

the bulletin

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Dear Customers

2023 is drawing to a close, as is my time with Bell Equipment, and I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've undertaken together over the past 16 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as CEO for the last five years, and I am filled with gratitude for the trust and support you, our customers, have shown throughout my tenure.

As I prepare to pass the baton to a new leader, I can't help but feel a sense of nostalgia and a touch of sadness. Leaving a company and a community I have been a part of for so long is never easy. However, I do so with the utmost confidence in the future of Bell Equipment.

Our organisation stands on a solid foundation, and I am proud to say that we are in great shape. The strategies we have embarked upon to explore new global products, expand into new markets, and drive various new business units and initiatives forward have set us on an exciting path. This positive momentum will undoubtedly continue into the future. In this edition, you will read about our newest division, Bell Heavy Industries (BHI), which is incredibly exciting. While there is a plan to manufacture more of our ADTs for the Northern Hemisphere closer to that market, our new products like the Bell Motor Grader and BHI will ensure that manufacturing remains at our world-class Richards Bay facility.

I want to express my sincere thanks for your partnership, loyalty, and unwavering support over the years. It's your trust and collaboration that have fuelled our success, and I have every belief that the same will hold true in the years to come.

As I bid farewell to my role as CEO, I look forward to watching Bell Equipment reach new heights, achieve greater milestones, and continue to serve you with excellence. Our dedicated team remains committed to your success, and I have no doubt that the best is yet to come.

Thank you, once again, for being an integral part of the Bell Equipment family. It has been an incredible journey, and I am excited to witness the remarkable future that lies ahead.

Yours sincerely


Leon Goosen
Group Chief Executive

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COVER PICTURE:
A customer in mining services is impressed by how well his JCB Tracked Excavators, fitted with specially reinforced rock buckets built by a third-party supplier using VRN400 steel, are performing in an abrasive zinc ore application in the Northern Cape.
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Bell ESD initiative enables B45E ownership for Kwangwane Consulting

When Aretha Franklin and Annie Lennox harmonised that “sisters are doing it for themselves” little could they know how close their lyrics could be to what a vibrant young lady emerging mining contractor in South Africa was passionate about.

Joy Hlongwane has 10 years of experience in the construction industry with the first half of that time spent with a construction company and the second half being self-employed.

“I’m passionate about job creation too and with there being so few Black women in mining, I’d like to change that narrative,” Joy enthuses. “I’m aware of the many stumbling blocks though, possibly the biggest one being money or access to it.”

In 2021, Joy approached Bruce Ndlela, Bell Equipment Director: Business & Public Sector Development, and Enock Mabaso, a Bell Sales Representative, about how

to get into the mining space, specifically opencast mining. “Bruce and Enock introduced me to PG and Precious Masondo whose company, Masondo Trading Enterprise (MTE), was already working as a mining contractor on a coal mine,” Joy tells us. “The Masondos looked kindly on me and decided that I could be a sub-contractor to their company, but I needed to find my own haulage vehicles.”

With a contract in her hand, Joy again approached Bell Equipment through Bruce Ndlela and Enock Mabaso to ask how she could acquire the two haulage vehicles she needed to fulfil her side of the mining sub-contract to MTE.



"To Bell Equipment's everlasting credit, the company acceded and while I acknowledge the glaring element of risk I presented, my young company, Kwangwane Consulting, entered into a rental with an option to purchase (ROP) agreement that saw us rent two new Bell B45E Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs)," Joy says. "I was reminded on the day that Bell Equipment Group Chairman, Gary Bell, handed over the two Bell B45E ADTs that I was the first Black female youth that Bell Equipment had assisted in this way and that moment will stay with me forever."

Kwangwane Consulting worked with MTE for six months until their contract ended. Joy then subcontracted to another large Bell Equipment customer, Ikoti Mining, and its CEO Branden Moodley, for a further eight months.

"I'm proud to say that we've just been awarded our first direct contract by Overlooked Colliery and its owner, Matthews Senosi, which is a 36-month commitment that will give us the opportunity to spend some capital on equipment," Joy explains. "This will also allow us to purchase the two Bell B45E ADTs we've been running under the auspices of the Bell Equipment ROP."

Joy mentions that the two Bell B45E ADTs have now done 3 340 and 3 200 hours respectively and while there have been some minor issues, these were always repaired or replaced very quickly by Wynand Oosthuizen, a Bell Customer Support Representative, working out of the Bell Equipment branch in Middelburg, who has kept his hand on Kwangwane Consulting's ADTs.

"We found financing privately for the first Bell B45E ADT and Bell Equipment, through its generous Enterprise Supplier Development initiative, is providing the finance to buy the second Bell B45E ADT," Joy says. "The ESD facility allows us R4 million toward the Bell, which we'll repay over 36 months at competitive interest rates. These terms speak to true enterprise and supplier development."

"We're also excited to tell you that we started our contract near Hendrina on 1 July 2023. This gives me the opportunity to really get my hands dirty as I'm a hands-on person," Joy says with her trademark smile. "If current expansion plans materialise, we'll look to deploy a full mining team for a load and haul operation consisting of a large enough excavator that can keep a fleet of four Bell B45E ADTs running."

"I'd be keen for us to keep supporting a truly iconic South African company such as Bell Equipment, not only for the excellent products and support it provides, but also to ensure jobs remain sustainable and new jobs are created, especially for women in mining. Buying locally from homegrown companies must surely create and sustain employment in the long run."



(From left): Enock Mabaso (Bell Equipment Sales Representative), Bruce Ndlela (Bell Equipment Director: Business and Public Sector Development), Joy Hlongwane (Owner of Kwangwane Consulting), Gary Bell (Bell Equipment Group Chairman), PeeGee Masondo (Owner of Masondo Trading Enterprise) and Livhuwani Khobo (Bell Equipment Sales Administrator).

Kobelco Excavator boosts production for AML Aggregates

When Raksha Laghari needed a new quarry-specified loading tool for the quarry they had just bought they turned to Bell Equipment for the right advice and tool for the job.

