subject of a successful land claim by the local Matsamo community in 2010. In a groundbreaking effort between the new and former owners, a joint venture has seen a steady process of skills transfer and upliftment taking place to maintain Tomahawk Farming Operations as a successful food producer and exporter, which means sustained job preservation and an earner of foreign exchange. This has been hailed a huge success and an

example of what can be created with total commitment from all concerned.

The farm is one of the largest employers in this area with a full-time labour force of 880 that swells to around 1 500 in the picking season.

This wide valley has produced good quality sugar cane for many decades and, being relatively flat, seems ideal for irrigation. Irrigation water comes mostly from the Lomati River to irrigate the 700ha under sugar cane. Tomahawk Farming Operations has for many years loaded its sugar cane infield using two slew loaders, namely Bell ATL 884 machines. Having the ability to drive infield following the cane stool rows and missing irrigation infrastructure has made the slew loader a sought-after loading tool.

"I haven't been here all that long but I'm aware of the value that the Tomahawk cane production teams saw in the two Bell ATL884s," says André Viljoen, Tomahawk Farming Operations' Workshop Manager. "Sadly, after each ATL884 clocked over 25 000 hours of excellent service, and we'd bought all available spares from Bell Equipment, we've had to cannibalise one machine as a source of spare parts to keep the other one running."



"We enquired from Charles Inggs, Bell Equipment's Product Manager: Forestry and Agriculture, whether it was possible to obtain a similar slew loader and he suggested we look at the more modern Matriarch UltECO 6 machine," André continues. "We were happy to hear that Bell Equipment had another slew loader model available as taking care of the irrigation infrastructure in our cane lands is paramount when loading the cane onto the trucks."

Tomahawk also has a Bell 125 Cane Loader available for emergencies.

When the four-wheel drive Matriarch UltECO 6 Slew Loader arrived, André and the production teams were pleased to see that its working width could be adjusted to fit the row configuration of the Tomahawk cane lands. The operators who had previously worked with the Bell ATL884 machines took to the controls on the Matriarch UltECO 6 seamlessly as the joystick control is simple to use. The operators also enjoy the air-conditioned, ergonomically designed cab that always faces the load and swings through more than 180 degrees.

"When we made our Matriarch UltECO 6 narrower, we fitted a slightly smaller cane grab than the

standard 0,42 metre grab the machine is supplied with," André explains. "The operators enjoy the push piler at the front of the machine as they can now stockpile the cut cane easier, rolling it along before picking it up with the grab."

Despite its all-wheel hydrostatic drive, the Matriarch UltECO 6 Sugarcane Slew Loader is much lighter than the Bell ATL884 and, fitted with high flotation tyres, has much less ground impact.

"The Matriarch UltECO 6 Sugarcane Slew Loader is a highly efficient machine and this can be seen from its fuel consumption which, at 4,2 litres per hour compared to 7,6 litres of that of the Bell ATL884, is a startling improvement of around 44%," André says. "Fuel is obviously an important part of our production costs and this is a huge improvement coupled to the fact that we're achieving high mechanical availabilities during two daily shifts, seven days a week."

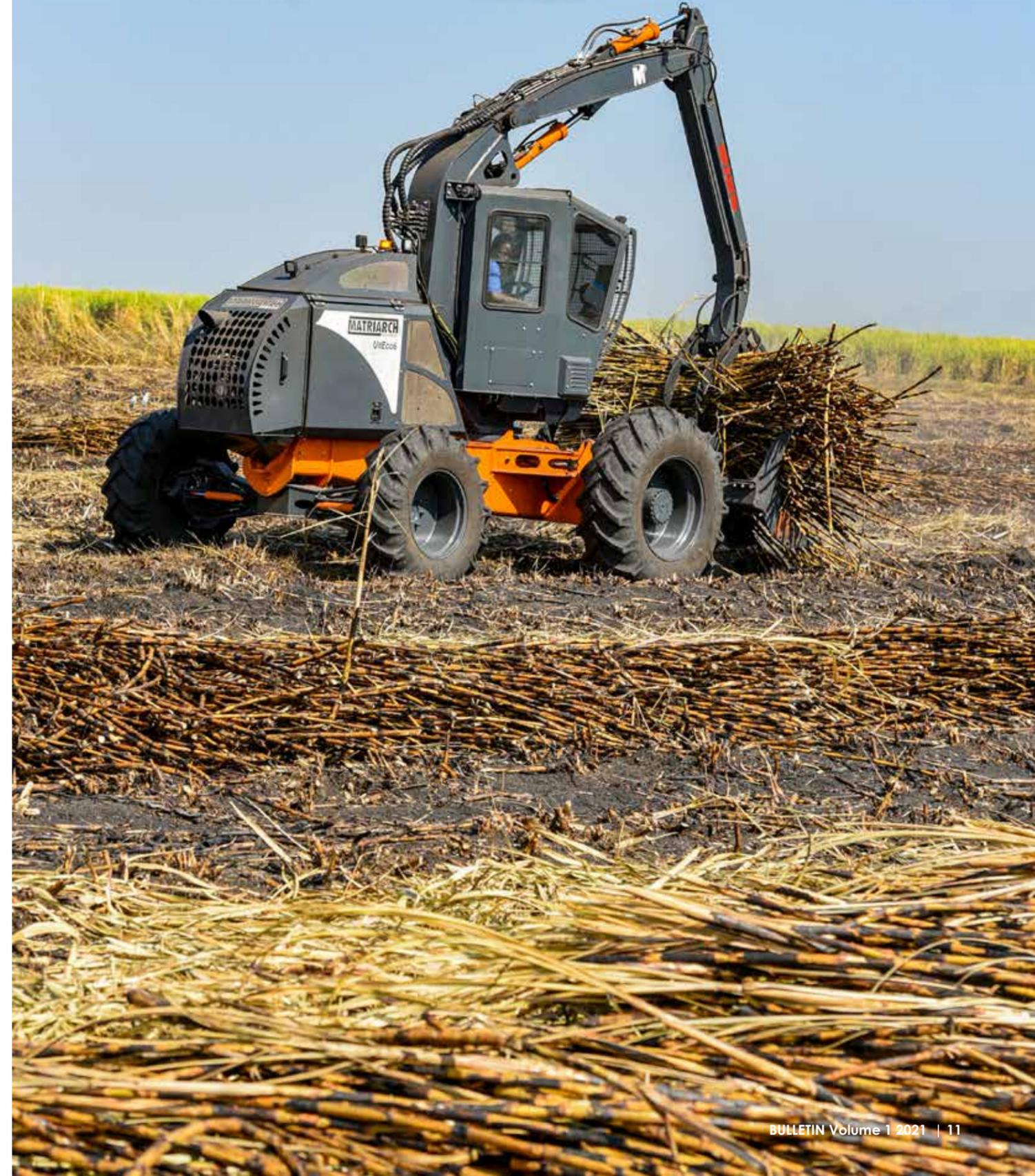
"The bottom line for us is that this new Matriarch UltECO 6 Sugarcane Slew Loader is getting the job done with more efficiency due to its slew loading action and lower fuel consumption. This translates into lower production costs per tonne of cane produced – a winning combination."

**"The Matriarch UltECO 6 Sugarcane Slew Loader is a highly efficient machine and this can be seen from its fuel consumption which, at 4,2 litres per hour compared to 7,6 litres of that of the Bell ATL884, is a startling improvement of around 44%."**

*André Viljoen*



**Tomahawk Farming Operations Workshop Manager, André Viljoen (left), with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen.**



# Exceptional customer support keeps Johnson Plant Hire & Civils loyal to Bell

Bell Equipment has always been known as an enthusiastic and innovative company but one of its sales representatives has set a new benchmark for customer service.



