

the bulletin

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Dear Customers

2022 has brought much relief from COVID-19 and the relaxing of legislation related to the wearing of masks has been most welcome, especially in the work environment where we can once again see the smiles of our colleagues and customers.

Although we have succeeded in dealing with COVID-19, there have been new challenges facing our country. KwaZulu-Natal is still recovering after the April floods and South Africa is counting the cost of unprecedented fuel price increases and the latest bout of loadshedding.

Fortunately, we South Africans are equipped with an innate resilience and no challenge is insurmountable. As Team Bell we are committed to keep pulling in the same direction so that we can remember 2022 for all the positive outcomes.

It has been over a year since Bell Equipment South Africa became the dealer for the JCB's range of construction equipment and you will see from the articles in this magazine that this arrangement has been a good fit for our business and for you, our customers.

This partnership was further strengthened in May when we added the JCB Agriculture range, which forms part of our new business unit, Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture. From an OEM perspective this unit will drive product innovation and customer support from our Richards Bay factory.

While some of our existing Bell Equipment Sales South Africa branches associated with farming communities will offer Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture, we are in the process of appointing independent dealers across the country. This will enable us to provide our customers in these industries with a dedicated focus and support.

We announced these exciting changes when we exhibited at NAMPO in Bothaville in May and at the Pietermaritzburg Royal Show shortly thereafter. It was great to spend time with customers at trade shows again, so thank you to everyone who came out to support us. We've missed the face-to-face interaction so you can be sure that we'll be making the most of all opportunities that present themselves.

Yours sincerely

Leon Goosen
Group Chief Executive

contents

- Alfieri Holdings 'supports local' with a dozen Bell ADTs4
- Janco 'digs' his dad's new JCB Excavator.....8
- JCB is a game changer for women's brickmaking cooperative.....12
- Benhaus realises the benefits of its Bell B60E fleet16
- F-series slashes Agri-trans Partnership's fuel bill.....20
- Eggers Boerdery expands its fleet with a Kobelco SK220XD23
- Local contractor grows his fleet with a new JCB 3CX Global..... 26
- Apollo Bricks impressed with JCB Wheel Loader productivity..... 30
- Wheel Loader delivers versatility and productivity for GI Projects34
- Kobelco SK220XD is Ka Lethabo Trading's first Excavator36
- Roseleigh Estates achieves in-trailer compaction with CanePro38
- New Kobelco and JCB machines benefit Martmol Trading42
- Bell Logger proves invaluable to Timber Express's operations46
- Thies family extends their Bell fleet with new Series V Haulage Tractor 49
- Solid relationship keeps Andru Mining coming back for more blue Bells.....52
- Kobelco Excavators and Bell Loggers drive mechanisation at GDH Harvesting55
- Bell Promo Shop.....58



Cover picture: Alfieri Holdings is the proud owner of 12 Bell B45E ADTs. **Read more on page 4.**

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Alfieri Holdings 'supports local' with a dozen Bell ADTs

A new junior mining company with a well-established pedigree in coal trading and transport, has turned to Bell Equipment's homegrown brand of haulage vehicles for its own coal mine, so completing the value chain.

Back in 2002, Branden Moodley started a transport company with one truck. While he may have been short of trucks, he certainly wasn't short of energy and ambition and the drive to build a recognised transport company.

"I started our company Fast Track Express, or FTX as it's commonly known, on a small scale but now we constantly have a fleet of 70 side-tipping interlinked trucks on the roads across South Africa,

hauling coal to major users like Eskom and Sasol," Branden says. "We operate out of big depots in Germiston, Middelburg and Ermelo."

"Getting to know the ins and outs of the coal transport market led us to start trading in coal in 2014 and, as the years flew by, the idea of completing the value chain by having our own coal source started growing ever stronger," he adds.

By 2019, Branden and a business partner, Zabilon Inama, had bought into a new coal resource under the name of Ikoti Coal situated near to the town of Breyten in Mpumalanga. This new mine had a mining license held by various shareholders and Moodley and Inama managed to gradually buy up the whole shareholding, a process which caused some delay in production, but which finally kicked off in May 2021.

The Ikoti coal mine is owned by Alfieri Holdings (Pty) Ltd of which Moodley and Inama are the directors.

"Having run a transport company for many years we were confident that we were well versed in things mechanical and hired in a fleet of loading and haulage equipment to get the opencast mining going," Branden explains. "We soon realised that to be taken seriously in the coal mining industry, by meeting the production targets and volumes our high-end clients demanded and

deserved, we would need our own new equipment that could within reason guarantee maximum and sustained uptime."

The two business partners started researching the market for options on mining equipment and spoke to other operators and contractors. "One name kept popping up and that was Bell Equipment with emphasis on the company's legendary Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) that are designed and built in South Africa," Branden says. "Influenced by the general consensus in the market that Bell ADTs were the haulage machines of choice, we made contact with Bell Equipment in Jet Park and met the company's Bruce Ndlela who is Director: Business and Public Sector Development who along with Sales Representative, Enock Mabasa, were very persuasive as they immediately showed us that they understood our business and the challenges we face."



"It would be fair to say that Bell Equipment was not merely interested in a sale but rather that we obtain the correct equipment for the job at hand which, all things considered, would ensure that we run a sustainable coal mining operation with benefits all round," Zabilon Inama adds. "We gladly acknowledge this and thank Bell Equipment for taking us seriously."

With a solid financing facility through Bell Finance in place, Alfieri Holdings ordered a fleet of 12 new Bell B45E ADTs of which eight were delivered in a staggered fashion during the second half of 2021 and the balance arriving in early 2022. The Bell ADTs have been bought with comprehensive extended warranties to 10 000 hours and Bell technicians from the Bell Equipment Customer Service Centre in Middelburg take care of servicing and general maintenance. Alfieri Holdings is looking at securing a full service package for its fleet of Bell B45E ADTs.

The Bell B45E ADTs are used to haul topsoil and blasted waste material to stockpiles from where this material will be used again when ongoing rehabilitation starts. Two 95-ton excavators load the Bell B45E fleet.

The Bell trucks have also impressed Ikoti Coal's Mine Manager, Dirk Coetzee. "With a stripping ratio of 4:3, we've exposed the coal seams quite quickly and although the ramps in and out of the pit are fairly steep, sometimes at between 9 and 10 degrees, the Bell B45E ADTs perform superbly

under full loads even during the wet summer we experienced," he says. "Despite these tricky underfoot conditions, the Bell B45E ADTs are burning fuel at just under 28 litres an hour which fits our mining plan."

The mined coal is hauled 2,2km to the run-of-mine tip where it is crushed and screened using mobile equipment before being loaded onto FTX trucks for onward delivery to customers.

"We also enjoy using Bell Equipment's Fleetm@tic® monitoring system and are looking forward to deploying the full package soon so that we can keep track of how the Bell ADTs and our operators are performing," Dirk says. "In this way we believe we'll be able to get the maximum life out of our Bell B45E ADTs which form the backbone of our mining operation."

"Knowing that Bell Equipment is only a phone call away is a big plus for us and the support we've received from Aubrey Potgieter and his team at Bell Middelburg has been phenomenal," he adds.

"Our first box-cut has so far yielded over 100 000 tons of coal and when we start a second similar operation on the eastern side of the property, we're bound to need more ADTs and we have no doubt that we'll be consulting Bell Equipment in this matter," Branden concludes.



Below, from left to right: Dirk Coetzee (Ikoti Coal Mine Manager), Mzwakhe Mbatha (Department of Trade, Industry and Competition: Automotive & Truck Industry), Enock Mabaso (Bell Equipment Sales Representative), Lehlohonolb Molloyi (MEMSA), Aubrey Potgieter (Bell Equipment Middelburg Branch Manager), Bruce Ndlela (Bell Equipment Director of Business and Public Sector Development), Branden Moodley (Director: Alfieri Holdings Pty Ltd.), Gary Bell (Bell Equipment Group Chairman), Zabilon Inama (Director: Alfieri Holdings Pty Ltd.), Advocate TS Mokoena (DMRE) and Coen Bezuidenhout (Mining Engineer: Ikoti Coal Mine).



Janco 'digs' his dad's new JCB Excavator

Operating the JCB JS140 Excavator really is child's play because even a twelve-year old can do it safely, just ask Janco Labuschagne.

This is not 'marketing speak' dreamt up by a bunch of advertising gurus but the real thing as the pre-teen recently showed us on his parent's farm, Winterhoek, near Steelpoort in Limpopo.

The Labuschagne family, comprising of the husband-and-wife team of Leon and Lizinda together with their children Janco and fifteen-year-old Anjoné, have owned this remote 500ha farm since November 2020. Leon runs his own business from Middelburg in Mpumalanga, building and maintaining overhead cranes.

"The farm is in fairly unforgiving but beautiful terrain and the previous owners had built a few houses and outbuildings, which we plan to renovate as time goes by," Leon Labuschagne says. "In the