Raksha Laghari is the owner of AML Aggregates Newcastle. She has been in the business of selling and distributing building materials, with a focus on cement and roof tiles, for many years. But, being a true ambitious trader, she decided it was time to own more of the building and construction material value chain and bought two quarries from an established South African cement manufacturer and supplier of aggregate and building stone.

The two quarries are situated near Newcastle and Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal, and we visited the Newcastle operation. Here we found Nicholas Kunene, a veteran of the previous company who has worked at the Newcastle quarry for 47 years and is the current production and maintenance team leader. He reports to Hein Grebe who was recently appointed the manager.

"We produce different sizes of stone aggregate and crusher dust from the dolerite rock we mine in a traditional drill, blast, load and haul operation," Nicholas says. "We use the excavator to load the blasted rock onto two Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) that undertake the short haul to the primary jaw crusher."

From the jaw crusher the crushed rock is fed into a cone crusher that reduces it further before a screen separates sized material and dust. Oversized rock goes back into the cone crusher to be further reduced. The stone aggregate is sorted according to size, and this is stockpiled for transport to customers. The quarry also produces a rounded stone aggregate that binds better into road construction layers. Even the very fine crusher dust of between 7,1mm and 4,7mm is sold to companies making cement bricks and doing paving.

"The previous owners had hired earthmoving, loading, and haulage equipment but we really wanted to own our own equipment for this purpose," Raksha says. "While we had found two used 30-ton ADTs in good condition on the pre-owned market, we thought it prudent to buy a new excavator that was job-specific due to the dense and abrasive nature of dolerite stone."

Raksha goes on to explain that AML was keen to buy an excavator from a well-known brand and when looking for agents for JCB equipment she found Bell Equipment was the official South African distributor.

"Although we're based in Durban, we were directed to the Pietermaritzburg branch of Bell Equipment into whose area our Newcastle operation would fall," Raksha says. "Here we met Bell Sales Representative, Brent Nelson, who was very knowledgeable, and we were impressed by the sound advice he gave us regarding the correct loading tool for our purposes."

That loading tool turned out to be a Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator with additional features for use in heavy quarry work as Brent Nelson explains: "The Kobelco SK380XDL-10 has been designed specifically for work in hard-rock mining such as a quarry where dolerite is extracted. The keyword here is protection of the machine and operator and this is achieved by reinforcing the boom and arm with rock guards, side-deck bumpers, and other protective guards. A lot of attention has been paid to protecting the drivetrain with a reinforced guide frame, double support outer flange upper rollers, thicker steel plate for shoes, reinforced motor cover and lower frame underside cover. All in all, this machine is virtually rock proof."

Brent adds that the well-designed cab with roll-over protection (ROPS) is easy to get in and out of and with operator comfort paramount, translates into a safe operation. Daily maintenance points are easy to get to through easily accessible ports.

AML Aggregates' Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator has been bought with a three-year/6 000 hour extended warranty on the hydraulics, wet drivetrain, and engine and during that time it will be maintained by mechanics from Bell Equipment's branch in Newcastle. Although it is still new, having been delivered in July 2022, average fuel consumption is not expected to top 25 litres an hour with the bonus of a fuel-saver power button which increases hydraulic flows.

"Another reason for us buying this Kobelco Excavator is that Bell Equipment has a branch staffed with trained mechanics right here in Newcastle which avoids expensive travel costs from larger centres such as Durban or Pietermaritzburg," Ali says. "This is further proof of Bell Equipment's large service footprint and reasons why we're keen to support such a local brand."

Nicholas Kunene has the last word when he says: "This Kobelco Excavator has had an immediate impact on our production figures as it is used for so many tasks like loading the ADTs in the quarry, stockpiling our product, and doing general housekeeping. Because of it, we have a tidy quarry, production areas, and product stockpiles, which all point to a productive and safe workplace."



AML Aggregates Production and Maintenance Team Leader, Nicholas Kunene.



JCB 3DX Eco Backhoes are the backbone of Amanzi Plant Hire

Table View is a popular suburb on Cape Town's West Coast and is named after its actual view of the iconic Table Mountain. Johnny Waters, a former mechanic and later a salesman of earthmoving equipment, had the task in the late 1980s of de-bushing large sections of what is now a built-up Table View at a time when there were only a few houses standing as this area was considered rather remote by the people of Cape Town.

"My dad, Johnny, did that with a wheel loader and worked under the name of Waters Plant Hire," says his son, Jonathan, who now runs the business. "At one point he had no less than 19 wheel loaders."

In time, Johnny added two tipper trucks and an excavator to his fleet and served many clients in the Cape Peninsula working especially on mushroom farms and clay pits associated with clay brick plants, township development and civil construction projects.

"I joined the business in 2017 after qualifying as a civil engineer at Stellenbosch University and gaining practical experience in order to register as a civil engineer," Jonathan adds. "I had also worked for a while on our family's farm near Mossel Bay where we prepared the land to plant almonds."

The name Waters Plant Hire changed over time to Amanzi Plant Hire, where 'amanzi' is the isiXhosa word for water.

"We'd found that the market had changed, and people were not wanting to pay the higher rates for a wheel loader when they really only needed a backhoe loader," Jonathan explains. "That is why we now run JCB Backhoe Loaders and focus a lot more on clients working in civil engineering and to a lesser extent on those working in agriculture. Excavators now do most jobs better than what wheel loaders could and are therefore a better bet to have as plant for hire."





Jonathan mentions that their first JCB Backhoe Loaders had been bought from another franchise holder before Bell Equipment became the South African distributor for this market-leading machine, but he recalls that both he and his father were very pleased when Bell Equipment took over.

"We have a policy on replacing machines after about 7 000 to 8 000 hours as they still have a good resale value," he adds. "After thoroughly researching the market, we bought two new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loaders from André Jordaan, Bell Equipment's very experienced Sales Representative in Cape Town, and these machines were delivered in February and March 2022 respectively."

According to Jonathan, the JCB 3DX Eco's naturally aspirated 4-cylinder, 4,4 litre JCB Dieselmix 444 engine purrs along while working at the coast which is where the bulk of their equipment is hired. Also, with a lot of the soil in the Cape Town metropole being so sandy, the backhoe has an easy task when trenching. The machine is also used for backfilling trenches, loading

trucks with waste and rubble and stockpiling material on construction sites. JCB Backhoe Loaders are known for the fact that they handle housekeeping duties on construction sites with ease.