Recently Fiona Johnson from Bell Equipment in Cape Town sold, amongst other compaction equipment, a Bomag BT65 Tamper to Johnson Plant Hire & Civils in Stellenbosch. While this Tamper was still new it developed a problem and, as Fiona was in the area, she simply drove to the site where the machine was being used, put it in the backseat of her sedan and drove it to the Bell branch near the Cape Town International Airport. Here the problem was attended to immediately and she delivered it back to the site in working order, the same day – again from the back seat of her car!

“Now that’s the kind of service we don’t get from any other original equipment supplier,” says a smiling Ben Johnson, Johnson Plant Hire & Civils’ Managing Director. “Fiona is always willing to help and really does go the extra mile for us.”

Ben grew up amongst earthmoving and haulage equipment as his late father, Mark Johnson, owned both Johnson Bricks and the Volmoed Quarry in Oudtshoorn. When these businesses were sold in 2000, the Johnson family moved to Melbourne, Australia but returned three years later. After finishing school, Ben went on to work for a construction company for some five years before the urge to be self-employed became too strong. In 2013 he saw an opportunity for a plant hire

service in the Stellenbosch area with a focus on the agricultural sector.

“My love for yellow machines started when my late father had the businesses in Oudtshoorn and with my own business I started small, first buying a tractor loader backhoe before growing the business to then own a 5,5 ton excavator and subsequently 13- and 20-ton excavators loading a variety of tipper trucks,” he says. “My target market when starting out was to supply plant hire services to the wine and fruit farming community here in the Western Cape, which is a captive market.”

Ben says that his equipment was mostly used for uprooting old vines, doing soil preparation, digging trenches for irrigation infrastructure, drainage canals, farm dams and related agricultural infrastructure.

“In 2017 I approached my friend MW Beyers, who had extensive experience of civil engineering and construction, to join the business and so we became Johnson Plant Hire & Civils,” he adds. “Now we could offer a more comprehensive range of services to include the construction of tarred and paved roads, storm water infrastructure, sewers and sewerage pipelines, stores and warehouses.”



(From left): MW Beyers (Civil & Construction Director), Fiona Johnson (Bell Equipment Sales Representative), Jacques Davids (Plant Manager) and Ben Johnson (Managing Director).

What started as a small plant hire company grew exponentially in a few short years and now has 110 full-time staff including four site foremen, a plant manager and a host of artisans, machine operators and truck drivers. The company's fleet of yellow machines and trucks has grown to number 22. During the slower winter months when there is not much demand for plant hire in agriculture, the equipment is cross-hired to the civil construction side of the business.

"Despite all this equipment, we were always having to hire in compaction equipment and, while the machines we use are not big, their hiring costs do affect our bottom line, so early in 2020 I decided it was time to acquire our own compaction equipment," Ben explains. "I recalled that we had enjoyed great service from machines made and sold by Bell Equipment with my father's businesses in Oudtshoorn and approached Bell in Cape Town through their Sales Representative Fiona Johnson, who we knew well by now as she called on us regularly. We believe it's the right thing to do supporting South African companies such as Bell Equipment."

In February 2020, Johnson Plant Hire & Civils took delivery of a Bomag BW120AD-5 Double-drum Ride-on Roller, two Bomag BT65 Tampers and a Bomag BPR35/60 Plate Compactor.

"We use the Bomag BW120AD-5 Roller mostly for compaction during roadbed preparation and it has run really well and added value during its first almost 300 hours of use," Ben continues. "Its fuel consumption has also been a pleasant surprise at between 3,5 and 4,5 litres an hour."

He goes on to explain that the Bomag BT65 Tampers are especially useful when compacting fill material on top of pipelines and behind retaining walls and the Bomag BPR35/60 Plate Compactor gives a solid and firm finish to any brick paving.

"I'm aware that Bell Equipment has a reputation for solid technical support, and we have not been disappointed as the example of Fiona Johnson as a sales representative doubling up in a product support role shows," he says. "We believe Bell Equipment understands our business and appreciates that we can't afford downtime on our equipment, which makes us confident that this South African equipment distributor will see more of us in the future."

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**Ben Johnson**



# Ritluka Resources raves about B45Es in wet coal mining application

**Applying one's mind is a popular concept for achieving success but when you have the luxury of applying two educated and keen minds to achieve the same goal, ultimate success in almost any challenging field is the result.**

Such has been the case when Rhandzu Ngobeni, a mining engineer, and Bonga Myeza, a geologist, put their heads together while working for a well known international mining company. "We thought we'd find a profitable future in providing technical services and project management to junior mining companies in the coalfields around Emalahleni (Witbank) and Middelburg in Mpumalanga," Rhandzu Ngobeni says. "These services would include pre-feasibility studies, short and long-term mine planning, mining scheduling and execution."

The pair established their company Ritluka Resources in 2014. 'Ritluka' is the Tsonga word for 'leaf' which symbolises growth as a sign of life. By 2016 Rhandzu and Bonga had knocked on enough doors and done enough groundwork to start employing people, and later that same year they landed contracts to assist in production for both underground and surface coal mining.

"We were delighted to land a large surface coal mining contract in 2019 for a major coal supplier but we immediately faced the daunting prospect of needing to source a fleet of yellow mining equipment for us to fulfill our side of the bargain," Bonga Myeza says. "Fortunately, our clients were well versed in a successful enterprise development initiative with Bell Equipment and it was to this local original equipment manufacturer and supplier that we turned for our all-important haulage fleet."

Working through Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Carel Venter, at Bell Middelburg, Rhandzu and Bonga were introduced to Tyron Ravenscroft, Bell Equipment Regional Sales Manager: Central Region, and Bevan Veall, Bell Equipment General Manager: Customer Finance Solutions.

"Because of the volumes of overburden and coal we were tasked to move each month, we knew we had to find some large trucks. We were confident in choosing Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) as experience had shown that this was the benchmark machine for haul trucks, especially in wet coal mines," Bonga says. "We had originally considered the Bell B50E ADT but were quite satisfied in the performance promised by the three Bell B45E ADTs we took delivery of in May 2020."



"The sales experience with Bell Equipment's knowledgeable management and sales staff was pleasant and it's a real confidence booster to meet a distributor that clearly understands and appreciates your business model and the potential challenges a young company such as ours could face," Rhandzu adds. "We're convinced we made the correct choice of the Bell B45E ADTs with extended warranties on the wet drivetrain and hydraulics to 12 000 hours or 36 months, and a service contract as a technical backup."

Ritluka Resources' three Bell B45E ADTs are deployed on an opencast coal mine near Kriel in Mpumalanga which produces thermal coal for the domestic and export market. They are loaded in the pit using 70- and 90-ton excavators and move overburden with specific gravities of 2,5 and coal, which is less dense. Haul distances vary between 1,7km for overburden and 3,5km to the run-of-mine tip area where the raw coal is deposited. Two 10-hour shifts around the clock sees the Bell B45E ADTs in almost constant daily use and, although they are still relatively new, their high mechanical availabilities and frugal average fuel burn of 20 litres an hour has impressed both owners and clients.

"The coal mining areas get quite wet and with the rainy season at hand we've been impressed by

how well these Bell B45E ADTs handle tricky underfoot conditions with their all-wheel drive traction when fully laden," Bonga explains. "With the bin being not that much smaller than that of the Bell B50E ADT, we're still meeting our monthly production targets with ease due to fast enough cycle times."