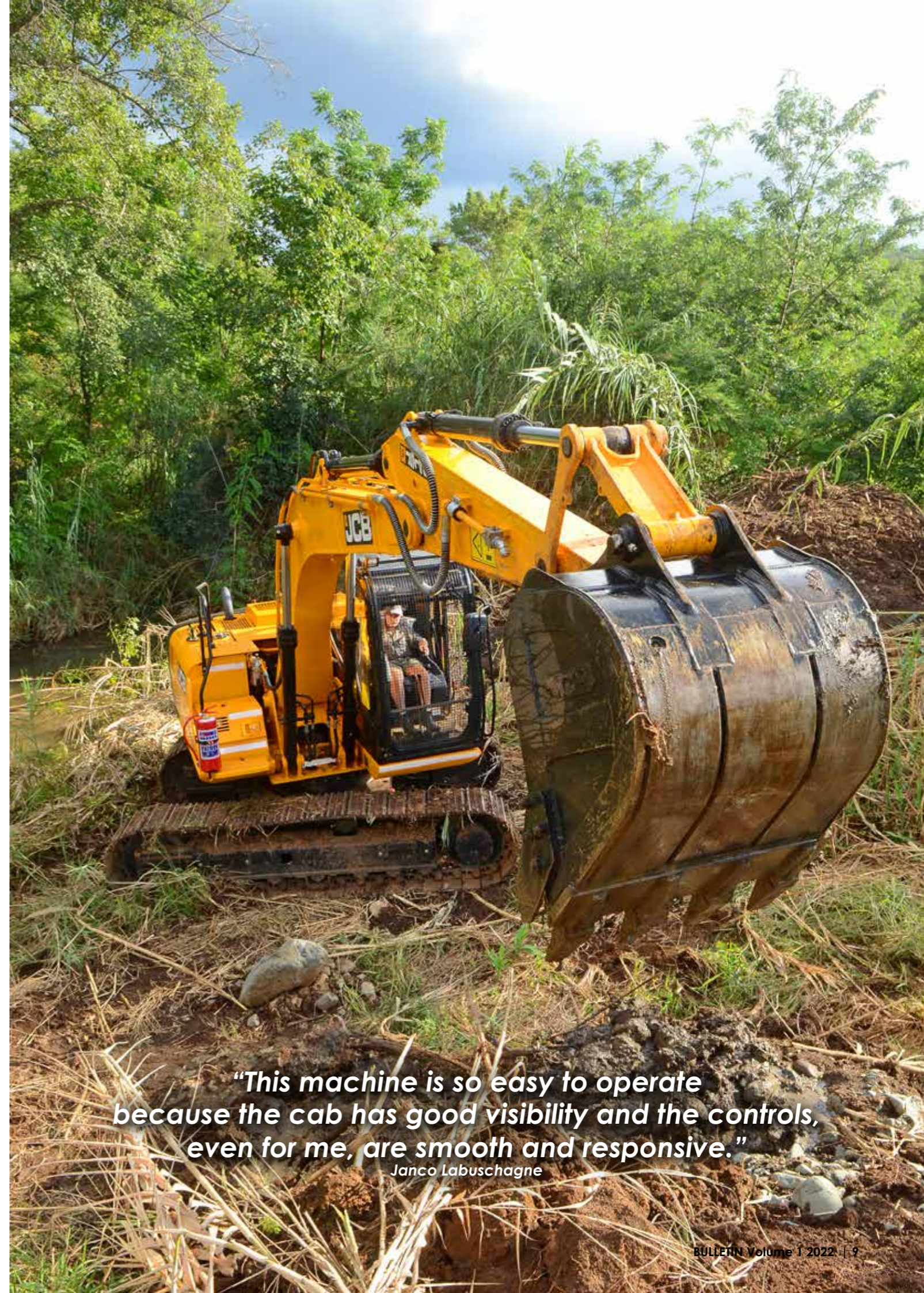
16 months that we've owned the property we've started off slowly. I have brought in some indigenous game like nyala and springbok. We have a lone leopard that roams the rocky outcrops as well."

There is a perennial stream that flows through the property, which is reached by a bridge where caution rather than speed is needed. Fixing this access road is one of the areas that Leon wants to tackle first, and he had considered doing this with an older backhoe loader he had bought on the used market.

"I'm a hands-on guy and this used machine was simply not up to the task as it kept breaking down. When I spoke to neighbours and friends about



From left to right: Bell Sales Representative, Carel Venter, with Leon and Janco Labuschagne and Bell Steelpoort's CSC Supervisor, Wayne Bowers.



"This machine is so easy to operate because the cab has good visibility and the controls, even for me, are smooth and responsive."

Janco Labuschagne

what earthmoving equipment would be best to improve and maintain the farm's infrastructure – a dozer or an excavator – the unanimous advice was to get an excavator," Leon explains. "As it happens, I maintain the overhead cranes at Bell Equipment's Middelburg Customer Service Centre (CSC) where I spoke to knowledgeable Sales Representative, Carel Venter."

According to Carel, Leon first enquired about a smaller 7,5 ton excavator but then changed his mind when he realised that a heavier machine would be needed to dig out rocks along the access road and dredge the stream. "It was then that I seriously considered the JCB JS140 Excavator, but these seem to be popular machines at Bell Equipment. The South African distributor was out of stock, which led me to almost buying a JCB JS205 model, which is the 20-ton machine," explains Leon.

However, Carel managed to track down a JCB JS140 Excavator that had become available, and with Leon's own financing the deal was struck. Unbeknown to Leon at that point, he was to face another obstacle which manifested itself as soon as the new bright yellow JCB JS140 Excavator was delivered to the farm in January 2022.

"As soon as he set eyes on the new JCB Excavator, my son Janco badgered me into letting him operate it," Leon says good-naturedly. "There was

no stopping the young man, so as a responsible parent I first showed him where the seatbelt fastened and then told him about everything that can go wrong when operating an excavator while also instructing him on the controls."

Janco set about operating the JCB JS140 Excavator after his dad, Leon, had manoeuvred it next to the fast-flowing stream on the property. Janco's task was to dredge the stream of silt and loose rocks and he did this with confidence, showing the dexterity of youth with obvious good hand-eye coordination.

"This machine is so easy to operate because the cab has good visibility and the controls, even for me, are smooth and responsive," he enthuses after the demonstration of his newfound skills. "We set the accelerator at level four of a possible eight and it gets the job done. My dad told me this is because the hydraulic oil flows so well to operate the boom and the bucket."

The Labuschagne's JCB JS140 Excavator was bought with a standard 12-month warranty with unlimited hours and the machine will be serviced by mechanics from Bell Equipment's Steelpoort CSC. Wayne Bowers, the Steelpoort CSC Supervisor, was on hand to watch Janco at work and he undertook to personally supervise the maintenance of Janco's JCB JS140 Excavator.

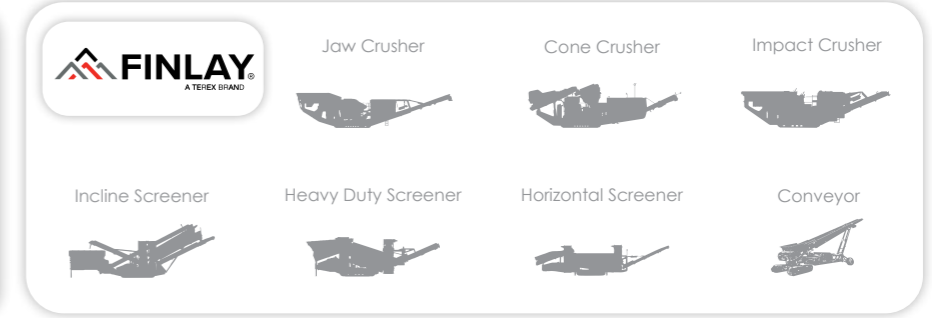
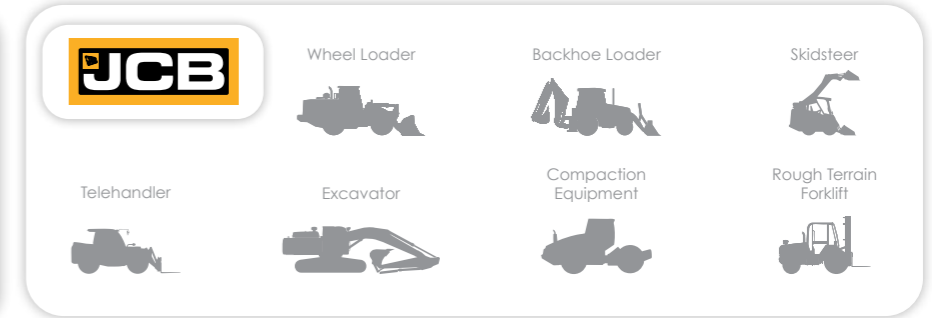
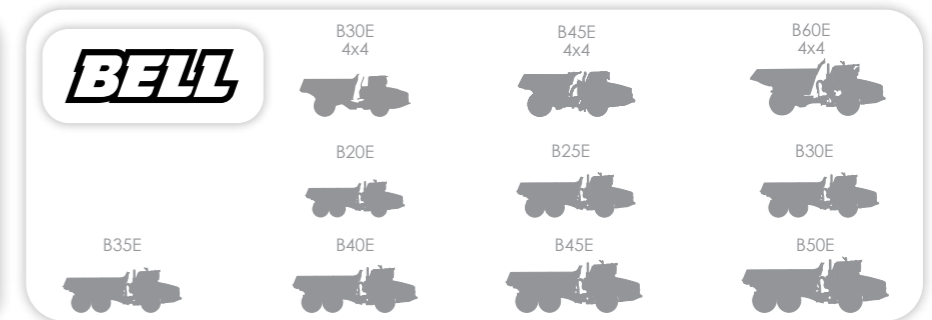


Janco Labuschagne in the cab of the JCB JS140 Excavator.

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JCB is a game changer for women's brickmaking cooperative



“The cooperative needed a JCB Skidsteer Loader, but Carel convinced us, backed up by facts, that a JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader with additional forks would be much better suited to the tasks at hand.”

Bafana Mokwena

The village of Mabitsi lies in a rural area in the Limpopo Province just north of Marble Hall and the area surrounding it is dotted with rocky hills, so typical of the northern bushveld area where one can imagine leopards keep watch from the outcrops.

With many of its men working in the larger cities to the south, it's an area which offers little economic growth with subsequent few employment opportunities; that is until a group of mothers decided to take matters into their own hands.

In April 1999, a group of 20 women got together around a small brick-built shed on the banks of the Motsephiri River and decided to start making concrete bricks. The objective was to create local employment but, more importantly, create an income stream for themselves, while working in a cooperative fashion.

And so, the Reamogetse Thakgalang Brickmaking Cooperative was born. The name in the Sepedi language means: “We have accepted, and we are happy.” Some members have left, and others passed away, and now the group consists of seven members. They are Elizabeth Mohlala, Segakwe Bogopa, Paulinah Maelane, Meriam Matlala, Polinah Masehla, Sehurane Malata and Ramosegeng Maredi.

While they at first operated out of the small shed on the riverbank, the cooperative showed steady growth and by 2007, were recognised by the

Limpopo Provincial Government's Department of Social Development. The Department helped them to buy a used agricultural tractor and trailer combination to haul sand from the Motsephiri riverbanks to premises they had secured in the Mabitsi village. The river where the sand is extracted is about 5km from the village.

In addition to selling concrete bricks, the cooperative sells building and plaster sand and hires out the tractor to local farmers on a plant hire basis to do land preparation, ploughing and planting. The tractor, being old and well used, started breaking down a lot which hampered the cooperative's production of bricks and sand and by 2021 an urgent need for a solution was felt.

Reamogetse Thakgalang was adopted by the National Movement of Rural Women in the 1990s. The NMRW is a non-profit, grassroots organisation founded in South Africa in 1990 with the purpose of giving rural women in South Africa a voice. The NMRW at a later stage handed over the project to its beneficiary organisation, Nozala Trust, to continue supporting Reamogetse Thakgalang cooperative through their technical support, capacity building and financial support approach.



Pictured with the Reamogetse Thakgalang Brickmaking Cooperative's new JCB Backhoe Loader are (from left): Ledile Bopape (Nozala Trust), Carel Venter (Bell Equipment), Segakwe Bogopa, Meriam Matlala, Bafana Mokwena (Dikwena Trading), Paulinah Maelane, Ramosegeng Maredi, Elizabeth Mohlala and Jan Malatji.