"We've learnt over time how important it is to check the machine before startup and to fill in daily checklists diligently," Jonathan says. "We've also learnt what an advantage preventative maintenance can be and with the way that JCB Backhoe Loaders are designed, they are so easy to maintain."

"It would be amiss if I didn't mention that with Bell Equipment now the distributor of JCB equipment, we know that solid technical backup is only a phone call away and we can always speak to someone we know. That's what makes Bell Equipment the best and will keep us coming back for more machines."

"In fact, with current demand as it is, if I had the means, I'd buy another JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader right now," Jonathan says.



Jonathan Waters, MD of Amanzi Plant Hire, with André Jordaan, Bell Equipment Sales Representative.

MTO upgrades aging fleet with new F-series Loggers

An upward growth spurt for a leading South African timber growing company has seen it turn to a preferred supplier of timber handling equipment to replace its fleet of older machines.

The MTO Group came into being out of a State-Owned Entity (SOE) that was a forestry group in the early 1990s. It has evolved from different investment groups and shown real growth since creating its own identity in 2005. MTO stands for 'Mountain to Ocean' and it's a very applicable name since its forests, especially those in the picturesque Tsitsikamma area of the Eastern Cape are often found in a thin belt between mountain tops and the nearby ocean.

As a timber grower, MTO operates in the Western and Eastern Cape and, since 2015, in the Mpumalanga Lowveld as well. It is here near White River that we find Dirk van Heerden, MTO Group's Maintenance Manager in the Lowveld and the person tasked with acquiring and maintaining mechanised forestry equipment that is used for a wide variety of tasks.

Dirk hails from Sabie where both his father and grandfather had worked in forestry, which means Dirk really is a chip off the proverbial old block.

"Here in the Mpumalanga area we grow mostly Eucalyptus species and we produce a variety of round log products into external value-adding facilities," he

says. "Some of the value-added products include pulp, board timber, sawn lumber, biomass, poles, mining timber, veneer, shutter-plywood, and shelving."

A visit to MTO's gum plantations near White River shows bustling clear-fell operations in progress with yellow Bell Loggers very much in evidence, extracting the felled timber and stacking it at the roadside where it is processed using chainsaws and cut into predetermined lengths.



"We've been using Bell 225 A-series Loggers for as long as I can remember and in September 2021, we started the process to replace some older models with the newer machines," Dirk says. "We researched the market thoroughly as there are a few players out there but we're happy to say that our choice once again fell on Bell Equipment's new F-series Logger. We're also grateful to Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, who as a forester, understands our business and the challenges we face."

According to Dirk, their plan is to retain a Logger for 10 000 to 12 000 hours before replacing it but some older models in their fleet had clocked in excess of 18 000 hours. "These Bell Loggers run to those high hours because they are easy to maintain and to rebuild if necessary. Bell also still stocks essential parts for the A-series such as hour meters and fuel pumps, and the company should be commended for showing such faith in an older design that they acknowledge its longevity."

MTO took delivery of three new Bell 225F Loggers in March 2022 and two more similar machines were delivered in June the same year in the Lowveld area.

"As you've seen, we're using three of these new Bell 225F Loggers infield with two others in our treatment and stockyard where they handle, stack, and load untreated and treated timber poles and other timber products."

Dirk and his colleagues are pleased to have the five new Bell Loggers working as with mounting production pressures they had to hire similar equipment that came at a cost, with much of that being fuel.

"These new Bell 225F Loggers with the Yanmar engines are so much lighter on fuel than the older A-series models," he says. "We're saving on average about 25% on our fuel burn with the new F-series Loggers, which amounts to a lot of money at the end of a financial year. What surprises us is that we're seeing this frugal fuel burn despite the Bell Loggers handling full tree lengths of up to 28 metres at times."

According to Dirk, their operators took to the new Bell 225F Loggers immediately and commented on how more responsive the controls were. The company has implemented strict daily pre-start checks and all operators know that preventative maintenance is key in successfully maintaining equipment to ensure longevity. Each Thursday is washday for the Bell Loggers and lubrication is done regularly.

Asked about maintenance and the level of service that MTO enjoys from Bell Equipment in nearby Nelspruit, Dirk says the following: "We had a few teething problems with the new machines as one can have but Bell Equipment is a mere phone call away and these niggles were fixed quickly and quietly with no questions asked."

"Looking to the future, upward-moving production targets see our company increasing harvesting capacity, which will increase our need to utilise three-wheel loggers going forward. We're busy evaluating the amount of new equipment we would need for our expansion and will be engaging with Bell Equipment to see if they can supply to our needs."



Daniel van Huyssteen (left) Bell Sales Representative with Dirk van Heerden, Maintenance Manager MTO Group Lowveld.



Bell and JCB form the backbone of the BHM Bricks fleet

Henk Vorster believes that because one buys equipment from people and not companies, the best machine is the one for which you get good service, again from people. And Henk should know.



Henk Vorster and his business partner, Gabriel Labuschagne, own BHM Bricks in the picturesque Eastern Free State town of Bethlehem. Henk had developed his business acumen in a family-owned business that originates from the former homeland of Qwa-Qwa, to the south of Harrismith, nestling against the Northern Drakensberg Mountain range.

"Gabriel and I have owned BHM Bricks since 2014 when we bought the business from a large aggregate producer and we're still in the business of making quality concrete products as our core business," Henk says. "We make a wide variety of concrete bricks in different colours for the domestic and industrial

markets as well as concrete building and retaining blocks."

BHM Bricks' products are transported with their own fleet of trucks as far afield as Thaba'Nchu in the Free State towards Bloemfontein, Vryheid in Northern KwaZulu-Natal and the Winterton and Bergville areas at the foot of the Central Drakensberg. Another division of their logistics arm transports agricultural lime to farming clients.