"Our immediate aim is to establish ourselves in the coal mining industry before moving on to doing mining in other commodities," Rhandzu adds. "As the only company to currently offer mining services in both surface and underground mining, we have additional opportunities in coal in the offing and will certainly be talking to Bell Equipment about enlarging our haulage fleet when these contracts come to fruition."

Both partners though are adamant about one important aspect of equipment ownership as they echo: "While hiring mining equipment is handy and a quick fix at times, it does eat into your bottom line. On the other hand, being seen as owners of new equipment that guarantees maximum uptime through solid technical backup by reputable distributors, such as Bell Equipment, reaffirms the view in the minds of existing and potential clients that you are a serious player and here for the long run. That's what we aim to be!"



Bonga Myeza (left) and Rhandzu Ngobeni (centre) with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter.



**"We're convinced we made the correct choice of the Bell B45E ADTs with extended warranties on the wet drivetrain and hydraulics to 12 000 hours or 36 months, and a service contract as a technical backup ."**

Rhandzu Ngobeni

# Burger & Wallace grows its Bell fleet with new Kobelco Excavator

In a tough economic environment lowering the cost of production is vital whether it be in construction, mining, or agriculture. All these disciplines involve the use of mechanical equipment and one of the key input costs is that of fuel.



When an established Cape Town-based civil construction company analysed fuel consumption on their newly acquired Kobelco SK210LC-8 Excavator, they were pleasantly surprised.

Burger & Wallace Construction (Pty) Ltd was founded by Terry Wallace and the late Martin Burger in 1988. Terry Wallace is still a director of the company that is now managed by Nick King, Paul Summers, Colin Budge, and Jason Keating, who form the executive team. The company has experienced sustained growth into what now can be described as a medium to large civil engineering and construction company with a recognised pedigree relating to a huge body of prestigious projects.

"We're proud of the reputation we've built to bring in projects on time and on budget," says Nick King. "Our approach has been to employ the right people and resources effectively to produce a quality end product."

Burger & Wallace has kept pace with the changing corporate landscape and has created an Employee's Trust that owns 30% of the company with subsequent profit sharing. In-service training is also prioritised and the company, which boasts a CIDB rating of 8CE, is a member of Tradeworld.

"Our projects range from bulk earthworks to upmarket housing estates, with low-cost housing projects in the mix as well," Nick continues. "This has seen us working across the Northern and

Western Cape from Springbok and Upington to George and Knysna, and has included roads and services."

Burger & Wallace Construction has been recognised for its innovative construction methods like exposed aggregate roadways at the Croydon Vineyards and Olive Estates that saw the company receiving the Concrete Manufacturer's Association Award.

"Employing the right resources also points to applying the correct tools for the job when it comes to our mechanised fleet. To this end we bought Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) from Bell Equipment in the early 2000s as we believed a Bell ADT to be better suited for working in bulk earthworks and off-road conditions," Nick states. "Our first two Bell B17C and two Bell B20D ADTs had each given us well over 20 000 hours of excellent service before we converted them into 10 000 litre water tankers. We believed they still had a lot of life left and running with water tanks would extend this life even further due to lower hour utilisation and effectively lighter loads."

Nick emphasises the benefits of a long relationship with an original equipment manufacturer and supplier such as Bell Equipment. Bell can be consulted when necessary and relied on for sustained technical backup. This happened in 2018 when Burger & Wallace Construction decided to sell three 25-ton tipper trucks and replace them with two new Bell B18E ADTs, which again were better suited for their off-road



**Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, with Nick King, a Director of Burger & Wallace Construction (Pty) Ltd.**

capability in bulk earthworks and civil construction projects. The fact that they were road legal for easy commutes between sites was a bonus and the Bell Fleetmatic® system helps to monitor their performance.

The company had a 21-ton excavator which had come to the end of its economical working life at between 12 000 and 14 000 hours. A large new development project was in the pipeline and it was thought to replace this machine with a new model of similar mass.

“Our friends at CSV Construction had recently bought a Kobelco SK210LC-8 21-ton Excavator from Bell Equipment and we took a close look at their machine and asked about its performance and especially its fuel consumption,” Nick explains. “On the strength of their experience and with the

information given to us by our Bell Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, we ordered a similar machine which was delivered in October 2019.

“Our Kobelco SK210LC-8 Excavator has been used extensively in bulk earthworks and in trenching for services on the new project and, despite working in deep clay, has returned fuel consumption figures of only 10 litres an hour, which is very pleasing. The machine has more than enough breakout force for what we require and its 1-cubic metre bucket moves good loads of soil whether trenching or loading tipper trucks. As the machine comes with external hydraulic piping, we may in time fit a hydraulic hammer to it.”

No bulk earthworks, services installation or roads construction project would be complete without

proper compaction and for many years Burger & Wallace Construction has relied on Bomag Rollers for this, which were also bought from Bell Equipment.

“We construct roads through all the base, binder and wearing courses except the final paving which we contract out. Proper compaction up to

that point is non-negotiable and we have our four Bomag 120, 212 and 219 Rollers to thank for this,” Nick adds. “We have a padfoot clamshell attachment on the newest Bomag 212 Rollers when working in clay and we rely heavily on these machines to deliver proper compaction.”

Mechanical equipment by its very nature needs to be maintained and Burger & Wallace Construction’s equipment, which is serviced and repaired by Bell Equipment, is no exception. Scheduled warranty servicing is done by Bell Equipment technicians out of the Cape Town branch. “Bell Equipment’s response times and parts availability has been very good for a long time and knowing that we can call on Kobus van Zyl and his team at any time is reassuring,” Nick says. “By the same token, when you consider that 11 machines out of our total fleet of 30 are from Bell Equipment, you can clearly see that we’re loyal to a brand and a company that delivers what it promises, much as we do.”



**“Bell Equipment’s response times and parts availability has been very good for a long time and knowing that we can call on Kobus van Zyl and his team at any time is reassuring.”**

*Nick King*

# FASTfell and Skogger enable GDH Harvesting to branch into thinnings

Two experienced foresters and partners in a contract timber harvesting company have for a while considered undertaking thinnings as a profitable business opportunity but they felt it prudent to wait to find the correct tools for the job.

This they have now found after turning to Bell Equipment.

"We had operated as two independent timber harvesting contractors but in 2005 we joined forces and started working together as GDH Harvesting," says Dean du Plessis, the business partner of Geoff Good. "We established our head office in Sabie and have a satellite office in Ugie in the Eastern Cape."

GDH Harvesting specialises in the clear felling and extraction of pine with their largest operations around the Sabie and Ugie areas. The partners felt that with thinnings being a low volume and high-risk operation, they would prefer to run a semi-mechanised operation. "Lower volumes also mean less money; however, we're applying our same operational principles to thinnings as we do in clear fell operations to make working in thinnings financially viable."

Considered an important part of the bigger silviculture picture, thinnings is conducted in saw log plantation regimes by reducing the number of stems per hectare to stimulate the correct growth of the remaining standing trees thereby allowing them to increase in diameter with less taper. This allows the tree to grow in a cylindrical form for maximum timber recovery when processed in the sawmill.

"Our preferred approach to a thinnings operation is to take an optimum load and achieve fast cycle times but it's not as easy as it may seem," Dean explains. "You cannot get into a young pine compartment using a harvester that is too wide and when we researched the OEM market for a suitable harvester for thinnings, we came across the Matriarch FASTfell, which judging by its physical dimensions and width of only three metres, would be ideal for us."

The FASTfell is a hydrostatically driven machine with a low centre of gravity, a rubber mounted air-conditioned operator cab with excellent all-round visibility and protection whilst in the operator workstation.