Bafana Mokwena from Dikwena Trading CC was appointed by Nozala Trust to provide technical support to Reamogetse Thakgalang Brickmaking Cooperative given his experience in construction, working with Ms Ledile Bopape, the National Capacity Building specialist from Nozala Trust, and Mrs Elizabeth Mbiza, NMRW coordinator.

According to Mokwena, he had researched the yellow metal machine market and when he learnt that Bell Equipment was now the distributor for the most popular Backhoe Loader range in the country, namely JCB, he contacted Bell Equipment's office in Jet Park. From here it was suggested he speak to Carel Venter, the company's sales representative in Middelburg, the Bell branch closest to the Mabitsi village.

"When meeting Carel Venter, my first impression was that I was being taken seriously and that is something I so appreciate," Mokwena says. "I explained that the cooperative needed a JCB Skidsteer Loader, but Carel convinced us, backed up by facts, that a JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader with additional forks would be much better suited to the tasks at hand."

The Nozala Trust provided the funding for the JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader, which was delivered to the project in mid-November 2021. The Nozala Trust also funded the purchase of a 3-ton tipper truck and a multi-brick mould to speed up the production cycle.

"On 17 November 2021, Thabang Thankge, Bell Equipment's Customer Support Representative from Middelburg did the machine handover and operator orientation," Mokwena says. Thabang was responsible for getting the two operators familiarised with the machine and understanding the benefits of daily maintenance checks to ensure the upkeep of the machine.

The JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader is used to dig out and stockpile sand on the riverbank, which is then loaded onto the tipper truck. This has shortened the process of hauling sand to the area in the village where the concrete bricks are cast with ten truckloads of sand now possible in a day compared to a maximum of three when using the older tractor-trailer combination, which was loaded manually.

When working at the cooperative's premises in the village, the JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader is used to convey materials when mixing concrete and the fork attachment is proving a valuable time saver to safely move pallets of concrete bricks. The machine will also be hired out on a plant hire basis when not in demand by the cooperative, which will mean an additional and welcomed income for its owners.

The seven members of the Reamogetse Thakgalang Brickmaking Cooperative expressed their joy and gratitude to firstly the Nozala Trust, NMRW and to Bell Equipment for providing them with a piece of equipment that is improving their working lives with an immediate increase in production of their products to a captive and growing market.



Benhaus realises the benefits of its Bell B60E fleet

Mining chrome from opencast pits in South Africa's North West and Limpopo provinces calls for durability – durable mining methods, durable people and, above all, durable haulage equipment because this dense and abrasive material quickly shows up any weaknesses.

The way chrome ore bodies are mined presents its own challenges as reefs often dip sharply, which makes for longer and steeper ramps. Here haulage vehicles' durability is tested to the limit and additional traction helps to extract the maximum life from a tyre, an important and expensive part of any yellow machine haulage fleet, as a well-established Rustenburg-based contract mining company has discovered.

Benhaus Mining Services originally started out as a transport company when Ben Botha founded the company back in 1969 hauling mainly sand and coal. Successful forays into civil construction followed but the company found its niche in the mid-1990s when it unbundled from a partnership structure to focus on opencast mining services in especially chrome mining and later limestone, gold, platinum and coal.

"We're a modern South African company and proud of our strong Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment component," says Herman Botha, the company CEO. His father, Ben, still acts as an advisor supporting Gustav Heuer and Themba Khumalo, who along with Herman, make up the Benhaus Mining Services' management team.

"The backbone of our tasks as a mining services company lies in the load and haul of topsoil, overburden and whatever ore is specifically mined," Herman explains. "All haulage vehicles such as articulated dump trucks (ADTs) and rigid dump trucks (RDTs) have a certain life-span but due to economic conditions, we've changed our replacement policy to now run especially ADTs to between 16 000 and 18 000 hours before considering replacing them."

Benhaus Mining Services has for many years relied on ADTs supplied by Bell Equipment and has a fleet of Bell B20, B40 and B50 ADTs. With 10 Bell Graders and eight Bell Wheel Loaders, Benhaus' yellow Bell fleet numbers almost 80 machines.

"Late in 2020, when we decided on replacing some older ADTs, we were intrigued by Bell Equipment's revolutionary Bell B60E 4x4 ADT with its two axles instead of the traditional three-axled trucks," Herman says. "We spoke to our Bell Equipment Sales Representative in Rustenburg,

Deon Swart, and he arranged for us to get a Bell B60E ADT as a demonstration model. During the two months that we used it on an opencast chrome mine we were astounded by many of its features and its performance."

The Bell B60E ADT is designed to be a crossover of a traditional ADT and an RDT. The most obvious sign of this is the single rear axle that allows much tighter turning circles, which according to Herman Botha and his company's COO, Gustav Heuer, is a major plus point in some narrow mining pits.

"We were astounded by many of its features and its performance."

Herman Botha



From left: Deon Swart (Bell Equipment Sales Representative), Herman Botha (Benhaus CEO), Gustav Heuer (Benhaus COO) and Gerald Lottering (Bell Rustenburg Branch Manager).



As with a traditional ADT, an oscillation joint keeps all the wheels in contact with the ground for consistent all-wheel drive traction, but with the centre axle missing there is almost no scuffing on the rear tyres which means extended tyre life. During an unusually wet summer, the Bell B60E ADT has proven itself to outperform rigid trucks, comfortably operating in slippery underfoot conditions where 6x6 traction is normally non-negotiable.

"We're confident that this feature will save us money in the long run as tyres are an expensive cost factor in the life of any truck," says Gustav. "Another big selling point for us is the B60E's flat-bottomed bin of 35 cubic metres that resembles that of a rigid truck in its dimensions and geometry making it fully compatible with existing loading equipment to provide an ideal 2:1 heap of coarse blasted material."

The Bell B60E also boasts many safety features such as Hill Assist, Tip Safe, downhill speed control and automatic traction control. Other standard features include auto-greasing, onboard diagnostics and a rearview camera. Benhaus Mining Services chose to upgrade the Bell Fleematic® monitoring system to the Premium package, which provides comprehensive feedback on operator and machine performance over a five-year period.

"Another important item in lowering our production costs concerns fuel burn and here we can happily report that the Bell B60E is definitely lighter on fuel than its rigid truck counterparts whilst carrying the same payload," Herman adds. "The B60's consumption is between 26 and 28 litres an hour while carrying a 55-tonne payload over haul distances measuring between 500m and 2km in one direction, and this we find very pleasing."

Demonstrating features of any equipment is one thing but Benhaus Mining Services put its money where its collective mouth is. After being so impressed with the performance of the demonstration model Bell B60E ADT, the company included it in the purchase of a fleet of six trucks of which three were delivered at the end of 2020 and three more in February 2021.

Herman Botha has the last word when he says: "We're very pleased with our decision to buy this fleet of what we believe are more versatile haulage trucks that will initially carry more overburden than chrome ore. The Bell B60E ADT is packed with innovation, competitively priced and its performance makes us confident that this combination will bring lasting returns for us and our customers alike."



Herman Botha, Benhaus Mining Services CEO, in the cab of the Bell B60E ADT.



"The Bell B60E ADT is packed with innovation, competitively priced and its performance makes us confident that this combination will bring lasting returns for us and our customers alike."

Herman Botha

F-series slashes Agri-trans Partnership's fuel bill

Should any vital link in a value chain not function to capacity or fail, the whole chain is negatively affected. The same applies to the transport of felled timber and sugar cane as an owner-operator in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands has found and, to his credit, he has discovered a reliable and efficient solution to keep delivering a sustained service.

Stan Trollip along with his wife, Bridgette, and son, Ryan, owns and manages Agri-trans Partnership, a transport company near New Hanover. Stan had grown up in the Mooi River area where his father had managed a farm with a dairy and racehorses.

"I had come to work on a sugar farm in the New Hanover area and when my employer emigrated, I was fortunate to be able to take over the farm,"

he says. "As the farm already had trucks used for sugar cane transport, it seemed natural to continue in that vein and so build a business."

The Trollip family also owns a timber farm aptly named Linton in the Mooi River area which prompted them to expand their business to include the transport of felled timber to pulp and paper mills. "Our truck fleet across many different sized vehicles has grown to 29 and we fetch sugar cane in about a 50km radius from New Hanover and transport it to sugar mills at Noodsberg, Dalton and even as far as Maidstone near Tongaat," Stan explains. "Timber on the other hand is fetched from as far away as Mooi River, Winterton and Greytown and taken to pulp and paper mills in Richards Bay, Umkomaas and Durban."

Hauling bulk freight such as sugar cane or timber implies that mechanical loading will take place at some point and here Agri-trans relies on Bell Equipment's legendary tri-wheeled machines for those onerous tasks. "We first bought a used Bell 100 Cane Loader with lots of hours on its clock in 1996 and used that to load our

cane trailers," Stan says. "We've bought numerous secondhand Bell Cane Loaders since then, but our first new Bell 125 Cane Loader arrived in 2010 and has since clocked 21 000 hours."

Agri-trans had bought various used Bell Cane Loaders and Loggers over the years and, with a fully equipped workshop and three qualified mechanics, has not shied away from rebuilding these machines including refurbishing engines and transmissions.

"We're aware that Bell Equipment first built its reputation on these reliable tri-wheelers and that's why we've never been afraid to buy a used Bell Cane Loader or Logger," says Ryan Trollip. "The quality of their design and build is such that with the same care and correct maintenance any decent machine deserves, reliability is guaranteed, and longevity is a given."

In 2018, Agri-trans was once again in the market for new Bell Tri-Wheelers and this time excitement ran high when the company took delivery of the new F-series machines with two Bell 125F Cane Loaders and a Bell 225F Logger.

"Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Keith Milne, had told us about this new Yanmar water-cooled engine and he wasn't exaggerating as it runs so quietly and is fuel efficient to boot," Ryan enthuses. "We've also found that with the fuel tanks underneath the machine, the centre of gravity has improved the machine's stability, which leads to a safer machine for our operators."



Both Stan and Ryan have been impressed by the Bell 125F and Bell 225F machines' fuel consumption. "You would appreciate that being in transport, we're very aware of how much fuel our fleet consumes in a month and that is pretty close to 160 000 litres, a huge overhead," Stan adds. "This is why we're so amazed at how much less fuel our F-series Bell machines are using as these are some of the key factors that lower production costs and improve bottom line margins."

According to Stan, Agri-trans' older Bell Cane Loaders use on average 6,11 litres per hour compared to the F-series machine at 4,86 litres an hour. The older Bell 220 Loggers burn 6,21 litres compared to the new Bell 225F Logger at 4,75.