"We've invested heavily in creating one of the most automated concrete brick plants in the country," Henk continues. "We have for many years used JCB

Wheel Loaders and the latest machine, a JCB 422ZX, which was bought from Bell Equipment and delivered in March 2022, is a successor to an earlier similar machine. That machine had been used for 4 000 trouble-free hours and will now be deployed at a new subsidiary plant we've established in Qwa-Qwa."

As we receive a guided tour around this modern brick-making plant, Henk points out where the process starts. The JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader brings bucket-loads from various stockpiles according to the correct 'recipe' for each specific end-product and loads stone aggregates and processed sand from either dolerite, natural plaster, or basalt into a weigh bin, where the correct amount of cement is added. After dry-mixing, chemical additives and water are added before this wet mixture is then fed into the block plant's feed hopper. The final product is formed when the mixture is vibrated into shape according to set moulds.

"From this point on you'll see that the wet bricks or blocks are moved without human intervention into our wet stacker where they will cure for a mere 20 hours in comparison to the 21 days it took before," Henk says proudly. "When these now cured products emerge after 20 hours of curing, they are stacked using our new robot system and then one of three Bell 225A Forklifts take the pallets to the stockyard."

Henk says their previous experience with the older JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader proved that this was the correct size machine for their operation. "You'll notice that we probably don't have a vast amount of free space in our operational area but the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader is not bulky and has more than enough power and manoeuvrability to work comfortably and safely to keep our plant running," he explains. "The 1,7-cubic metre bucket holds just the right amount of raw product for the weigh bin where the dry ingredients are weighed and with good braking that makes for a safe operation when unloading on a steep ramp up to the weigh bin, we're confident that this JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader will outlive the previous one."

"Our operator is also full of praise for the ergonomics in the ROPS-FOPS cab that is airconditioned with good all-round visibility and we're assured this will lead to less operator fatigue."

Henk smiles when he mentions how fortunate customers like BHM Bricks feel now that their stalwart Bell 225A Forklifts and new JCB Wheel Loader all come from the same distributor, Bell Equipment. "Obtaining spares and servicing from one distributor will work well for us as everything can now be done with one phone call," he says. "Our Bell 225A Forklifts have for many years been the backbone of the back end of our operation and there is simply no other tool that can so



Henk Vorster of BHM Bricks (left) with Bell Sales Representative, Chris Botha.

effortlessly move our heavy brick-laden pallets around to stockpiles and load the delivery trucks. We bought the most recent one four years ago and all three machines have each given us more than 10 000 hours of service."

According to Henk, maintaining the Bell 225A Forklifts is the simple part as their respective lives are extended

by easily replacing hydraulic pumps and wheel motors due to the machine's simple design and easily accessible parts.

But BHM Bricks' Bell-backed fleet doesn't stop with these machines. Bell Equipment's top Sales Representative, Chris Botha, has been very active in these parts as BHM Bricks took delivery of a JCB 3DX

Eco Backhoe Loader in July 2022 and it has been used extensively as a versatile tool in civil construction projects its owners have undertaken with some selected plant hire assignments as a bonus. It joins yet another, although older model JCB 406 Wheel Loader that is used in the company's lintel production yard.

"We're proud to say that with increased demand for our quality products, we've moved with the times with this modern brick plant and the same can be said of our material handling and loading tools. Without our yellow Bell and JCB fleet of machines offering sustained service, this plant could not perform as it does," Henk says.



Kobelco, JCB and Finlay provide ideal solutions for alluvial diamond mining



Geologically the Richtersveld is regarded as one of the most interesting and visually stunning geological areas of Southern Africa. It has several geological units deposited over an enormous time span with rocks ranging in age from one to 2 000 million years old, almost half the age of the Earth.

Some of these paler formations are commonly known as calcrete and although of interest to geologists and tourists who enjoy a near-lunar landscape, this material poses real challenges to alluvial diamond miners operating in this area. One such company is Silver Solutions whose owners are working a patch of land some 25km inland of the small coastal hamlet of Alexander Bay, situated where the mouth of the Orange River borders Namibia.

Silver Solutions, established in 2015, is headed up by Derek Corns, a 40-year veteran of the alluvial diamond mining industry as were his father and grandfather before him. Derek has been joined in the business by his two sons, Dylan and Stephen. We met Dylan at their mining site along the banks of the Orange River with the dunes of Namibia clearly visible on the far side of the river.

"We had expected to encounter some hard material when we first moved to this mining site some three months ago and had decided to come prepared with the correct tools for the challenges that lay ahead," Dylan says. "We've found that much of the possible diamond-bearing gravels are contained within conglomerates of calcrete that are almost impossible to break with the bucket on a 40-ton excavator and calls for more specialised equipment," said Dylan.

That specialised equipment has come in the form of a Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator fitted with a JCB HM160T Hydraulic Hammer bought from Bell Equipment in Kimberley where Silver Solutions has its head office.

Derek Corns dealt with Bell Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe, who handled the sale of the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator and says: "We knew we had to have a robust excavator with a decent-sized hydraulic hammer and, while we were happy to buy another brand's used machine with low hours, Eric did a great job of convincing us to acquire the new 22-ton Kobelco with the hydraulic hammer and a bucket at a very competitive price. We're new to the Kobelco range of excavators and look forward to seeing what this machine can do for our operations in the challenging mining areas in the Richtersveld."

"The calcrete we're experiencing is particularly hard and has a glass-like appearance ranging from 200mm to a metre in thickness. Once you've broken through that the diamond-bearing gravels lie underneath it in seams of 2 to 3 metres thick," Derek explains. "Blasting the calcrete won't work for us, which is why we've chosen the JCB Hydraulic Hammer on the Kobelco Excavator."

The Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator with its operating mass of 21 800 kg and breakout force of 157kN is considered the ideal carrier for the JCB HM160T Hydraulic Hammer due to its ability to maintain excellent hydraulic flows and pressures.

Bell Equipment is also supplying Silver Solutions with a smaller and more robust rock bucket to add to the standard 1-cubic metre bucket the machine comes equipped with. The Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator has been bought with an extended warranty to 4 000 hours on its wet drivetrain and, because of the remote location of the mining site, the Kobelco will be maintained by a contractor based at another mine nearby and working under supervision from Bell Equipment during the warranty period.