Both Dean and Geoff liked the look of the business end of the FASTfell, namely the free hanging felling head, a Matriarch MT50FH with its Indexator GV1245 rotator and Hultdins Supercut saw unit with a cutting capacity of 520mm.

To ensure they achieved the volumes to make a thinnings operation financially viable, the GDH Harvesting partners needed to extract the timber the Matriarch FASTfell cut and bunched and placed on the compartment floor. To ensure the viability, efficiency was a key factor and here they saw the Matriarch Skogger, which has the same width of three metres as the FASTfell. This meant



GDH Production Supervisor, Themba Jele, with GDH Harvesting Partner, Dean du Plessis, and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen.



that these two machines could ideally work in tandem as a well balanced harvesting and extraction system.

The Matriarch Skogger was developed with versatility in mind and to be a flexible and cost-effective timber handler in extraction, felling and stacking operations. The machine's simple hydrostatic-mechanical drivetrain is efficient with good ground clearance and a low centre of gravity, which makes it extremely stable. As an articulated four-wheel drive machine the Skogger can climb and handle difficult terrain. The ROPS/FOPS rubber-mounted air-conditioned cab is built

with ergonomics in mind and ensures operator comfort and excellent visibility with a 180-degree swivelling seat. The swivelling seat allows the operator to extract on the same route without having to turn the machine around; he/she simply swivels the seat and reverses the machine whilst still facing forward.

"Since the two Matriarch machines were delivered to us in October 2019, we've been running them in a single daily shift and we're constantly achieving mechanical availabilities in the high 90%," Dean says. "The whole mechanical operation is so much more productive than manual felling and

extraction with tractors and we're comfortably maintaining a production rate in this pine compartment of 150 cubic metres of timber a day."

"Given the stability of both machines we feel there's potential for them to be used in full tree-length harvesting systems especially with the production of biomass material where you can leave the branches intact on roadside," Dean adds. "An additional machine we may consider in this operation is a small excavator with a harvesting head to process the tree lengths into the required products."

Dean is adamant that their gamble on adding thinnings as an extra service offering has paid off as there is enough work in the pipeline to justify their investment in the Matriarch FASTfell and Skogger.

GDH Harvesting runs an impressive fleet of Bell manufactured and licensed equipment. They have 10 Bell 225A Loggers, two John Deere 540 Cable Skidders and a John Deere 648L Grapple Skidder. Two Kobelco Excavator carriers have made their mark as well. One, a SK300LC-10 model is kitted out as a shovel-yarder and arrived in January 2020 and a two year old SK260LC-8 has been fitted with a third party harvesting head.

# New Bell 620G Graders in the Western Cape show they are a cut above

Graders generally come in two classes, namely those that are best suited for the heavy work of road construction and others that work best maintaining roads. A provincial government in South Africa, best known for the quality of its service delivery, has found that graders from Bell Equipment fill both roles equally well with a competitive price tag as a bonus.

The Western Cape Province in South Africa is known for its picturesque scenery comprising among other attractions, big-sky Karoo vistas, dramatic mountains, and a spectacular coastline. To get to these places its citizens and visitors use some 6 600km of tarred roads and almost 33 000km of gravel and access roads\*. All these roads, especially those that are unpaved, need to be maintained and at times rebuilt. This is the responsibility of the provincial government's Department of Transport and Public Works.

"We, as the Department of Transport and Public Works, oversee the construction and maintenance of all the non-national roads in our province and the acquisition and maintenance of the yellow machine fleet used for this," says Mustapha Subailey, the Department of Transport and Public Works' Control Technician. "To give you an idea of the size of our yellow machine and general vehicle fleet we control, its current replacement value is a sizeable R1,7 billion.

*\*Source: Road Infrastructure Strategic Framework for South Africa and National Department of Transport*



“We pride ourselves on the fact that we do regular and correct road maintenance on especially our gravel roads and this disciplined approach sees our yellow machines remaining mechanically sound for a long time, as long as 30 years in some cases,” Mustapha explains. “We therefore have a replacement policy on machines and vehicles that is based on replacing equipment when it starts costing more money than it is earning.”

Within the last year a need arose to replace six maintenance standard graders and two pneumatic tyred rollers. State departments issue one of two types of tenders, a national tender open to all registered original earthmoving equipment suppliers (OEMs) and one for preferred

suppliers, known as an RT57 contract. Bell Equipment is such a preferred supplier and won the tender to supply the six Bell 620G Graders and two Bomag BW27RH Pneumatic Tyred Rollers.

“Bell Equipment exceeded our expectations especially with the Bell 620G Graders; a powerful machine that has the same engine as the old Bell 670G model of which we have 10 we had acquired previously, and which are still giving us excellent service,” he adds. “Interestingly enough is that we requested four of these new Bell 620G Graders be fitted with mid-mount scarifiers, a set of slightly shorter ripper teeth than the normal ripper that is fitted on the rear of a grader, fitted in front of the blade.”



**“Bell Equipment exceeded our expectations especially with the Bell 620G Graders; a powerful machine that has the same engine as the old Bell 670G model of which we have 10 we had acquired previously, and which are still giving us excellent service.”**

*Mustapha Subailey*

The Department of Transport and Public Works in the Western Cape operates from its main workshop in Bellville but has depots in Paarl and in Oudtshoorn. Equipment is also rented to various local municipalities such as George, Moorreesburg, Van Rhynsdorp and the Cape Agulhas Municipality, which as its name implies is close to the southernmost tip of Africa. The municipalities are reimbursed for the maintenance that they do on gravel and other roads on behalf of the provincial department.

It was at the latter municipality that we came across a Bell 620G Grader working on the maintenance of a gravel road outside the town of Bredasdorp. With the mid-mount scarifier in place, the top level of a gravel road was loosened before the grader blade running behind the scarifier, levelled the surface again.

Jan de Goede, the Workshop Supervisor for the Cape Agulhas Municipality, and an industry veteran with 36 years' experience in earthmoving plant and earthworks, is full praise for the Bell Graders: “If I had my way, I'd change our entire fleet to Bell Graders due to the quality of their build and performance,” he says. “But my experience with Bell goes beyond the equipment as Bell is a company where its people still make a difference like Francois Kellerman, who has since retired, and Kobus van Zyl, the Workshop Foreman at the Cape Town branch, who goes out of his way for us.

“The mid-mount scarifier on the Bell 620G Grader gives an extra tool in our quest to maintain our gravel roads properly and we've been very happy with the way it's working,” Jan adds.

The six new Bell 620G Graders and two Bomag BW27RH Pneumatic Tyred Rollers have been added to an impressive fleet of Bell manufactured and backed equipment. There are 16 Bell 670G and 620G Graders, nine Bell Wheeled Loaders, 13 Tractor Loader Backhoes, three four-wheel drive Bell Tractors and 42 Bomag compaction machines comprising of tampers, pedestrian and ride-on rollers. All the equipment is painted in a particular specified paint namely Golden Yellow B49, which is guaranteed against rust for four years. This is a standard for all yellow machines in the department's fleet.

The Bomag BW27 RH Pneumatic Tyred Rollers have been eagerly awaited due to their dual application on tarred as well as gravel roads. We asked Mustapha about the performance of the new Bell and Bomag additions to their fleet to which he replied smiling: “We have a saying that when you don't hear anything about a piece of equipment, it's running well. To date there hasn't been a peep about our new machines from Bell Equipment.”



**Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Clifton Roberts (left), and Mustapha Subailey, Department of Transport & Public Works Control Technician.**

# Somusa Forestry sold on Bell Timber Forwarder's safety features

Timber harvesting is a fascinating field and in Southern Africa it is an industry that is seeing ever growing mechanisation. Large machines are now felling and cross-cutting trees while stockpiling and loading timber onto interlinked rigs for haulage to sawmills and pulp and paper plants is totally mechanical.

An area often overlooked though is that of timber forwarding where the cut timber is extracted from within the compartment to the roadside and here Bell Equipment is fast making inroads with its Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder.

This has been the experience of Sefiso Bembe and Natt Pretorius, two experienced timber men who jointly own Somusa Forestry. "Somusa" is the Zulu word for "gratitude" and this modern South African company proudly boasts a Level 2 B-BBEE score. We met the partners at one of their larger sites near Lothair in Mpumalanga and while Sefiso oversaw a busy timber harvesting operation, Natt spoke to us.

"This business used to be called Ihlati Logging and belonged to my father-in-law, Eckardt Küsel, who contracted to the larger pulp and paper companies for some 28 years," he says. "When he retired, we bought the business from him and renamed it Somusa Forestry. This happened in 2018.

"With buying the business, we inherited some of the former company's forestry equipment and this included three Bell 225A Loggers and two Bell 1716A Tractor-trailer units. There was also a timber forwarder of which ours was the only one in South Africa, having been sent here as a demonstration model," Natt says. "The forwarder's manufacturer



Somusa Forestry partners, Sefiso Bembe and Natt Pretorius, with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen.



**"We've been impressed with the truck's fuel consumption. Fuel consumption is a big factor when buying equipment and we have not been disappointed."**

Natt Pretorius

has since stopped making forestry equipment so spares and certain key replacement parts became a real problem to keep this machine running.

"I have fortunately, during my 30 years in forestry and its related industries, had lots of experience with timber handling machines designed, built and maintained by Bell Equipment. When we looked to replace our existing forwarder, I confidently turned to Bell Equipment and the company's knowledgeable Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, to see what they could offer us," he adds.

According to Natt, Bell Equipment arranged for him and Sefiso to visit the Bell factory in Richards Bay and to also call on Joseph Zulu and his company Siyawisa Hlathi in Zululand. Joseph owns and operates four Bell TF302E Timber Forwarders in both 4x4 and 6x6 versions and Natt and Sefiso were able to glean first-hand knowledge of how these innovative new trucks performed in terms of cycle times, infield loading and fuel consumption.

Armed with this knowledge and being assured that with Bell Equipment's large local footprint, technical backup and spares availability would not be a challenge, the partners ordered a Bell

TF302E Timber Forwarder, which was delivered in July 2020. "We had looked critically at the terrain where we do most of our work and with it being relatively flat, the Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder suits our application perfectly," Natt says. "Had the terrain been steeper, we would probably have opted for a John Deere purpose-built 1910E Forwarder."

Both Natt and Sefiso are excited about what they describe as a timber forwarder for a new generation. "You can see that with the Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder designed to CE and ISO quality and safety standards that Bell Equipment is thinking ahead. These are also standards that our similar thinking clients are insisting on so we're meeting standards all-round," Natt says. "We take safety very seriously and Bell Equipment's claim that the truck has "best-in-class braking" with its fail-to-safe braking system seems justified."

The same can be said of other standard safety features such as a retarder that benefits brake life, Hill Assist and rollback protection, which are all

appreciated despite the flat areas where Somusa Forestry mostly operates currently. The partners have noted the inclinometer which would offer instantaneous warnings of instability should they occur in compartments on steeper slopes or sharper turns with full loads.

"We're pleased to see that operator comfort has not been forgotten in the ergonomics of the cab," Natt adds. "The Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder has a better ground speed than a typical forwarder and we think this will offer the operator more comfort and cause less fatigue. The sealed switch module in the cab is a great innovation and we can see this working better in dusty environments than toggle switches."

The partners also speak highly of the Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder's broader bunk space which offers 30m<sup>3</sup> of space over a length of 5,8m. This space easily accommodates the saw logs of up to 6,6m and shorter hauls to the roadside. The truck is fitted with a Waratah CF8 crane and a Matriarch 42LX grab with a capacity of 0,42m<sup>3</sup>.

Current sustained operations see the Bell TF302E Timber Forwarder clocking up 400 operational hours a month.

"It would be amiss if we didn't mention that we've been impressed with the truck's fuel consumption. Fuel consumption is a big factor when buying equipment and we have not been disappointed. We believe the Bell 6x6 TF302E Timber Forwarder is very competitively priced compared to other purpose-built forwarders and we're confident that Bell Equipment will soon be the market leader with this type of timber truck."



# CSV Construction sees huge fuel saving with Kobelco SK210LC



**“We’ve been so impressed with this 21-ton Kobelco Excavator that we recently took delivery of its bigger brother, the Kobelco SK300LC-8 machine, which we’re positive will play a definitive role in some of our larger projects.”**

*Jacques Vlok*

**Strong bonds forged as former neighbours have seen a leading Western Cape civil construction company and its preferred original equipment supplier continue their relationship based on mutual trust.**

In 2007 when CSV Construction (Pty) Ltd and Bell Equipment were neighbours in a Cape Town light industrial area near the airport, the former bought its first two Bell B20D Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs). These trucks are still running. Three Bell B30D ADTs have since been added to its fleet with all the Bell ADTs now boasting high hours of service.

CSV Construction (Pty) Ltd was founded in the Ceres area by John Cullum, Johan Scriven and Alex von Klopmann in 1992. Alex is the current Managing Director and Randall Davids, Alex Pospech, Lusanda Martin and Hannes Coetzee have since joined the executive management team as directors.

The company’s core business is firmly anchored in challenging civil engineering projects such as water reservoirs, sewerage and water treatment plants and reticulation systems, pipe-laying, bulk earthworks, building works and specialised micro-tunnelling. Recently an asbestos removal and disposal team has been added.

“As one of the biggest diversified civil engineering construction companies in the Western Cape we’ve expanded our footprint and have successfully completed projects all over South Africa and Namibia,” says Hannes Coetzee. “We still believe in a hands-on approach from the directorate down to our dedicated and skilled

management and supervisory staff and using modern construction methods with reliable yellow fleet equipment helps us to always complete projects on time and on budget.”

Hannes points out that the company’s fleet of machines and utility vehicles now numbers 233 and of that, machines from Bell Equipment make up a significant slice. “We have owned at least 12 Bell 315 Tractor Loader Backhoes (TLBs) since 2007, some which we’ve sold and others which are still running and giving us exceptional service as the ongoing improvements on the newer models prove their worth,” he says. “The same can be said of the three Bomag BW120 Rollers we have that just keep on going.”

Recently, CSV Construction has been tasked with a lot more bulk earthworks which includes pipe-laying necessitating deep trenching and the company decided to add a new excavator to its existing fleet. “When I had worked in South East Asia I got to know that the Kobelco name in excavators was associated with quality in design and build so we were pleased to know that Bell Equipment sold the Kobelco range of Excavators in Southern Africa,” Hannes explains. “Fiona Johnson, the Bell Equipment Sales Representative who calls on us, did a lot to secure a competitive price on a Kobelco SK210LC-8 Excavator.”



**Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, chats to CSV Construction Site Agent Jacques Vlok about the company’s new Kobelco Excavators.**



"We had asked Adrian Lategan, who is in charge of all yellow equipment at Afrimat, for his opinion on the Kobelco Excavators and with his positive views in mind we ordered the Kobelco SK210LC-8 machine. We thought it was good value for our type of work, which often needs a versatile application, and we haven't been disappointed. We now also fully understand why this machine is popular all over the world."