Agri-trans Partnership operates around the clock except for Sunday nights. Owners and operators alike have been impressed by the LED lighting on the new F-series machines that makes for safer night-time operations. Night-time operations are favoured as delays at especially the sugar mills are reduced while cane harvesting happens only in daylight. Each Bell Cane Loader easily handles 180 to 200 tons of cut cane in a 12-hour shift.

"We move our fleet of eight Bell Cane Loaders and Loggers between the various loading zones and roadside depots using roll-back trucks," Ryan explains. "It takes on average about 90 minutes for a Bell 220 Logger to load a 38-ton truck and each machine normally loads 200 tons of timber in a shift."

Agri-trans relies on Bell Equipment's Pietermaritzburg Customer Service Centre for its maintenance and spares. "We've always had the assurance that Bell Equipment understands and appreciates our business model and should a particular part not be available, we know we'll have it within 24 hours," Ryan says. "This cuts our downtime to manageable levels."

"With the way we work, it would be impossible to maintain the value chain if it were not for our Bell Tri-Wheelers loading both cane and timber," Stan concludes. "That's why it was a particularly happy day in early October 2021 when we took delivery of another new Bell 225F Logger to further prove our commitment to our many loyal clients."



From left: Keith Milne (Bell Equipment Sales Representative), Ndoda Ngubane, Wellington Gondo, Berg Arntzen (Agri-trans Timber Manager), Ryan Trollip, Stan Trollip, Bridgette Trollip and Sikhavathi Jekevu. (Back): Bell Operator, Mzandile Madondo.

Eggers Boerdery expands its fleet with a Kobelco SK220XD

Two brothers of German descent, who along with their sister make up the fourth generation of mainly forestry growers on plantations near Piet Retief, have found that Bell 1766 Haulage Tractors are machines that never fail and with some tender loving care, just run and run and run.

Some of Ernst and Hermann Eggers farmland was originally occupied by their great-grandfather, also named Ernst. The senior Ernst emigrated from Northern Germany in 1903 and arrived in South Africa to pursue better opportunities. He was a master craftsman and pursued opportunities in the building industry during his first years in Natal. Later he ventured into farming to cultivate cotton along with some mixed crops. After spending time at Bishopstowe near Pietermaritzburg, he moved to the Piet Retief area and started planting timber in the 1930s. He also farmed with pigs and had a Holstein dairy stud.

"Our great-grandfather was followed by our grandfather, Johannes, and he in turn, by our dad, Berthold or Bertie as he is known in this area," says Hermann Eggers, the younger of the brothers. "Our sister Inge, who is the middle child, lives in KwaZulu-Natal."

Johannes Eggers had in the mid-1970s bought some of the first Bell Loggers which were constructed with round tubing. Some Bell 1206 Haulage Tractors followed in the 1980s.

"When I returned to the farm after studying forestry at Stellenbosch University, we resumed actively growing and harvesting timber and I recall us buying our first Bell 225A Logger in 2003," says Ernst. "That machine is still being used daily despite its chassis having seen some 26 000 hours of service along with three refurbished engines and some work on its boom."

Eggers Boerdery grows gum, wattle and to a lesser extent pine. The two Eggers brothers have divided the work with Ernst taking care of planning and silviculture and Hermann, with a tertiary qualification from Saasveld College, handles the harvesting and timber haulage.

Timber destined for pulp is transported to Richards Bay and that for wooden pallets, to nearby sawmills around Piet Retief. Pine for sawtimber goes to a sawmill in Eswatini and mills around Piet Retief's surroundings. Eggers Boerdery also produces wattle bark for the tanning and related industries, where bark is sent to NTE at Iswepe.



From left: Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, with brothers Hermann and Ernst Eggers.



“We run five Bell 1766 Haulage Tractors, some of which we bought on the pre-owned market, and they are very hard to find, for good reason,” Ernst says. “Bell Equipment has perfected this machine as a haul tractor configuration especially when it comes to fuel consumption which is low at between 7 and 8 litres of diesel an hour, even when hauling 20 tons of timber.”

“You can’t find these Bell 1766 Haul Tractors on the pre-owned market as people simply don’t want to part with them,” Hermann adds. “We had refurbished one and as a test, advertised it on a popular sales platform where we had enquiries from as far as Zimbabwe.”

The brothers agree that despite the Bell 1766 Haulage Tractors’ age, the fact that Bell Equipment still supplies spare parts stands them in good stead and adds greatly to the machines’ longevity and reputation.

“Without these Bell 1766 Haul Tractors, we couldn’t move our harvested timber to where it needs to be to get loaded onto long-haul transport and we have the reliability of the Mercedes Benz 366 motor to thank along with that Allison transmission which just doesn’t break,” Hermann says.

In addition Eggers Boerdery runs four Bell 225A Loggers and these perform a variety of tasks from loading felled timber infield to stacking and loading at roadside depots. Their fuel burn of between 6 and 7 litres an hour is also not frowned upon. Further machines manufactured by Bell Equipment include two Backhoe Loaders (TLBs), one a 315SK and the other a 315SL machine.

“There is always work for a TLB on our farm and we use them to repair roads, maintain drainage ditches and furrows and a host of other tasks,” Hermann adds. “Their versatility is their greatest advantage and with two big tools at hand, they are indeed very handy, even hauling our

agricultural tractors out of the mud when they get stuck.”

Despite the handy versatility that their Bell TLBs offer, the Eggers brothers recently saw the need to invest in a larger machine, also supplied by Bell Equipment. “We felt we needed a bigger multi-purpose tool that could be used first of all to remove big rocks when fixing haul roads in and around our timber compartments and then later on, be fitted with a timber harvesting head to speed up timber harvesting,” Ernst explains. “After consulting our Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, we decided on the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator and we’re very excited to see how it can add value to our general maintenance and timber harvesting.”

This 22-ton excavator with its 1 cubic metre bucket is known to have superior hydraulic performance which bodes well for a timber harvesting

application as well. At the time we met the Eggers brothers, their new Kobelco SK220XD-10 had just been delivered but one could sense their excitement at seeing it in action.

“We should add that we’ve done some minor modifications on our Bell 1766 Haul Tractors, like replacing the rigid axle with an independent one. We’re pleased to see that Bell Equipment has followed suit and is now fitting this to their new haul tractors as well,” Ernst says.

Hermann has the last word when he says: “No machine can run forever without replacement parts and we have a bin system in our workshop where we buy a new part from Bell Equipment’s handily placed branch in nearby Piet Retief whenever we use such a part from our stock. Bell Equipment’s Mechanic, Stephan Coetzer, responds quickly when we call, and he handles all our servicing under warranty which gives us peace of mind.”

Local contractor grows his fleet with a new JCB 3CX Global



The platinum deposits in southern Africa are said to be in the shape of a giant three-leaf clover. The mines that dot parts of its eastern limb around Steelpoort and Burgersfort contribute valuable foreign currency and provide jobs for many people who live in communities around the mines.

When the members of these communities have their own reliable earthmoving machines, chances are so much better that they will reap the benefits of contract work. One such local operator is Johannes Mankge who named his construction business with his ancestral family name of Galaka Construction & Projects.

Johannes left school at the end of Grade 10 and became a bricklayer. This enabled him to build his own home after which he spent some time at one of the nearby ferrochrome smelters working as a backhoe loader (TLB) operator. This experience would later stand him in good stead.

“When I left the ferrochrome smelter, I started my own construction business, Galaka Construction & Projects and built houses, schools and clinics in this area,” Johannes says. “This gave me a good income, but I was always looking to expand my business interests and have branched out into poultry farms as well.”

In 2014 Johannes started producing tombstones for the local market and provides a valuable and sensitive service. He buys granite from the Rustenburg area and cuts and polishes the stone before sandblasting the engraving onto the surface. His tombstone business has a branch in Burgersfort and Jane Furse, and he has plans to expand it further north to Marble Hall and Polokwane.

“Having worked with a TLB at the ferrochrome smelter, I always dreamed of owning such a machine as I had firsthand experience of how versatile a machine it is,” Johannes explains. “The year 2019 saw me make that commitment when I approached the Bell Equipment branch in Middelburg and bought a Bell 315SL TLB that we still work with, and which has done close to 2 700 hours.”

Word quickly spread that there was a member of a community close to a major platinum mine with



Johannes Mankge (second from left) with Bell Sales Representative Johnny Smit (third from left) and three of his children (from left): August, Grace and Tumelo Mankge.

a new TLB. This paid off handsomely for Johannes as the income the machine generated enabled him to pay it off in a mere 24 months.

"The mine hired my TLB and used it to assist in patching potholes and do general maintenance on the roads and other infrastructure around the mine," he says. "The three older sons of my six children, Joseph, August and Tumelo, all work at the mine but in their spare time they work for me and enjoy working with the TLB as I'm a hard taskmaster and don't like young people sitting around being idle."

The same platinum mine is now set for a major expansion and again Johannes has been proactive by buying a new machine, as he's confident of landing more contract work during the mine's expansion phase.

"I again went to Bell Middelburg and this time I met their new Sales Representative, Johnny Smit, who told me all about their new, exciting range of Backhoe Loaders made by JCB," he says. "Johnny guided me through the full range of JCB Backhoe Loaders – I was amazed at how many different models there are – before eventually choosing the JCB 3CX Global, which seemed the closest match to my previous machine."

Johannes was particularly impressed by the JCB 3CX Global's ROPS/FOPS cab, which is an essential safety component for working on mines. He believes the fact that his machine is brand new and boasts this safety feature will benefit him when plant is hired and contractors are appointed.

"Representatives from the mine are set to come and assess my machines to see how and where they can be utilised. I'm confident that with the way I've maintained the older Bell 315SL TLB and the fact that I have a brand new JCB 3CX Global machine, they're bound to put us in line for contract work," Johannes adds with a broad smile.

"I've always had all my servicing done by Bell Equipment's branch in nearby Steelpoort where they know me now. We buy all our consumables like air and fuel filters and lubrication products from them as we believe that is the right thing to do to ensure longevity of one's equipment."

"I may be getting on but I'm still ambitious and I'm working hard to fulfill my dream of owning a wheel loader that will benefit the mines, and even a grader that I could rent to our local municipality. And the way that Bell Equipment has looked after me, I'm confident this company will be part of my plans."



Apollo Bricks impressed with JCB Wheel Loader productivity



Mention nine million bricks to the average person and one cannot really comprehend how many bricks there would be when they are all stacked on pallets, drying in the Highveld sun. But this is the reality and responsibility that faces Dawid Nagel and his team at Apollo Bricks every day as they keep producing that number of clay bricks each month, and sometimes more.

The Apollo Bricks operation near Bapsfontein in Gauteng, is one of two such production facilities that fall under the Brakkefontein (Pty) Ltd banner. The other is at Atlantis in the Western Cape.