Dylan Corns (Silver Solutions Director) with Theo Greef (Silver Solutions Site Manager) and Abel Riet (Silver Solutions Excavator Operator).

"Keeping to our mine planning, and once we've broken through enough of the calcrete, we'll swap the hydraulic hammer with whichever bucket we choose to clean out the rock bottoms of the mined-out areas before rehabilitation starts," Dylan explains. "In terms of our mining licence, and with the strict environmental guidelines that govern our operations, we'll gladly rehabilitate the mined areas of this pristine area."

To this end, Silver Solutions stockpiles the topsoil and overburden before actual mining commences and this material is then returned to the mined-out areas by backfilling. This adds to their mining cost but they see it as essential to mining responsibly.

The mined gravel is screened using a Finlay 694+ Triple-deck Screener to screen out the fine sand that hampers production and this process will be enhanced when another Finlay machine, an 883+ Screen, will be used in tandem in 2023. It is expected that with tandem screening, profitable concentrates will be obtained.

"With us being in such a remote area and far away from any large centre, it's good to know that we have reliable suppliers such as Bell Equipment with enough spares for both the Kobelco and Finlay machines to support us, even if delivery may take a day or two longer than normal," Dylan says. "These are the reasons why we choose to buy equipment from the likes of Bell Equipment."



Exeo adds new JCB 3CX Global units to its fleet

When a leading Western Cape-based civil construction company bought its first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader some 18 years ago, little did the owners know that after 20 000 hours of diligent service, it would return almost 40% of its original value when sold out of hand.



"We did not realise it at the time but owning that JCB 3CX Sitemaster was almost like the marriage vow of 'till death do us part'", says Charles Cooks, Chief Operating Officer of Exeo Khokela Civil Engineering Construction (Pty) Ltd.

"When we decided to sell it at 20 000 hours, all that really needed attention were a couple of minor oil leaks, which points to JCB's excellent design and build and our solid maintenance regimes," adds Exeo Plant Manager, Warren Thomas.

Exeo Construction was founded in 1995 in Cape Town and after several joint venture projects, the company merged with Khokela Construction in 2004 and so the modern-day Exeo Khokela Civil Engineering Construction (Pty) Ltd was born, which is known in the local construction industry as Exeo. The company's core business is found in earthworks, pipelines, roads, concrete structures, and municipal infrastructure.

"The greater bulk of our civil construction projects are found in and around the Cape Peninsula and then we also venture as far afield as Beaufort-West, Knysna and Ladismith," Charles explains. "Working further afield becomes expensive in terms of moving people and equipment."

Exeo has completed many civil construction projects like water and wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, reservoirs, bridges, canals, and roads. The company also boasts successfully undertaking some unique projects like a sewer system on top of the Table Mountain World Heritage site and a hydro-power project in the Franschhoek mountains. Other unusual projects include desalination infrastructure, water pressure maintenance, harbour upgrade and seawall reconstruction and construction and maintenance of petrochemical infrastructure – a long list providing interesting reading.

Mention machines and Charles relates the story that despite being a civil construction company with a measured dependency on yellow machines, Exeo relied on only two older backhoe loaders during the first few years of the company's existence. These would regularly break down alternatively, which would necessitate a certain amount of scrambling to get at least one working.

"The real value of owning your own equipment became evident when we started buying and operating new equipment in the early years, much like our first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader purchased around 2010," Charles says. "Each of our projects has a cost code and we hire our own equipment for a project, which brings a return on the investment."

"Added value and a decent return on the investment is a given as with careful operating and diligent maintenance regimes, we strive to get the maximum life out of machines, which our JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders have proved is possible time and again. We strive to get anything between 16 000 to 20 000 hours from a machine and equipment is assessed every year."

The different uses of the JCB 3CX Global machines are varied as Warren explains: "We've found that when trenching, something we do a lot of in infrastructure projects, the breakout force on the JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader compares favourably with that of a 5-ton mini-excavator and even more so as our machines' dippers extend a further 1,2 metres beyond that of a normal machine. The front clamshell buckets handle most fill material easily when it comes to laying bedding for piping and backfilling trenches that contain water and other infrastructure."

Warren adds that they often add forks to the front buckets as these come in handy when moving pipes and pallets with building material.



André Jordaan, Bell Sales Representative (left) with Warren Thomas, Exeo Plant Manager (centre), and Charles Cooks, Exeo COO.



"There are not many equipment suppliers that can maintain competitive pricing consistently over time but our experience with Bell Equipment as the South African distributors for JCB equipment, has proved that this can be done," Charles explains. "We've found that when buying two JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders in the latter part of 2021 and a total of three in 2022, they were all priced the same, which is a real bonus."

"And let it be known that our newest JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders were bought because of the positive experience we had with the older machines," he says. "Average fuel consumption of between six and eight litres an hour also fits well into our cost structures."

Most people are aware of the water challenges the city of Cape Town has faced in the recent past and Exeo's latest JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader was

taken straight to an aquifer project the city was constructing to help manage water storage for the future.

Both Charles and Warren have high praise for the technical support they receive from Kobus van Zyl and his team of mechanics and parts specialists at Bell Equipment in Cape Town. They agree that with good response times, services can be timeously booked and

with the commonality of many parts, supply issues are not a factor.

Bell Equipment Sales Representative, André Jordaan, mentions an interesting fact when he says that he has recently received signed orders for seven new JCB Global Backhoe Loaders with Exeo as a reference. Such is the power of word-of-mouth from a credible source for a quality product.

Dzombo Plant Hire sees huge benefit in its B30Es with coal bins

Load and haul in a mining material handling application involves so much more than simply loading a haulage vehicle with the commodity at hand. There must be proper planning, daily adjustments to environmental conditions and above all, the correct tools for the job.



So says Wynand Botha who heads up the Dzombo Group of Companies in Limpopo's Lephalale where Dzombo Plant Hire has made its mark as a contract mining and material handling company. Dzombo was the name of one of the legendary magnificent seven big elephants that ruled the Kruger National Park for many years. The name comes from the Xitsonga word for a stream that is slow to move but impresses on arrival.