CSV Construction's Kobelco SK210LC-8 Excavator is fitted with a standard 1-cubic metre bucket and its hydraulic lines are so configured that it can easily switch to a hydraulic hammer.

"You will appreciate that fuel is a major part of any input cost and the Kobelco SK210LC-8's fuel consumption is about 20% less than that of competitor machines," Hannes says. "Our operators have commented on the ergonomics of the cab that offers really good all-round visibility coupled with smooth and responsive controls."

"We've been so impressed with this 21-ton Kobelco Excavator that we recently took delivery of its bigger brother, the Kobelco SK300LC-8 machine, which we're positive will play a definitive role in some of our larger projects."

# MMP bowled over by performance of new Bell B30Es

**A disciplined approach to life developed on and next to sports fields at the highest level has positioned two brother partners in good stead in the challenging world of mining.**

John Mmutle is the founder and General Manager of Mmutle Mining Projects (Pty) Ltd. He gained Gauteng colours for both cricket and hockey before qualifying as an industrial engineer with a postgraduate qualification from the Wits Business School. His younger brother, Stephen, is the Operations Director for the company and, according to his older sibling, is more analytical in his approach to life. He holds a B Tech degree in logistics and supply chain management. He is registered with the Gauteng Cricket Board as an official cricket scorer with Wanderers Cricket Stadium as his own stamping ground.

"It would be amiss if we didn't give credit for our diligent start in life to our single parent mother, Mary, who kept our noses to the grindstone," John says. "Our mother, with her background in training and marketing, paved the way for Stephen and I and this we will never forget."

John worked as a contracts manager for Fraser Alexander Bulk Mech for 10 years when in 2016 he saw adverts encouraging emerging contractors to register for Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) initiatives. A long-standing urge to make a difference to his and his family's lives kicked in and he decided to pursue this dream.

"I made a full disclosure to my employers that I was keen to follow this path and registered Mmutle Mining Projects (Pty) Ltd as a company that same year," he says. "In June 2017, when registering as a VAT vendor, we landed our first material handling contract at a large colliery loading run-of-mine coal for transport to the processing plant."

From these seemingly humble beginnings and with 20 employees, Mmutle Mining Projects steadily grew and today employs 170 people. Its load and haulage fleet, consisting mainly of rigid trucks, has also grown. Other contracts have seen the young company transporting silica to smelters and reclaiming sludge from tailings dams that is then transported for reprocessing.

"I must mention the invaluable assistance we've had from the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) who not only assisted us with finance but also sound advice," John adds. "They will not set you up to fail and they definitely want you to repay their loan, which we did when buying new rigid trucks and an excavator."

Technical changes on the site of their first material handling project at the colliery created challenges that had to be met head-on. Their clients

extended their contract by 42 months and increased the volumes that had to be moved. Suddenly the working environment also changed and working surfaces that had been level now became steep ramps where the rigid trucks could no longer operate and a drastic change was necessary for Mmutle Mining Projects to still offer a sustainable service.

"We'd had lots of experience with equipment built and sold by Bell Equipment during my time at Fraser Alexander Bulk Mech and I tasked my brother, Stephen, and our Operations Manager, Thabo Lerumo, to approach the NEF and another government agency, the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), for funding to buy four Bell B30E Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs)."

Both Mmutle brothers are adamant that the immediate support and input they enjoyed from Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Carel Venter, and his principals made the difference and justified their choice of ADTs.

"Business should go to people like Carel, who has shown that while he really wants us as his customers, he and his company understand our business and appreciate the challenges we face," says Stephen Mmutle. "With our funding in place we happily took delivery of two new Bell B30E ADTs in July 2020 and another two in August the same year."

John points out that Mmutle Mining Projects is involved in this particular contract as a partner of Zizwe Opencast Mining, which brings added responsibilities, especially on fuel consumption that needs to be closely watched. In this regard, the Bell B30E ADTs are performing impressively and the

Fleetm@tic® system reports average fuel consumption of just 17 litres an hour while hauling coal to the plant 2,5km away.

"We learn a lot from the Fleetm@tic® Classic programme as we monitor good loads of around 27 to 28 tonnes, which translates into our four Bell B30E ADTs delivering 6 500 tonnes of coal in a 24-hour shift," explains Thabo Lerumo. "The Bell ADTs are fitted with 200mm greedy boards and tailgates to ensure good loads are consistently delivered."

When Thabo was asked how the deployment of the four Bell B30E ADTs has changed his working life, he replied: "When using our previous equipment, we were forever playing catch-up and when your client isn't happy, you don't sleep either," he smiles. "Since the arrival of our Bell B30E ADTs, we can focus fully on the job at hand and this confidence has had a positive downstream effect on our operators as well as they are no longer nervous of equipment breaking down. It's suddenly a great environment to be in."

Mmutle Mining Projects bought the four Bell B30E ADTs with standard 12-month and unlimited hour warranties and have a service contract in place for the warranty period.

"We're ambitious in our growth and are in the process of establishing an asset-holding company we're calling Temo, which will in future rent yellow-fleet machines to Mmutle Mining Projects," John says. "We're also keen to expand our crushing and screening side of the business and I've asked Carel Venter for quotes on Finlay equipment, meaning that we aim to walk a long road with Bell Equipment."



**(From left): Stephen Mmutle (MMP Operations Director), John Mmutle (MMP Managing Director), Carel Venter (Bell Sales Representative) and Thabo Lerumo (MMP Operations Manager).**



# Timber Logging Solutions sees the benefit of running its own Bell equipment

How does a qualified mining engineer who rose to the level of a general manager change tack so radically as to get into the timber harvesting field? In the case of Mandla Nxumalo, the answer is almost by accident. His subsequent success though is based on two disciplines: that of finding an experienced mentor for guidance and listening to what people in the know say about getting the correct tools for the job.

Mandla is a qualified mining engineer and, having studied on a scholarship from the largest diamond mining company in the world, was on the up and up. But then something changed, and he thought it prudent to start advising emerging miners and contractors about the essence of mining as a discipline.

"We often found that although young entrepreneurs had obtained mining licenses, they knew nothing of the discipline, pitfalls and ultimate goals of mining and so did not make it," Mandla

says. "I set out to change that perception through a mining consulting business I had created called Makarapa."

Ever the thinker, Mandla thought to spread his risk in case of possible tough times that could beset the mining industry and bought three used trucks with which he hauled timber from the Sudwala area in Mpumalanga for some 18 months, starting in 2016. He loaded the timber trucks using a Bell 225A Logger that he had bought new. This was followed by a brief foray into timber short hauling



**Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen (left) with Mandla Nxumalo, owner of Timber Logging Solutions.**

for a large pulp and paper group and, although not sustainable, it got his foot in the door and more importantly, he got noticed by people who mattered.

"Soon after I was approached by a large pulp and paper company to ask whether I'd be interested in supplying short-haul services to a timber harvesting initiative they had created for emerging contractors delivering small volumes," Mandla says. "This was called Timber Logging Solutions and our close contact with them led us to being offered a stump-to-depot contract even though I knew very little about actual timber harvesting."

Mandla explains that this happened with the knowledge and the blessing of the large pulp and paper company and in July 2018, he subsequently bought Timber Logging Solutions to run as his own. "We had no timber harvesting equipment to start up with, however we were fortunate enough to be able to rent equipment which enabled us to get started and get timber moving."