"We run a typical clay brick operation here, producing clay stock and non-face extra or NFX bricks," Dawid Nagel, the General Manager of Apollo Bricks tells us. "Transport contractors distribute our bricks far and wide across South Africa to especially big hardware groups."

A brick plant is by its very nature a large user of yellow machines and driving around the large property Apollo Bricks occupies, one is struck by the fact that almost all the yellow machines working there are manufactured and sold by Bell Equipment. A total of 12 Bell 220A Forklifts and Bell 225 Versalifts criss-cross the many tracks leading to the drying areas in a ballet of constant movement, seemingly choreographed as they pick up pallets of green bricks (bricks not yet kiln fired for hardness) and deposit them in rows to dry.

In the pit, where the clay is mined using an excavator,



Bell Sales Representative Chris Botha (left) with Apollo Bricks's General Manager, Dawid Nagel, in front of a Bell 225 Versalift.

the raw material is hauled to the milling area by a Bell B30E Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) boasting 23 000 hours of service, along haul roads where dust is suppressed using a water bowser mounted on an older Bell B30D ADT.

Making clay bricks follows an age-old process. The mined clay is left to weather before it is milled and then soured where water is added to equalise the moisture in the raw material. This material is fed into the extruder from where it emerges in a long slab. The long slab is pushed through a harp cutter which cuts it into brick-sized sections. The green or wet bricks are then stacked onto pallets using industrial robots and the pallets of bricks are taken outside to dry.

Drying bricks is very weather dependent with 21 days being the norm. The dry bricks are stacked into a formation known as a clamp that contains fire boxes filled with combustible material. This is set alight and the clamp acts as a large kiln, firing the bricks, which each contain a small amount of coal that burns away and hardens the bricks. This

baking process takes around 14 days in winter when the Highveld air is dry and 20 days in summer as there is more moisture in the air.

Returning to the pad where the soured clay material is fed into the extruder of the brick plant, we meet the new star of the Apollo Brick yellow fleet. Dawid takes up the story: "We used to run two Bell L1806E Wheel Loaders to feed the milling plant with weathered clay raw material (clay breaks down when left outside), load soured material and coal into the extruder, remove waste material and do general housekeeping. The one Bell L1806E Wheel Loader is now undergoing a rebuild under the expert eye of our workshop manager, Gavin de Villiers, and the other similar machine was traded in on our new Wheel Loader, a JCB 455ZX, which is making our eyes water with its performance."

Dawid and his team have been impressed with the ease and speed with which the JCB 455ZX Wheel Loader heaps the soured material into its generous 3,1 cubic-metre bucket while burning an

average of only 18 litres of fuel an hour.

"This new JCB 455ZX Wheel Loader is currently doing the work that two machines normally do and is doing so with ease. Once the Bell L1806E Wheel Loader has been repaired and returned to service the two loaders will work as a team," says Apollo Bricks' Workshop Manager, Gavin de Villiers. "It seems to get the job done at low revolutions and the selective all-wheel drive function coupled with real grunt in its break-out force is a big plus point."

"Considering the new JCB 455ZX Wheel Loader presents high utilisation for us where, as Gavin says, it's doing the work of two machines, it's lower fuel burn is saving us a massive R25 000 per month which is remarkable," Dawid adds.

The JCB 455ZX Wheel Loader was bought with a standard one-year warranty and unlimited hours. Its initial services at 500-hour intervals will be done by mechanics from Bell Equipment's Jet Park Customer Service Centre. Both Dawid and Gavin point out that the reason their company has such a long relationship with Bell Equipment is due to accessibility. "I can call on our Bell Sales Representative, Chris Botha, or a host of other people from product support representatives to mechanics at any time and will get support because we know them all by name, which is a rarity these days," Dawid says. "It matters little that JCB is a new brand for Bell Equipment because the support of the product is still 100%."



Wheel Loader delivers versatility and productivity for GI Projects

Imagine a machine, albeit a small one, that could do the work of fifteen men and at the same time steadily speed up the process of constructing luxury homes in one of South Africa's most sought-after towns.

This is exactly what two brothers in a small, specialised construction company found when they bought a multi-purpose wheel loader.

Ian White and his brother, Arno, own GI Projects in Stellenbosch, in the heart of the Cape Winelands. "We originally hail from Cape Town's Northern suburbs where our father Gys was a building and health inspector and under his expert tutelage, we learnt a lot about quality building methods and getting it right the first time," Ian says over coffee in the picturesque Jonkershoek Valley near Stellenbosch. "I used to be in the South African Police Services and, as a sideline, my brother Arno and I bought small patches of land and built houses that we sold."

The world financial recession started affecting their sideline business as early as 2006 and the brothers had to take the decision to enter the bigger housing construction market and build for profit to survive. "After 12 years in the SAPS, I resigned and an architect friend suggested we look at building houses in the 200 to 300 square metre range, and

that we should concentrate on a more affluent area like Stellenbosch," Ian explains. "We fortunately took this sound advice and although it hasn't always been easy, it certainly has paid dividends in the long run."

GI Projects has over time built a name for itself as a construction company that brings in building projects on time and on budget, is meticulous in its attention to detail, and takes pride in the projects it has completed for a blue-chip market.

Construction of especially larger homes implies that a fair amount of site levelling, digging of foundations and services trenches along with material handling will take place for which earthmoving and material handling equipment is necessary. "Our father Gys had taught us about cashflow controls and for a long time, even though it was expensive, we hired in earthmoving plant only when it was needed," Ian adds. "We recently decided though that with a full order book potentially putting us under pressure, buying a new versatile machine that could multitask was warranted and we started researching the market."



Arno White (left) with Bell Sales Representative, Clifton Roberts.

He concedes that they had at first considered buying a used machine but decided with the pressure they were under to deliver, valuable time could be wasted with more maintenance such an older machine may demand.

Ian was surprised when a sales representative at a supplier of yellow machines suggested he look at a rival JCB machine, which according to that representative, was the market-leading brand in the machine model he was seeking. "I was further pleasantly surprised to learn that Bell Equipment is now the agent for JCB equipment and when visiting their well-appointed branch near the airport in Cape Town, I met Sales Representative Clifton Roberts who I found to be very knowledgeable," Ian says. "Most pleasing though was the fact that Bell Equipment had a sparkling new JCB 406 Wheel Loader in stock, the very machine we were interested in due to its ability to quickly switch between a loading bucket and forks."

Bell Equipment assisted GI Projects to obtain financing at favourable rates over 48 months and the company took delivery of the JCB 406 Wheel Loader in August 2021.

"We put the JCB 406 Wheel Loader to work on a large building project in the Jonkershoek Valley and its impact was immediately felt," Ian continues. "The quick change between loading bucket and forks is amazing to experience and you can be loading excavated soil onto a stockpile and five minutes later be handing a pallet of bricks to a bricklayer standing 3 metres high on the first floor."

"We're currently using a bucket with a straight edge but have asked Bell Equipment to supply us with a second bucket fitted with ground-engaging tools to loosen soil and ease site-levelling operations in harder soils."

Both Ian and Arno are impressed by the JCB 406 Wheel Loader's compact design and articulated steering that make it easy to manoeuvre in tight spaces. The machine's rear lights are recessed into the solid counterweight for good impact protection and hydraulic hoses are well protected and securely clamped while positioned well away from potential pinch-points. The cab offers good visibility while the ergonomically designed joystick makes for comfortable and intuitive operation.

"This JCB 406 Wheel Loader easily does the work of 15 men," Ian says smiling. "While we haven't accurately calculated its fuel burn yet, as it seems to run for more than a week on a full tank, we're expecting it to return figures of around 4,5 litres an hour, which would be great."

While Ian and Arno are aware of their social responsibilities as employers, uplifting and training their employees through skills transfer, they also take cognisance of the importance the benefits that modest mechanisation will bring to their growing business. "We have a relative in the construction industry in the Netherlands and learn a lot from him and the building methods used in the First World through mechanised means where you have fewer people building homes of a high standard at a much quicker pace," Ian tells us. "We believe that should we be able to give the 'grunt work' over to machines, we can concentrate more on improving the quality of the finished article we're steadily building our reputation on."

"We're excited at the prospect of becoming more mechanised and our thinking is that a backhoe loader is the next machine that will slot in well with our building operations," Ian concludes. "With this in mind, Bell Equipment and its market leading JCB machines, along with the surety of reliable technical backup and parts, is firmly on our radar."



Kobelco SK220XD is Ka Lethabo Trading's first Excavator

An aptitude for mathematics has created opportunities for Mandisa Cele, owner of Ka Lethabo Trading in Pietermaritzburg. She has had a fulfilling career as a teacher and is now a successful entrepreneur and construction contractor with a Grade 5 CIDB rating.

She is also the proud owner of a new Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator that can be seen working on the extensive N3 upgrade project between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. Work includes the widening of the N3 carriageways to four or five lanes in each direction, and the reconfiguration and upgrade of most major interchanges along these route sections. Three key projects include the 19,4km stretch of road from Cato Ridge to Dardanelles (Umlaas Road) interchange, 26,6km from Dardanelle Interchange to Lynnfield Park and a 32km stretch from Lynnfield Park to Ashburton interchange.

Born and bred in Pietermaritzburg's Mbali township, Mandisa excelled at and enjoyed mathematics as a learner. Keen to pass on her love of mathematics to future generations, she studied and became a teacher.

An entrepreneurial spirit at heart, Mandisa established Ka Lethabo Trading in 2003, while still

teaching, and tried her hand at catering, fencing and selling clothing, among others. However, it was a passion for construction that drove her to enrol in a project management course that changed the course of her life.

"It was a joke on the course because everyone had to say why they were there. Everyone else was sent by the companies they worked for, but I had to make up a story and say that I was project managing renovations at my mother's house. Everyone was laughing because I had no real reason to be there, but afterwards I knew that I wanted to start working in construction," recalls Mandisa. "It was the management tools, techniques and the strategies that I learnt while doing that



Owner of Ka Lethabo Trader, Mandisa Cele (second from left) with her son and Operations Manager, Leo Cele (right), Site Foreman, Samkelisiwe Khumalo (left) and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Nomthi Mazibuko.

course - how to maximise your profit by speeding up project delivery - that appealed to me. There were a lot of things that I learned there that I was keen to put into practice."

Government employees are not allowed to engage in government business, so Mandisa wasted no time in resigning as a teacher and registering on the Department of Transport's database. She was a natural from the outset: "I was invited to a meeting for entry level projects and when I got to the boardroom where the meeting was held, we were given formulas and training and told how to calculate for projects. It was my first time, but I was able to help other people who were not understanding. I got the first project I tendered on, and I think it was because of my calculations."