"Since starting our company in 2005, we first concentrated on doing developments in the domestic housing and commercial retail markets and believed in doing the levelling of building sites, preparation of platforms for construction, installation of water and power services and the construction of roads, ourselves," Wynand says. "To do this we needed a

fleet of yellow machines, and over the past 17 years we have steadily grown our own fleet to now number some 150 pieces of equipment."

According to Wynand, their acquisition of yellow machines was always for their own use. At the right time, the creation of a plant hire division named Dzombo Plant Hire, was a natural outflow of their ownership of a variety of earthmoving equipment that could be put to wider and profitable use.

"If you look hard enough, you'll find plenty of opportunities for work as we did when an opportunity to do material handling on one of the major coal mines in our area came across our path and we created a mining division," Wynand continues. "We had been using a fleet of 16 Articulated Dump Trucks

(ADTs) fitted with standard bins to haul coal slimes for reprocessing when in 2021, Gerald Lottering, Bell Equipment's Branch Manager in Rustenburg first approached us with the concept of a Bell B30E ADT that was fitted with a coal bin, which would carry far more volume due to the low specific gravity of the coal products."

Bell Equipment duly provided Dzombo Plant Hire with a demonstration Bell B30E ADT fitted with a coal bin to test its performance and fuel consumption under actual working conditions. Wynand says when testing the Bell B30E, the results of its performance and especially its frugal fuel consumption were so positive while carrying a larger load that he had no hesitation in ordering two Bell B30E ADTs fitted with coal bins. The new Bell B30E ADTs were delivered in July and August 2022.

"When working in challenging environmental conditions such as heat, dust and wind, we pay a lot of attention to controlling those factors that we're able to, such as reducing dust blowing into our machines and having our haulage vehicles pull away on a downhill rather than uphill, if possible," Wynand explains. "Our two new Bell B30E ADTs with the coal bins have been managed in the same way and have really exceeded our production expectations while using remarkably less fuel over the 6km haul route."

"We've been impressed with Bell Equipment's design of its coal bin which, with the use of a tailgate, gives us six to seven more cubic metres of a heaped load than ADTs with standard bins," he says. "And even working with those larger loads in wet underfoot conditions, a fuel burn of around 22 to 24 litres an hour does not exceed our fuel cap."

Wynand adds that with Bell Equipment's design engineers distributing equal torque across the Bell B30E ADT's three axles, thus creating equal torque bias, tyre life is extended as there is less scuffing of the centre axle's tyres.

"What we especially enjoy about the design and build of the Bell B30E ADT is that it's a simple design and everything is made of steel, which means that should you want to replace something beyond the ADT's warranty period, you can simply fabricate such a section to be slotted in," he says. "Having invested in many pieces of earthmoving equipment, our aim is to get the maximum life out of such a machine, and this can only be done when there is diligent maintenance backed by parts availability from the original supplier, which in the case of Bell Equipment has been solid."

"Proof of excellence in a machine is found in good production coupled with economical fuel consumption. This in turn needs to be backed up by good parts availability and service and here Bell Equipment ticks all the boxes," Wynand adds. "We're especially keen to learn what other new products Bell Equipment plans to bring to the market and we appreciate the company's Sales Representative, Jan Barnard, calling on us regularly."

The Dzombo Group employs its own team of mechanics which has become familiar and confident with rebuilding machines where necessary, so further extending machine life and productivity.



Bell Sales Representative, Jan Barnard, (left) with Wynand Botha in front of a mural depicting the elephant Dzombo.



Wynand Botha with his beagle aptly called Bell. Bell follows Wynand everywhere.

Uitkyk Diggers grows its Bell relationship with JCB Roller

When JD Kriel first brought his newly acquired plant hire business, Uitkyk Diggers, to the Caledon area in the Southern Cape's Overberg region, he found breaking into the local market very tough. That is until he volunteered his equipment and personnel to help fight a devastating fire on a nearby mountain and soon the surrounding community realised that here was a man of substance with a compassionate side, prepared to help others without a second thought.

Johannes David Kriel, who prefers being called JD, hails from fruit farming stock in the Greyton area. He too first worked in fruit farming operations but always nurtured thoughts of being self-employed in plant hire. "A big opportunity came my way in 2005 when a local farmer loaned me the capital to start out on my own with used earthmoving equipment and I could generate income initially from a small sand and stone mine while also offering plant hire to the local farming community," JD tells us. "As there was no sustainable sand mine in the Overberg region, we quickly expanded that side of the business to supply customers as far afield as Hermanus, Riviersonderend, Villiersdorp, and Bot Rivier."

The focus of JD's plant hire business, Uitkyk Diggers, is on supplying the correct equipment for bulk earthworks and land preparation to the local farming community. Having bought out an older company along with its equipment, Uitkyk Diggers' equipment is used to build dams, maintain roads, irrigation canals and storm water drains, and to remove rocks from land that is prepared for planting a variety of crops.

"We first met André Jordaan, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, in 2008 when he worked for the previous distributors of JCB equipment," JD says. "André called on us regularly and was patient and persistent until the day in 2019 that we asked him to demonstrate a JCB JS205 Excavator that we thought we could use to remove some gum trees on a farm."

JD recalls that when the two-week demonstration period had lapsed and the JCB JS205 Excavator had performed the task admirably, André made him an offer that was almost impossible to refuse, and Uitkyk Diggers became the proud owner of a JCB JS205 Excavator.

Since then, Uitkyk Diggers has established a firm business relationship with Bell Equipment. JD bought a used Bell B25D Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) and on the strength of that vehicle's solid performance, a new Bell B18E ADT was added to the fleet. The Bell B18E ADT has now done over 7 000 hours and JD has added another used Bell B18D ADT.

"Dealing with a reliable company such as Bell Equipment involves so much more than competitive

pricing alone as we face uncertain times in our business which means we double up on efforts to get the maximum life out of our machines," JD says. "Technical support and good parts availability are crucial as is the relationship you have with the first port of call into a company, which is the sales representative."

"Here I think Bell Equipment is in a unique position because I, or any member of my staff, can call André Jordaan at any hour of the day. With his background in technical matters, he has in the past given us sound advice on what to try when a machine breaks down or a warning light comes on and this has often saved us valuable time and money. This all stems from the relationship André has built with us over time and his visual impact, meaning he stops by without expecting business, which is something we as customers value highly."