"We soon learnt the hard way that renting equipment negatively impacts one's bottom line and when I approached the client about a longer term contract to justify financing timber harvesting equipment, the company responded very quickly

with a five-year contract for which I will be eternally grateful to them," he says. "I had adopted Elvis Shabangu of Kanyilanga Trading as my mentor and when I asked him who to approach for timber harvesting equipment, his answer was unequivocal in pointing me to Bell Equipment and the company's knowledgeable Forestry and Agriculture Manager, Charles Inggs, in Nelspruit."

To Mandla, who by his own admission was new to forestry and timber harvesting, the general advice was to go to Bell Equipment should you need reliable timber harvesting equipment in South Africa. "With my limited experience I was not prepared to be any other equipment supplier's guinea pig, so I decided to stick with the tried and tested and support Bell Equipment, and I have not been disappointed."

As it happened, Bell Equipment was able to offer Mandla and his company Timber Logging Solutions a deal on a Bell 225A Logger with very favourable terms – an offer that he didn't refuse. A further initiative from the South African Government through its Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) saw him add an excavator converted into a shovel-yarder along with a light delivery truck and a Bell 225F Logger into the mix.

"Armed with this generous five-year contract, I was able to acquire some serious kit and with favourable terms as well," he says. "Two other banks came to the party and I added another shovel-yarder, one more Bell 225F Logger and a John Deere 640L Cable Skidder. Added to this I bought two used Bell 225A Loggers bringing my total Bell Logger fleet to six."

Mandla is adamant that when he researched a big-ticket item such as a John Deere 640L Skidder, his mind was swayed by the fact that Bell Equipment backed this machine and he could rely on trained personnel to handle the maintenance and repair. His experience in mining had taught him that mechanical equipment does break down at times.

"It's been a steep learning curve for me and my staff numbering 71 loyal people but we're happily hitting our production targets," he says. "We started off producing 2 200 tonnes of timber a month, which has now grown to 5 800 tonnes with a reserve stockholding of 1 700 tonnes. This we could not have done without reliable mechanical equipment from Bell Equipment."

Mandla's management experience comes to the fore as he explains that everyone in his company, himself included, is undergoing skills development all the time. Human resources issues are dealt with promptly and they have managed to meet production targets with limited overtime which points to efficient use of man-hours and good mechanical availabilities.

"Our Bell Loggers are running between 18 and 20 hours a day and having the one-year, unlimited hours warranty on the new Bell F-series Logger is a real blessing," he adds. "Our F-series Loggers are covered by a maintenance plan up to 2 000 hours and we're capitalising on this by working them hard in the first year."

"Having both the A- and F-series Loggers we can tell you that the new Yanmar engines definitely show an improvement in fuel consumption, which has impacted favourably on our operational costs."

Timber Logging Solutions' John Deere 640L Cable Skidder sees utilisation of around seven hours during daylight only as nighttime skidding is not allowed. "As a young company our clients mentor us and safety in the compartment and on loading zones is taken very seriously, something that I'm used to and happy with given my background in mining."

"On the servicing side I'm happy to report that everyone at Bell Equipment in Nelspruit is accessible and my recently appointed maintenance manager and I have built a special relationship with the Workshop Foreman, Louwtjie Erasmus. Bell Equipment's response times and parts availability are excellent, and should a certain part not be available, it generally arrives the following day. We get the impression that Bell Equipment understands our business and appreciates that downtime favours no one."



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# Bell beefs up excavator range with heavy-duty 20-tonner

**Bell Equipment, the exclusive distributor of Kobelco Excavators in Southern Africa, is excited to introduce the new tenth generation Kobelco SK220XD to its range, which bolsters the region's 20-ton class with a heavy-duty machine that is both highly productive and economical in all aspects.**

"The SK220XD is loaded with features not usually found in 20t machines; features that make this model well matched to Africa's toughest mining and construction sites," says Bell Equipment Marketing and Alliance Partner Manager, Stephen McNeill.

"The SK220XD-10 has a rated power output of 118kW at 2 000rpm and a maximum torque of 592Nm at 1 600rpm. Like the current SK210 and SK260, it is fitted with a 4-cylinder Toyota Hino engine, which has performed exceptionally well in our construction, mining and forestry industries. Bell has sold around 150 Kobelco machines with this engine since 2017."

Kobelco has always focused on hydraulic efficiency as the key to achieving maximum power output and lowest fuel consumption on its excavators. Reducing friction in the system means less energy is wasted and more work gets done with less fuel used.

Stephen explains that they have taken this a step further with the tenth generation by introducing the latest hydraulic technology, the Arm Interflow System. "When lowering the boom, the system uses the downward force generated by the boom's weight to push fluid to the arm cylinder. Essentially the machine is using gravity to generate hydraulic energy, which means there is less demand on the hydraulic system and engine. Improved hydraulic efficiencies reduce fuel burn and on the SK220XD-10 Kobelco claims a 19% higher fuel saving in ECO-mode compared to S-mode on the SK210HDL-8.

"The SK220XD-10 also offers improvements to both the fuel and hydraulic filtration systems with a view to increasing durability and longevity of an already reliable machine. This makes them even more suited to our harsh South African conditions."

Structurally the machine is much stronger. The SK220XD-10 has a 1- cubic metre heavy-duty bucket, designed, and manufactured by Bell Equipment with South African conditions in mind.

The boom and arm, which take the greatest punishment, are reinforced with thick steel plate for a more robust attachment while long, solid rock guards prevent damage to the arm.

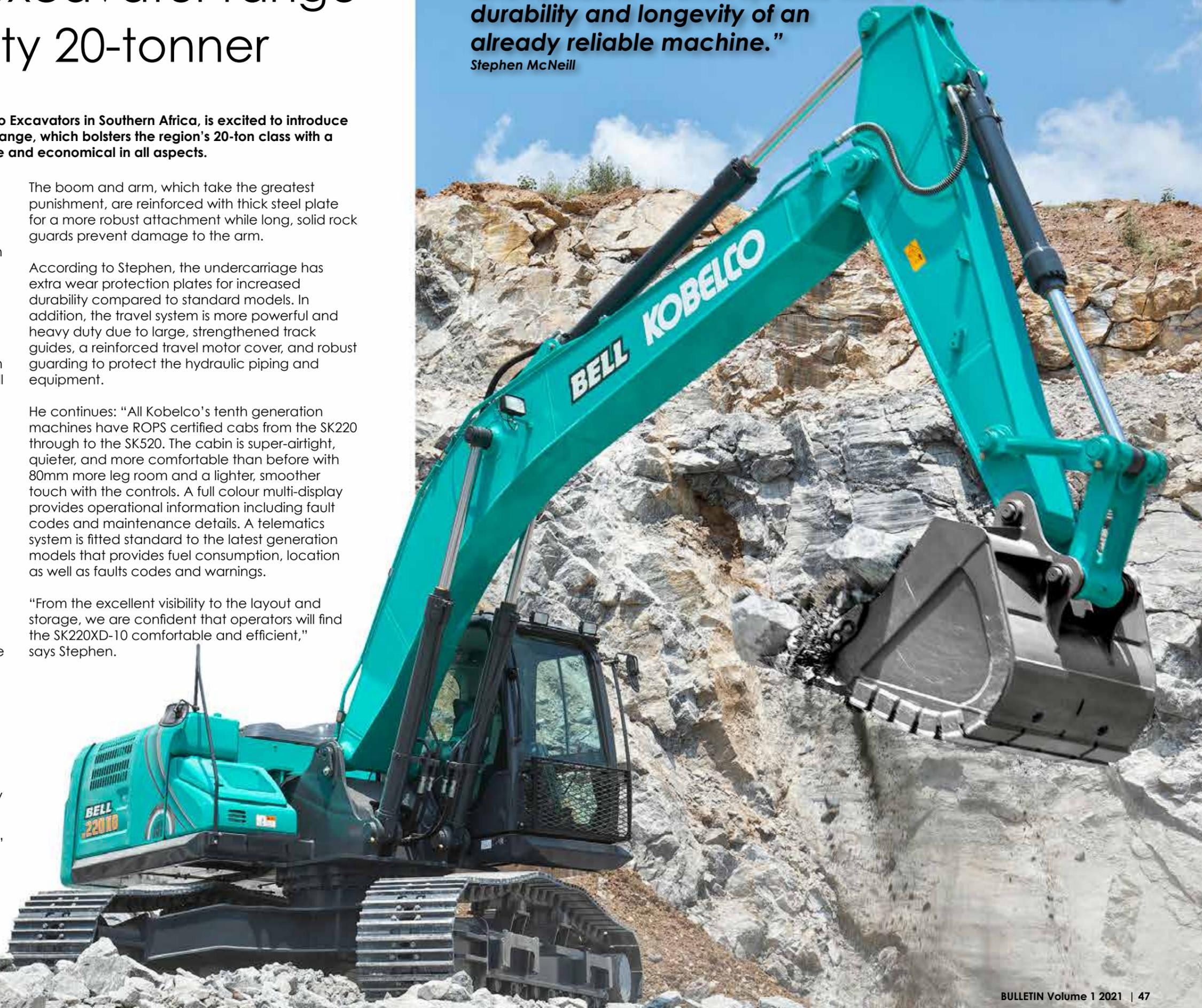
According to Stephen, the undercarriage has extra wear protection plates for increased durability compared to standard models. In addition, the travel system is more powerful and heavy duty due to large, strengthened track guides, a reinforced travel motor cover, and robust guarding to protect the hydraulic piping and equipment.