That was in 2008 and the project was installing guardrails in the KwaDukuza area. Mandisa worked with a Grade 1 CIDB rating until 2012 and 2013 when she successfully completed road re-gravelling and betterment of rural roads projects in the same area that elevated her to Grade 2 and then Grade 3 status.

According to Mandisa, lessons were learnt along the way. "During those projects I had plant challenges. I hired from reputable plant hire companies but there were a lot of breakdowns. When an excavator breaks down, but you have hired tipper trucks from another company, you still pay for those tipper trucks even though they are also standing. It was a good lesson to hire from only one company."

Executing two Grade 3 projects simultaneously saw Ka Lethabo Trading elevated to a Grade 5 CIDB rated company in 2021. With this rating the company most recently completed 10km of re-gravelling in the Ilembe District for the Maphumulo Local Municipality.

Most importantly the rating has created opportunity for Ka Lethabo Trading to invest in its own plant and equipment. In March 2021, the company was the only women-owned business out of five local subcontractors awarded a four-year contract to supply plant and equipment to Raubex Construction, the main contractor on the N3 upgrade project. Employing local subcontractors assists the JSE-listed company to achieve its contract participation goal of awarding 30% of the project to local businesses.

"I first bought three 10-ton tipper trucks. They are good second-hand trucks, 2017 and 2018 models with about 100 000km on the clock, and are performing well," says Mandisa. "I then applied for finance for a Kobelco 26-ton excavator, but the banks declined me. My Bell Sales Representative, Nomthi Mazibuko, has been a great support. She tried by all means to assist when the banks declined my application but, in the end, I raised cash for the smaller Kobelco SK220XD-10."

The Kobelco SK220XD-10 arrived on site at the end of May and was immediately put to work loading tipper trucks and performing other road building duties.

The decision to invest in a Kobelco Excavator was influenced by the company's experience with a Kobelco 26-ton Excavator that has not given any issues since they started hiring it in April 2021. "We have a relationship with the person who we are hiring the machine from, so we asked him about the Kobelco and he spoke highly of the brand and the machine. We liked that it has an air-conditioned cab and saves on fuel, especially with the recent fuel price increases but we still did our own checks with competitor machines and found that Bell offers better value for money. Bell is a reputable brand with a good footprint locally; that the Pietermaritzburg branch is only 20 minutes from our site made sense in terms of parts and support."

Roseleigh Estates achieves in-trailer compaction with CanePro

The old saying that time is money rings very true for a KwaZulu-Natal sugarcane grower as a new cane loader drastically cuts loading time while maximising the usable space in a cane trailer.

Rob Gurney's great-grandfather, Frank Gurney, had been the postmaster in Verulam near Durban and when he retired to a farm under wattle near Eston in 1911, he decided that sugar would be a more profitable crop. His son Eric believed that too and carried on with growing this essential commodity as did Eric's son Peter, who was Rob's father. Rob is now the fourth generation farming the land called Roseleigh Estates.

"As far back as I can remember, we've had Bell Tri-Wheeler Cane Loaders, going back to the original Bell 100 series with its round-tubed frame," Rob Gurney says. "We refurbished some of the machines, attending to their engines, wheel motors, pumps and drive trains and respraying the chassis."

"I know that two particular Bell Cane Loaders ran up 30 000 and 45 000 hours respectively, which is true testament to the machine's simple but excellent design and quality build that brings about such extreme longevity."

Roseleigh Estates currently runs a fleet of three Bell Tri-Wheelers – two Cane Loaders, a Bell 125 and a Bell 220, and a Bell 225 Logger. The latter is used in multi-tasking roles for handling some felled wattle, moving seed cane when planting, removing tree stumps and rocks, and handling grass sods for lining water courses to prevent soil erosion. At an average fuel burn of 6 litres an hour, none of these machines are blowing the fuel budget, according to Rob.



From left: Owner of Roseleigh Estates, Rob Gurney with his Farm and Transport Manager, Mister Chiya, and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Keith Milne.



Moving with the times and looking for higher yields, Roseleigh Estates started finding that some newer cane varieties at times produced lodged cane, where the stalks are bent, and getting full loads in a trailer became challenging due to the many air pockets the bent cane stalks cause.

"For all their versatility, our Bell Cane Loaders weren't solving the problem as their booms couldn't reach down into the trailer to push the lodged cane down and so eliminate air pockets," Rob explains. "We knew we had to find a solution as with our cane transport business, we get paid per ton of cane that we move and not filling a trailer properly was costing us money."

Rob thought about using an old 8-ton excavator that would have the reach to push the cane down into the trailer. This excavator would be welded to a trailer for quicker mobility to various loading zones, but this idea was shelved as being impractical.

Rob consulted Keith Milne, Bell Equipment's knowledgeable sales representative working out of the Bell branch in Pietermaritzburg. "Keith suggested we look at Bell Equipment's CanePro loader and he duly organised one for us to use on a trial basis for six weeks in the second half of

2020," Rob says. "During the 500 hours the machine was with us, its performance was remarkable and this prompted us to order one, which arrived in November 2020.

"Our initial motivation for buying the CanePro was to increase the mass of our loads as each of our seven interlinked cane trucks carries just under 1 000 loads per year and each load has to pay for itself," Rob explains. "By using the CanePro's longer reach to push the cane down into the trailer, we've increased the mass by at least two tons. This adds up to a lot given the annual tonnage each truck carries."

"However, what we hadn't banked on and what possibly should have weighed more heavily on our decision to buy the machine was the saving of time we now had loading a truck coupled with more efficient fuel burn while getting bigger loads."

According to Rob, the CanePro takes 25 minutes to load a truck as opposed to the Bell 125 Cane Loader's 55 minutes. The CanePro can reach further down into the trailer bin and loads 10,6 tons of cane on one litre of diesel compared to the Bell 125 Cane Loader's 7 tons. The Matriarch CanePro burns fuel at an average 6 litres an hour.

"Given that a return trip to our nearest mill takes four hours and we do 12 to 13 loads a day, we are now saving up to six hours of loading time. This means that by moving a heavier load of cane more efficiently, we can take one truck out of the system, which at the end of the day means a saving in time, running costs and fuel," he adds.

Rob and his operators have been impressed by the many safety features the CanePro boasts like the ROPS-FOPS airconditioned cab, a sliding counterweight that adds to the machine's stability and a fail-safe feature that won't see the park-brake released unless the cab door is fully closed. This promotes the machine's safe operation on the steep slopes that characterises Roseleigh Estates.

"I'd like to see Bell incorporate some of these features in its Tri-Wheeler range such as an airconditioned cab (now an option on the F-series) and a sliding counterweight that would increase stability and operator safety," he says.

Roseleigh Estates' CanePro is used between 12 loading zones, the furthest being 4km away, and the machine can drive to these zones unaided. It was bought with a standard warranty of 12 months and unlimited hours, and while under warranty all servicing is done by the Bell Equipment mechanics from Pietermaritzburg. The estate's own mechanic, Vela Ngcobo, reports that Bell Equipment's response times are very good.

Rob sums up the experience of acquiring the CanePro by saying: "It would be amiss to not mention that Keith Milne had his hand on this entire process, from the time that he arranged a demonstration machine, throughout the manufacturing to the delivery and handover, the latter involving some hands-on training for our operators, which has stood them in good stead and ensured that the CanePro started saving us money almost immediately."

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New Kobelco and JCB machines benefit Martmol Trading

When Martin Molewa was a bank teller, he learnt to count money. Jump ahead a few years, by which time Martin was a borehole contractor, and while laying water pipes with his own hands he learnt about the value of money and what it could buy in terms of mechanised means to make the job easier and faster.

"My parents, through their own entrepreneurial ventures, had laid the foundation in me to be similarly self-employed, which is what caused me to leave the banking world and start my own business," Martin says when we meet in his comfortable office outside Tzaneen. "This was back in 2007 and I did sub-contract work for borehole contractors, acting as the middle-man between the contractor and the client while also learning about the drilling business."

Martin tells that he was then still unattached and threw himself into the world of borehole drilling, working relentlessly and he soon owned his own drill rigs and regularly got down and dirty installing pumps and laying water pipes once underground aquifers had been breached.

"I now felt I owned the whole value chain around drilling for water and by 2010, started looking around for other opportunities related to civil construction," he says. "This I found in road construction for which there was a big demand in our Limpopo Province as the provincial government and local municipalities started making good on their promises of service delivery."

Keeping an open mind, Martin learnt about road construction as his business grew and he also learnt that hiring in earthmoving and road construction equipment, such as loaders, graders, trucks and pavers, costs dearly and had a real impact on bottom line profits. The answer to a more profitable business lay in owning his own yellow machine fleet and this challenge he



Bell Sales Representative, David Papi (left), chats to Martmol Trading owner, Martin Molewa, besides one of the latter's new JCB 3DX Backhoe Loaders.

"They're powerful machines and we've used them extensively to dig and load material out of borrow pits, dig trenches for foundations and water lines and to load trucks."

Martin Molewa



addressed head-on. His company called Martmol Trading, a combination of his name and surname, was by now well-known.

"One of the first pieces of equipment I bought in 2012 was a Bell 315SJ Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB) which to my mind was best suited to our needs as a versatile tool," he says. "The other consideration was that the TLB should last a long time as durability was more important to us than efficiency."

At the same time, Martin was buying tipper trucks, rollers, graders and pavers, all the types of equipment essential to road construction. Martmol Trading was by then able to offer road construction services from base course to blacktop.

"It was reassuring to know that while buying earthmoving equipment from Bell Equipment, one was assured of technical support and the availability of spares as the company has a fully-fledged branch right here in Tzaneen to add to its wide national footprint," Martin adds. "More

Bell TLBs followed the first machine and we own several Bell TLBs in both the 315 SJ and SK ranges." "When it came to larger digging and loading tools like excavators, we again turned to Bell Equipment whose sales representative at the time assured us that the Kobelco range of machines had no beating in the market and the three Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavators we bought have certainly proved that. They're powerful machines and we've used them extensively to dig and load material out of borrow pits, dig trenches for foundations and water lines and to load trucks."

Martin has through hard and diligent work, grown his company Martmol Trading exponentially and now employs 110 permanent staff across many disciplines and employs even more manual and casual labour in areas where his company undertakes projects. A subsidiary company owns five filling stations and distributes both diesel and petrol fuel. He also buys land and develops housing estates around Tzaneen.

"Bell Equipment recently transferred a new sales representative to our area, and I can tell my own staff about the results that persistence brings," Martin tells us with a broad smile. "David Papi has been relentless in his calling on us and it has certainly paid off for both parties as we've bought several new machines from Bell Equipment as a result."

These machines include three Kobelco SK220XD-10 and two Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavators, one JCB CT260-100 and two JCB CT160-100 Smooth Drum Rollers.