In 2020, Uitkyk Diggers bought a JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader for its versatility in smaller projects and later that year two more JCB JS205 Excavators were added. These Excavators have seen some interesting action especially when they are used to open the mouths of local rivers to the sea, a task that is done periodically for the Overberg District Municipality.

"When we started getting increasing requests to compact roads and the walls of farm dams, we bought a JCB 116D Single Drum Roller from Bell Equipment in March 2021 and we were pleased to see that the company is now the South African distributor of such a great brand like JCB," JD continues. "While fuel consumption is an important input cost, our farming clients all have access to diesel. And even with Bell and JCB equipment's frugal fuel burn, it is not as big an item as sustained uptime, which is what we get from our Bell and JCB equipment."

"Our mantra for our business is to not pinch the client's time but to just get the job done properly, on time, every time. Having the correct equipment that delivers maximum uptime, is what produces happy clients – a winning formula for us," JD says.



Bell Sales Representative, André Jordaan (left), with JD Kriel, owner of Uitkyk Diggers.

Kobelco SK220XDLC-10 proves successful as a drill rig carrier

Excavators are known to be powerful machines and above all stable, as the mass created with their tracked undercarriages lends them stability. This is thought to be the reason why excavators have evolved into different applications besides the use of their buckets for digging and loading.

They can be seen in the forestry industry felling, processing, and loading timber. In mining and construction applications they can be used to break rock and concrete when fitted with hydraulic hammers. An innovative engineering company based at Donkerhoek to the east of Pretoria has now successfully added yet another use to these versatile carriers - that of a drill rig.

Hyperion Drilling & Manufacturing was founded in 2007 by Kenny Truter and, when meeting Kenny, one is immediately struck by his brimming inner energy that translates into the success he's had with his business in a competitive environment. "I qualified as a fitter and turner at ISCOR back in 1996 but as there were no positions available in the company, I had to head out into the big wide world to find work," he says.



This he found with a large drilling company where he gained valuable experience during 10 years building drill rigs. A short stint working with a friend in the roof truss industry taught him about working with clients in business before he ventured into Africa with a Zimbabwe-based drilling company that did exploration work in that country as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia.

"By 2007 I felt I had enough confidence and experience to go out on my own and I built five drill rigs for my erstwhile employer from Zimbabwe," he adds. "These drill rig set-ups would consist of three Samil trucks bought on the used market where we would fit the drill rig on one, a compressor on a second, and the drill rods and other ancillary equipment on a third."

Kenny says that in 2012 a client suggested they mount a drill rig on an excavator. It radically changed their way of thinking when they mounted a drill rig on a 20-ton machine. The air compressor, which has the important role of providing the impetus for the drill's hammer action, was at that stage still mounted on a trailer that was towed behind the excavator.

"Three years later, we decided to mount the air compressor on the excavator by removing the rear counterweight and adapting that mounting bracket to accept the compressor," Kenny explains. "This

added weight of an additional engine providing more than enough stability to the whole rig proved to be really successful as it's now an all-in-one compact unit with no trailer behind it."

Having done conversions on many different brands of excavators since then, totalling an impressive 80 in number, Kenny thought to try this on a brand of excavator he had never worked on after speaking to friends in the know. "It was after I had first heard of Kobelco Excavators from my friends at ALS that I came into contact with Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Kobus van Niekerk, who impressed me with his technical knowledge of what this bright turquoise brand could offer us," Kenny recalls. "We subsequently bought through Kobus, a Kobelco SK220XDLC-10 machine at a competitive price from Bell Equipment and ordered it without the stick and bucket as we would not need those once the drill rig is mounted on the boom."

Kenny also explains that the 20-ton excavator range works best for them and their clients as it is relatively easy to transport in that it doesn't qualify as a large abnormal load and subsequently needs only one escort vehicle.

"We can offer our clients a variety of three different mast types, namely cable, cylinder, or chain masts, and we fit water-based dust suppression systems to all



Jaco Kruger, Kenny Truter, Jaco Prinsloo, and Ben van Staden of Hyperion Drilling & Manufacturing.



our excavator conversions along with additional fuel tanks," he says. "We've found the Kobelco Excavators to be particularly well designed, which makes them robust and well suited for work on mines in Africa, where several have been exported to. Added to this is Kobelco's all-weather cab which is very well insulated and makes for fatigue-reducing operator comfort and safety."

Regarding safety, Kenny further explains that excavator-based drill rigs like the Kobelco can work safely near high walls on opencast mines. Kenny and his team have also experienced the Kobelco SK220XDL-10 Excavator with its slightly longer undercarriage that provides more stability, to have very good hydraulic pressure, which produces a lower revving engine and subsequently better fuel consumption. All the hydraulic functions on the excavator are driven by the excavator's engine with only the compressed air on the drill rig running off the compressor.

"We've found the Kobelco Excavators easy to work on as their rugged design makes them well-suited for us to fit our range of Raptor drill rigs on and we look forward to working with more such quality equipment that is backed by a solid company such as Bell Equipment," he says.



JCB Wheel Loaders make a huge impact at Mpact

Recycling is said to be the process of reusing discarded materials which can be made into new products and one company has got that right, with a little help from a certain brand of yellow metal.

Mpact is, according to its website, the leading paper and plastics recycler in South Africa and proudly states that in the last 10 years it has collected 11,3 million tons of paper and paper packaging. This means 11,3 million tons of a valuable resource did not become litter or pollution.

Working out of 10 branches spread across South Africa, with two more in Namibia and one in Mozambique, Mpact uses state-of-the-art recycling and packaging technologies to convert pre-consumer and post-consumer recyclable materials into innovative plastic and paper solutions.

Visiting one such branch in Parow, Cape Town we meet the Branch Manager, Shaun Smit. "We have two branches in Cape Town with this one handling about 70% cardboard packaging and also paper, plastics and glass while our other branch at Epping handles more higher-grade paper," Shaun says. "What we find surprising is that despite the inroads that digital media has made on our society we still find a high percentage of newspapers and magazines coming into our branch."