He continues: "All Kobelco's tenth generation machines have ROPS certified cabs from the SK220 through to the SK520. The cabin is super-airtight, quieter, and more comfortable than before with 80mm more leg room and a lighter, smoother touch with the controls. A full colour multi-display provides operational information including fault codes and maintenance details. A telematics system is fitted standard to the latest generation models that provides fuel consumption, location as well as faults codes and warnings.

"From the excellent visibility to the layout and storage, we are confident that operators will find the SK220XD-10 comfortable and efficient," says Stephen.

**"The SK220XD-10 also offers improvements to both the fuel and hydraulic filtration systems with a view to increasing durability and longevity of an already reliable machine."**

**Stephen McNeill**



# Bell appoints Hardrock Earthworks CC as Namibian dealer

**Bell Equipment has expanded its independent dealer network with the appointment of Hardrock Earthworks CC as its authorised supplier and distributor in Namibia with effect from 31 October 2020.**

"This follows our Bell group strategy to migrate to a dealer model in select markets," explains Bell Equipment Marketing Manager: Sales and Distribution, Llewellyn Roux. "In our experience, working through independent dealers allows us to provide better coverage and support to customers in markets where areas are vast and machine populations are comparatively low."

He continues: "This is due to the synergies found with dealers that have complementary product lines in their stable. They can derive additional revenue streams across different industries and sectors, manage through challenging and cyclical market trends as well as drive higher efficiencies and utilisation from resources critical to superior customer support."

According to Llewellyn, during preliminary investigations Bell Equipment considered various options in terms of potential dealers with the ability to provide the same or superior levels of service experience and support that customers have been accustomed to.

We are convinced that Hardrock Earthmoving is the partner of choice and have full confidence that their dynamic and motivated team is well positioned to meet and exceed our existing customers' needs, while at the same time grow the footprint of our product offering in the region," he said.

Hardrock Earthworks is well established and provides and supports earthmoving equipment to the construction and mining industry along with other supporting product lines, such as mechanical and hydraulic attachments. They also specialise in providing engineering works and services to the market. Llewellyn added: "We are pleased to welcome them to our dealer network and believe the partnership will be beneficial to both parties, but most importantly to our Bell customers in Namibia."

Owner of Hardrock Earthworks, Johan van Wyk said: "Bell Equipment is a highly respected brand in Namibia, and we are excited about the opportunity to add the Bell range of products to our offering. We are working with Bell Namibia to ensure a seamless transition and look forward to building a lasting relationship with new and existing customers by providing high levels of service and support."

"The Namibian construction industry has been in a recession over the last four years and I see that trend continuing for the foreseeable future. That said, Namibia remains a close knit society and the relationships we have built and fostered with clients, with our current employees over the years, and the trust that the Bell clients have in the product ensures us that we will see these times through and emerge more robust."

"Hardrock Earthworks will be able to serve our clients much more efficiently with the availability of an engineering facility onsite. In the past this needed to be outsourced, adding additional cost and time to repairs. Other services that we will include over time will further enhance the client's experience and make us truly a one-stop-shop."



**Bell Equipment's Wolfgang Schweiger (right) hands over the official plaque to Johan van Wyk in recognition of Hardrock Earthworks appointment as the authorised dealer for Namibia.**



"During these early stages, it was clear that a partnership with Hardrock Earthmoving would deliver benefits for Bell and Hardrock Earthmoving, but most importantly, our customers."

# Bell Promo Shop

**Hunting Knife**



**R2050**

**Biltong Cutter**



**R1200**

**Salt & Pepper Grinder**



**R300**

**Leather Wallet**



**R530**

**Cycling Jammer**



**R450**

**Cycling Jacket**



**R550**

**Leatherman Wave**



**R2550**

**Card Holder**



**R340**

**Belts**  
Black/Brown  
Leather Stitch/  
Burnished



**R255**

**Mens Check Shirt**  
Black & Blue  
Size: S - 4XL



**R360**

**Mens Shirt**  
Grey  
Size: S - 4XL



**R360**

**Vellies**  
Tan  
Sizes: 5-11



**R650**

**Beer Mug**



**R55**

**Compact Braai Stand**



**R1415**

**Power Bank**  
10 000mAh  
Sold without charging cable



**R340**

**Mens Body Warmer**  
Slaz Reversible  
Grey  
S- 4XL



**R455**

**Mens Katavi Jacket**  
Softshell  
Black & Grey  
S- 4XL



**R950**

**S5 Turbo Vellie**  
Tan  
Sizes: 5-10



**R670**

**Ladies Bags**  
Gold/Leopard/Zebra  
Tote/Med/Large



**R360 - R420**

**Multi-headwear**



**R55**

**Hats**  
Leather  
Breezy/ Tan/ Oxblood/ Oxblood Fold Up



**R355**

**Town & Country NSTC**  
Sizes: 6-13



**R995**

**BS6 Lace-up Boot**  
Brown  
Sizes: 6-13



**R1000**

**FS3 Pull-up Boot STC**  
Sizes: 6-13



**R885**

**Logger Scale Model**  
Wooden



**R465**

**ADT B45E Scale Model**



**R750**

**ADT B60E Scale Model**



**R950**

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- Go to our website [promoshop.bellequipment.com](http://promoshop.bellequipment.com) to start shopping!
- Select the colour and/or size of the items you wish to purchase and 'add to cart'
  - When you have finished shopping proceed to 'checkout'
  - Fill in all your details and 'place order'
  - The Bell Promo Shop will confirm availability via email
  - Use your enquiry number as a reference for your transaction via EFT
  - Any changes to your order can be communicated via email

*Online system replaces telephone and email orders.*

# New SK220XD Excavator TOUGHEST EVER

Our new  
Kobelco  
SK220XD-10  
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features not  
usually found in  
20t machines



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- Undercarriage guards and reinforcement
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- Reliable 4-cylinder Toyota Hino engine

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