Martin and his staff have been impressed with the efficiency the new equipment has shown as was plain to see when watching one of the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavators working on the site of a new road in the rural village of Skororo near Tzaneen.

We spoke to the Kobelco Excavator's operator who was excavating soft soil where the new road was to be built and loading it into 12-cubic metre tipper trucks in a matter of minutes. Victor Mukwevho has been operating a variety of excavator brands during his 15 years in this role and is full of praise for the Kobelco SK220-10's responsive controls and well-designed cab.

"This is the best machine I have ever worked in, and you can see that I load a 12-cubic metre truck in under five minutes because the hydraulic flows are so true with the Kobelco's engine sounding like it's merely idling," he says. "I also enjoy the machine's compact design which means that with no real tail swing, the Kobelco Excavator can work comfortably in areas with houses and powerlines nearby."

Martmol Trading's policy on machine replacement is based on when a piece of equipment starts costing too much to maintain, that equipment is then sold off on auction. This was the case recently when the company sold off some older TLBs and again turned to David Papi of Bell Equipment for replacement equipment.

The company now owns an impressive list of machines with the latest acquisitions comprising four JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders, three Kobelco SK220XD Excavators, two Kobelco SK260LC Excavators, two JCB 116D Rollers and one JCB 260-120 Tandem Roller.

"We have been pleased with the four new JCB 3DX Backhoe Loaders we've bought and have added front forks to further increase their versatility," Martin says. "All our machines are bought with standard warranties during which time we have the assurance that Bell Equipment does the servicing. Having the Bell Equipment branch on our doorstep in Tzaneen is a confidence booster as we know that even once a machine is out of warranty and we do the maintenance ourselves, spare parts can be obtained quickly, even if they need to be specially brought in."

A dynamic and energetic operator such as Martin Molewa is hard to rein in and he is now looking north of South Africa's borders to use his company's expertise on water supply projects in Zambia. He is also confident that earthmoving machines supplied by Bell Equipment will bring success in this new venture.



Bell Logger proves invaluable to Timber Express's operation

Word of mouth is said to be one of the most powerful forms of advertising and to Danial Rana's ears this certainly held true when his family's business wanted to buy a timber handling machine in the past year.

Danial and his older brother, Arslan, had joined their father Abdul in South Africa in 2010. Abdul and his wife had left their native Pakistan in 1997 with the aim of establishing a hardware business in South Africa, and this he has done successfully trading as Timber Express with branches in Margate and Dududu on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast and in Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape.

"Because we experienced shortage of supply in certain key areas, we embarked on

manufacturing our own water storage tanks, which are made under the banner of Amadiba Tanks and are popular items," Danial tells us. "We've also encountered a shortage of building timber and decided, as a family, to source our own as we were close to the timber growing areas in southern KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape."

The Rana family bought a former guest farm near Paddock, to the west of Port Shepstone, and set

up a tank manufacturing plant and a small sawmill. Handling the large pine logs delivered there posed a handling problem due to the sheer weight and size of the logs. Due to the rough terrain and stanchions on the timber trucks delivering the logs, a traditional forklift truck is unsuitable.

Logs in varying diameters are sourced and 6m lengths are preferred as they can be cut to shorter lengths, depending on demand. Their timber is used mainly for construction, roof trusses, decking and furniture.

"When we asked about hiring a timber handling machine the only name on everyone's lips was a Bell Logger," Danial explains. "So, we found a plant hire company and hired

an older Bell 220 Logger, and even though it broke down at times and once stood for a whole month while the engine was refurbished, we soon realised that without it to unload timber off trucks and feed our small sawmill, we would be in trouble."

This however solved their supply problem to a large extent and with timber stocks now flowing to their stores, this enterprising family were looking to supply timber to a wider market as well as looking to lower their production costs.

"We realised that as efficient as the Bell Logger was, it's hiring costs were eating into our bottom-line profits and we had to approach this situation differently," Danial says. "While asking around about how to buy our own Bell Logger, we were advised about Bell Equipment being a local company with its manufacturing plant in the same province as we were, which was a pleasant surprise to us."



Danial and his brother, Arslan, met Nomthi Mazibuko, Bell Equipment's sales representative working out of Durban (now known as eThekweni), after scanning the Bell Equipment website.

"Dealing with Nomthi was very pleasant as she knew the product range well, could organise finance for us through Wesbank and stuck to the timelines she had committed to," Danial says. "Having some financial experience taught to us by our father, we realised financing the Bell 225F Logger was a better option for our cash flows as we needed cash on hand to buy raw material."

Timber Express took delivery of its new Bell 225F Logger in April 2021 and it was immediately put to work offloading pine logs from trucks, delivering them to the plant at Paddock, feeding the small sawmill and loading sawn timber for transport to their three hardware stores.

"Now that we've streamlined the timber sawing process, we've also started supplying some customers in northern KwaZulu-Natal using our own fleet of trucks, which is adding value to our business," Danial adds. "We're currently working in daylight only but can foresee that we'll extend the hours on our sawmill once there is greater demand for our timber products, which will see us using our Bell Logger during a night shift."

Danial comments on the superior LED lights the Bell 225F Logger is equipped with, which makes him

confident that operations at night could be conducted safely. He feels they are fortunate to have an experienced Tri-Wheeler operator in Patrick Paragza, who spoke of the smooth and responsive controls on the Bell 225F Logger.

When asked about the fuel consumption of the Bell 225F Logger, Danial explained that they still had to calculate exact hourly fuel burn rates as the machine had only done 300 hours. However, the brothers were pleased with their decision to buy their own machine as the monthly instalment alone was much less than that of a hired machine and it was running at 100% mechanical availability despite having suffered a punctured tyre the day before. They were in the throes of compacting their operational area with fill material and foresaw punctures could be avoided in future. The water-cooled Yanmar engine in the new Bell 225F Logger was proving to be less thirsty than the air-cooled engine of the older hired machine.

"This is a powerful machine, and those big front wheels offer amazing traction in wet weather when this loading area becomes muddy," Danial says smiling. "We're confident that as our business grows, we'll have need of a second similar machine to keep our production rolling. We're also enjoying the service Bell Equipment offers us under warranty. With this level of attention we can see ourselves using that excellent and confidence-boosting service way beyond the warranty period on our Bell Logger."



Patrick Paragza, the Bell 225F Logger operator, chats to Danial Rana (right).

Thies family extends their Bell fleet with new Series V Haulage Tractor

The modern sugar farm is a busy place where precision farming techniques demand that every man and machine be efficiently used for what he or it was trained or designed for. The same goes for mechanical haulers such as tractors where agricultural tractors should not be sacrificed to haul cut cane to the mill to the detriment of daily tasks.

This has long been the view of the Thies brothers, Eugen and Uwe, on their farms near New Hanover in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. They have the distinction of being the fifth generation of their family to work these lands. "Our forefathers arrived in the area back in 1881 to farm wattle and cattle," says Eugen. "Our own father, Helmut, switched to growing sugar cane in about 1966 and we have built on his legacy."

Helmut Thies bought his first Bell Cane Loader, a Funkey Bell model with its distinguishing round tube frame, high lift boom and double jockey wheel, in 1983 in Empangeni. This machine is still being used by his sons to load seed cane and after having its engine refurbished at 10 000 hours, it has since passed 16 000 hours of service.

"We mention this to show how long our family has always believed in using the correct machine for the job it was designed for and, in this regard, how we've come to rely on Bell Equipment to supply us with such equipment," younger brother, Uwe says. "Back in 1993, our dad bought a Bell 1756 Haulage Tractor which we still use to haul cane trailers, although we replaced its engine some years ago with that of a Bell ADE 366 unit."

The Thies brothers have been impressed by equipment from Bell proving longevity and excellent resale value, despite machine age. "We subsequently bought a Bell 120 Cane Loader in 1996 and then again a Bell 125A machine in 2013,



which illustrates a wide gap in time," Uwe continues. "In between those two, we had owned another used round-tube framed machine which we sold out of hand to a local farmer for an excellent price, and that machine is still being used on a daily basis."

Their Bell Tri-Wheeler fleet is made up of three cane loading machines and one Bell 225 Logger, a refurbished machine bought back in 2008 which is used to load limited amounts of wattle and pine that they grow and supply to NCT and the UCL sawmill.

Cut cane though is no good unless it can be hauled to a nearby mill by a hauler that is purposely built for that role as Eugen explains: "We first owned a Bell 1716 Series 3 Haulage Tractor which we ran until 6 000 hours and replaced that with a 1734A two-wheel drive machine which we still have and now shows 5 000 hours on its clock. As we load our cane trailers infield, we've always found it necessary to have a spare tractor on standby to pull the laden tractor-trailer combination out of wet fields in the rainy season."

"Since we started using our new Bell 1736AF Series V in August 2021, we haven't had that problem due to the machine's all-wheel drive traction that can pull a fully laden tandem trailer out of a wet field and over muddy roads. We should have bought this type of tractor years ago."

Both Eugen and Uwe agree that they chose the Bell 1736AF Series V Haulage Tractor for its competitive price and knowing that one day it won't be hard to sell. "We had a good look at the market and the Bell Haulage Tractor was priced much better than its immediate competitors, not that there are many," they say. "Experience has also taught us that equipment from Bell is easy to maintain and has excellent resale value no matter its age."

The Thies family farms are situated relatively close to the nearest sugar mill at Noodsberg and the return haul to the mill is only 12km. "Our older Bell 1734A Haulage Tractor gave us fuel figures of between 9,4 and 10,5 litres per hour which is excellent but keeping in mind that it is a two-wheel drive machine that at times needed assistance out of wet fields," Uwe says. "The new Bell 1736AF Haulage Tractor compares very favourably with these figures at between 10,6 and 11,2 litres per hour for an all-wheel drive machine, which we are very impressed with."

Thies Trading Trust's new Bell 1736AF Series V Rigid Hauler has been bought with a standard 12-month unlimited hours warranty. The farm makes extensive use of Bell Equipment's mechanics from the Bell branch in Pietermaritzburg but also sources some essential spares from a local outlet in Fawn Leas that keeps genuine Bell parts.



Brothers, Eugen and Uwe Thies with their Bell Sales Representative, Keith Milne.

According to Eugen and Uwe, there has been a lot of interest both at the mill and from neighbours about the new Bell Haulage Tractor, the first of its kind in the area. "We think this new Bell 1736 Series V range of Haulage Tractors is going to be a winning model range for Bell Equipment considering the ease with which it pulls fully-laden cane trailers as if there is nothing on the tow-hitch," they echo. "More importantly, not having to take an agricultural tractor out of its daily routine is a cost saving factor, which ultimately lowers our production costs."



Solid relationship keeps Andru Mining coming back for more blue Bells

In today's structured corporate world, it is rare for a customer to engage with a design engineer of any product, let alone make suggestions as to how that product may be improved. This is exactly what keeps a major South African mining contractor brand-loyal to a market-leading manufacturer of articulated dump trucks (ADTs).

Andru Mining is known to be a leading player in the competitive business of contract mining in South Africa. The company was founded in the late 1970s by Terry Troughton, a civil engineer. The company is currently in the hands of a dynamic foursome consisting of Branden Bowen, the Managing Director; Joe Naicker, Plant Director; Anthony Wardlaw, Operations Director and the lone rose amongst the thorns, Shonel Reddy, who is the Financial Director.

"We work exclusively in opencast mining and our fleet of earthmoving equipment is

well-known by its distinctive blue colour," says Branden Bowen. "We offer our services in opencast coal mining, bulk material handling services as well as in hard-rock mining such as platinum, gold, chrome, manganese, silica and fluorspar."

"You will appreciate that working in mining contracting that



The Andru Mining directors (from left): Anthony Wardlaw (Operations Director), Shonel Reddy (Financial Director), Branden Bowen (Managing Director) and Joe Naicker (Plant Director).

demands production on a 24/7 basis, means we rely on high utilisation and sustained mechanical availabilities of any equipment that we buy, and for this reason we run equipment to its first life only," Branden adds. "Experience has taught us to do accurate condition monitoring and peg a piece of equipment that has the potential of suffering a major component failure, so as to deal with it before such failure."

Branden further explains that Andru Mining has built a

reputation for selling used equipment that has been well-maintained and, as each machine comes with a full service history, the equipment generally sells itself. Any Andru Mining equipment that is destined for South Africa is first repainted to its original yellow livery but that which leaves the country is left blue.

"We run a huge fleet of around 125 ADTs in the 30- and 40-ton ranges and they all come from one manufacturer, namely Bell Equipment," Branden says. "The reason for this is simple, as apart from very competitive pricing, we enjoy a unique relationship with Bell."

"The latter fact is the real reason why we have such a long and successful relationship with Bell Equipment



which translates into why we keep on buying their outstanding ADTs."

"It's through this understanding of our needs that Bell designed and built a dedicated coal bin that we have used on many of our B40s with huge success," he explains. "We recently took delivery of the first ADTs for an order of five Bell B30E and 16 Bell B40E ADTs and while these have all been ordered with standard bins, we will be taking delivery of eight specialised coal bins for the B40E ADTs during the second half of 2022. The dedicated coal bins make a massive difference in our offering to our clients in terms of sustained production."

With coal having a much lower specific gravity than the overburden that covers it, the coal bin allows the Bell B40E to easily fulfil its design capacity of carrying between 36 and 39 tons of raw coal.

Four of Andru Mining's new Bell B30E ADTs have been deployed to a fluorspar mine northeast of Pretoria where they haul both the fluorspar-bearing rock and overburden between 1 and 4,5km in one direction.

Four Bell B40E ADTs are being used to successfully mine platinum on a major opencast deposit near Rustenburg. The mining process for the elusive platinum is especially tough on machines due to its dense and abrasive nature with the overburden showing specific gravities of 2,8 and the platinum ore, of 3,2 upwards.

"In both the applications mentioned, our Bell B30E and B40E ADTs are still new and will run a while still until we pin down accurate fuel consumption figures," Branden says. "In both cases our clients provide the fuel, but we do have a fuel cap and the good news is that our new Bell ADTs have in both cases, remained below the fuel cap limits."

"Our experience in this challenging and competitive field of opencast contract mining has taught us that the Bell B30E and B40E ADTs are best suited for the types of contracts that we as a company enjoy," he adds. "Our winning formula is that we carefully choose the types of contracts that suit our equipment, and our Bell ADTs across the board have not let us down yet."

Kobelco Excavators and Bell Loggers drive mechanisation at GDH Harvesting

Excavators using hydraulic technology have come a long way since Sir WG Armstrong & Company first used water to drive an excavator when building the Hull docks in England back in 1882.

Today excavators using hydraulic oil offer a safe and efficient option to a variety of industries as a leading timber harvesting contractor has found. Excavator-based cable-yarder systems have proved very popular in many parts of the world.

Geoff Good, a 30-year veteran of the contract timber harvesting industry, is the owner of GDH Harvesting with its headquarters in Sabie in Mpumalanga and a busy branch in Ugie, in the Eastern Cape.

"We've been operating in the Ugie area for the past 10 years, doing clear felling, extraction of steep and flat areas and processing of pine at roadside for our client, a large timber grower with plantations across the country," Geoff Good says. "After a devastating fire swept through many of the company's pine saw log compartments near Ugie during the winter of 2021, we were tasked with getting that burnt timber felled quickly to allow our client to still extract some value from it, selling it wet before the wood fibre starts losing its quality and therefore its value."



To do this quickly, efficiently and above all safely, GDH Harvesting has committed a large part of its labour force of 80 people in the Ugie area to this effort. "Almost 65% of the people we employ at the Ugie operations are local and we have invested heavily in their training for the skills that we need, taking them from unskilled labour up to supervisory level so that we leave a solid legacy of skills in this area as part of our commitment to social upliftment," Geoff explains. "As is our normal way of working, focusing on efficiencies and safety, we're mechanising as much as possible for all our operations."

In April 2019, GDH Harvesting took delivery of a Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavator fitted with a third-party timber felling head. Geoff says that they had chosen the Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavator for its quality but importantly also for the fact that they could rely on technical backup from Bell Equipment, who sold the equipment range. "We've been dealing with Bell Equipment in Nelspruit for 30 years and knowing how the company works is a big plus for us," he says. "With Ugie being a bit isolated, we have the assurance that Bell Equipment is near enough in Mthatha to be able to service and repair our machines bought from the company."

By all accounts, the 26-ton Kobelco's performance has been impressive as it has clocked some 8 000 hours since its arrival in Ugie in 2019, felling and processing around 500 cubic-metres of pine timber a day in two shifts. The two daily shifts mean that the machine is used between 13 and 14 hours a day, reflecting high mechanical availabilities, and its fuel consumption of 16 litres an hour is well within the business plan.

Some timber compartments around Ugie are planted in steep areas, at times on ground with more than a 30% slope, and here Geoff and his teams have deployed a 30-ton Kobelco SK300LC-10 Excavator fitted with a shovel-yarder attachment from a third-party supplier. "Although the ideal weight excavator carrier would be a 35-ton machine, we've found the 30-ton Kobelco to be sufficiently stable and above all, delivers more than sufficient hydraulic pressure and flow to run the cable yarder system efficiently, quickly and safely," Geoff says. "We've retained the bucket on the Kobelco for stability and to help the machine create safe and level loading platforms."

Geoff points out that in contrast to traditional cable-yarding systems, excavators offer better stability due to their weight and can be moved easily without the added bother of re-establishing anchor cables. Their use creates a more efficient and safer system and the ease and speed with which timber is extracted from the steepest compartments makes for better production at lower costs.

"We've used one Kobelco SK300LC-10 Excavator in this way at our Ugie operations since January 2020 and in this period of around 22 months, it's given us just over 3 000 hours of really good production," Geoff says. "We recently replaced an older machine and again turned to Bell Equipment in Nelspruit where Daniel van Huyssteen, Bell Equipment's knowledgeable sales representative, who is also a qualified forester, assisted us with yet another Kobelco SK300LC-10 Excavator that we have converted to a shovel-yarder."

GDH Harvesting now has two Kobelco SK300LC-10 Excavator carriers outfitted as shovel-yarders to add to the one Kobelco SK260LC-10 with the timber-felling head, nine Bell Loggers and two John Deere 648 Grapple Skidders all deployed in the Ugie area alone.

"I should stress once again, that Bell Equipment's large service footprint played an important role in our decision to buy the Kobelco Excavators as carriers for the shovel-yarders as we're assured of a service centre nearby at Mthatha, and East London as backup even though it's a little further away," Geoff adds. "What adds to Bell Equipment's service though, and ensures we get the maximum uptime out of our equipment, are our own strict preventative maintenance schedules as overseen by Etienne Kruger, our mechanic and fleet manager in Ugie, who ensures that we do interim servicing with Bell Equipment's approval at 250 hours along with strict daily checks and constant lubrication on all our machines."

Amongst GDH Harvesting's nine Bell Loggers at the Ugie site, one stands out as being 'different' and Geoff explains why: "With the speed with which we fell and extract the whole trees using the Kobelcos, we needed a logger with a bit more grunt to keep ahead of the stacking and processing at roadside. We need to move some full tree lengths away from the Kobelcos which are then marked, crosscut and stacked. Bell Equipment arranged for a Bell 225F Turbo Logger on a demonstration basis, and we were so impressed by its performance that we promptly bought the demonstration machine. It offers around 10 horsepower more, has a teleboom that can be extended or retracted and is ideally suited for our purpose while still only using 7-litres of diesel an hour."

Geoff is adamant that mechanisation is the way to go in timber harvesting and having the correct tools for the job like Kobelco Excavators and Bell Loggers is non-negotiable.



Bell Promo Shop

Hunting Knife

R2050

Biltong Cutter

R1200

Thermal Mugs
 Hot & Cold
 330ml

R140

Leatherman Wave

R2550

Leather Wallet

R560

Belts
 Black/Brown
 Leather Stitch/
 Burnished

R270

Power Bank
 10 000mAh
 Solid without charging cable

R360

Cooler Box
 Blue
 25 litre

R1550

Duffel Bag
 Black

R280

Cooler Box
 Green
 45 litre

R2300

Multi-pupose Mat
 can be used as a bar mat,
 gamer mat,
 mouse pad
 or desk mat

R120

Hats
 Leather
 Breezy/ Tan/ Oxblood/ Oxblood Fold Up

R355

ADT B45E Scale Model

R790

ADT B60E Scale Model

R1000

Ladies K-Way Softshell Jacket
 Black
 Size: L - 2XL

R1090

Mens Solo Hoodie
 Black
 Size: S - 5XL

R420

Cycling Jammer

R450

Cycling Top

R550

Mens Canvas Jacket
 Olive
 Size: S - 5XL

R760

Mens K-Way Softshell Jacket
 Black
 Size: S - 2XL

R1090

Vellies
 Tan
 Size: 5-11

R650

JCB Rain Jacket
 Black & Yellow
 Size: S - 5XL

R450

Mens Shirt
 Grey / Black & Blue
 Size: S - 4XL

R200

S5 Turbo Vellie
 Tan
 Size: 5-10

R670

Town & Country NSTC
 Size: 6-13

R1150

BS6 Lace-up Boot
 Brown
 Size: 6-13

R1170

FS3 Pull-up Boot STC
 Size: 6-13

R1080

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