Material coming into the Mpact Parow branch is sourced from printing companies, shopping malls, the company's own buy-back centres and hawkers who roam the streets with their familiar high-piled trolleys.

Working under roof, as the company knows that rain is not good for its source material, the operational side of Mpact's Parow branch is a hive of activity as trucks bearing loaded skips and big mesh baskets deposit ton after ton of cardboard and paper that is first sorted into type. This is then fed onto a wide metal conveyor that feeds the baler as the onward recycling journey starts with material in orderly wire-bound bales.

"You'll notice immediately that the vast amount of especially cardboard packaging we handle here simply could not be fed onto the conveyor by hand

and that is why we use a wheel loader to push the piles of cardboard onto the metal conveyor," Shaun says pointing to a bright yellow JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader. "Our previous Bell L1204E Loader had reached close to 19 000 hours and even after undergoing a rebuild at 17 500 hours, it was time to replace it after five years of excellent service."

Shaun says that the senior managers tasked with finding replacement machines, researched the wider wheel loader market thoroughly and saw many sales representatives plying their products.

"Our choice of machine fell on the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader because of the superior technical backup service we had received from Bell Equipment in the past," Shaun says. "We were pleased to see that Bell



Equipment was now the South African distributor of JCB equipment as this size machine with its 1,7-cubic metre bucket and enough grunt from its 93kW motor, fits the needs of our operation perfectly. We bought a similar machine for our Epping branch."

"We're of the opinion that we'd rather pay a bit more for such equipment and have the assurance of proper technical backup that is quick to respond to our calls and have the knowledge and correct spare parts to minimise any unforeseen downtime brought on by repairs and servicing," Shaun adds. "Having built a solid working relationship with the likes of the Regional Aftersales Manager, Pieter Neethling, and Kobus van Zyl, the Workshop Manager at Bell Cape Town, we have that assurance which gives us the confidence to push the JCB 422ZX to high hours of service."

The JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader for the Mpact Epping branch was delivered in February 2022 and the one working at Parow, in July the same year. Both machines will be serviced and maintained by Bell Equipment even after their standard warranties of 12 months, unlimited hours have expired.

"Proof of this reliable backup was seen recently when we needed a thermostat changed on this new machine and this was done quickly with no questions asked," Shaun says. "We realise that we may face special challenges as we're using the machine in an enclosed space that can get very dusty with heat building up and we've found the reversible fan on the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader to be very effective to negate this."

Shaun expects the machine to be used for between 180 and 220 hours a month and an average recorded fuel burn of 6,5 litres an hour is pleasing, given its workload.

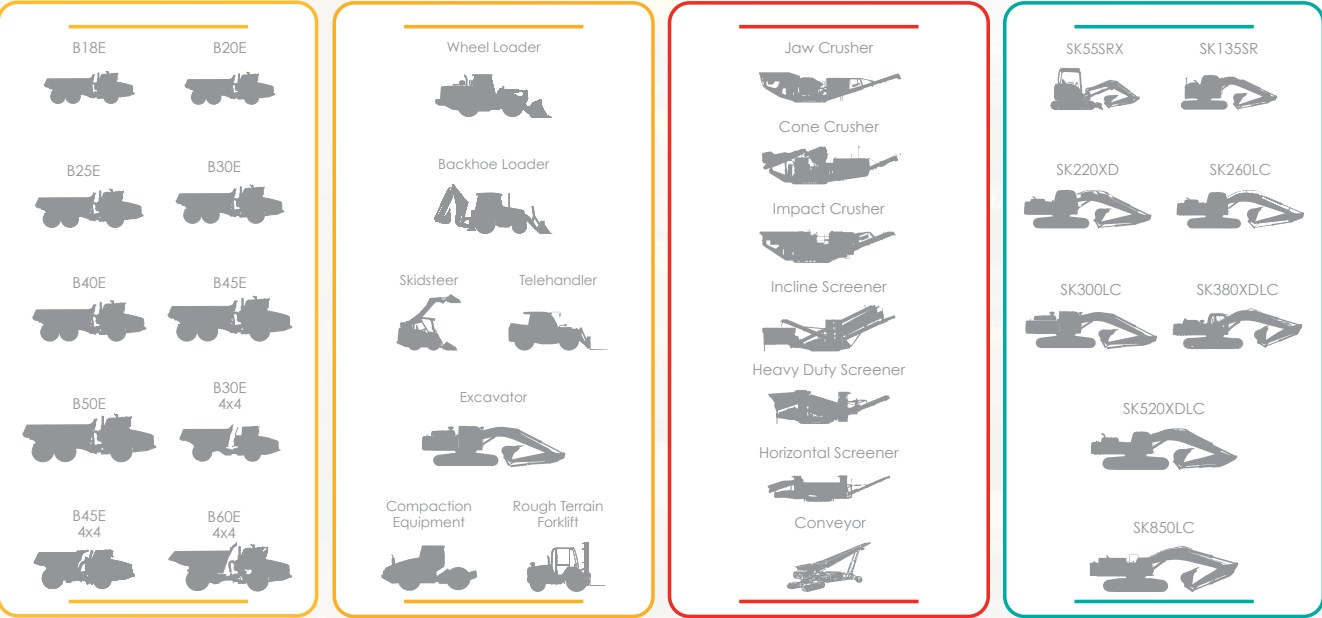
"Just as we live by our company motto of 'smarter, sustainable solutions' so we believe that solid backup service of any mechanical equipment sells the second machine. This has been proved here with even a third machine (at Epping) in the offing," Shaun says. "The whole purchasing experience from meeting Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, to the machine's delivery, and knowing there will always be reliable support, was a pleasant one and we look forward to clocking high hours on this JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader."



Fiona Johnson, Bell Sales Representative, with Shaun Smit, Branch Manager Mpact Parow in Cape Town, standing in the area where the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader in the background, loads the conveyor feeding the baler.

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Octo Plant Hire continues to breathe new life into D-series ADTs

When Burger Schoeman first started his plant hire company in 2002, he thought owning only eight pieces of equipment would be manageable and affordable, hence the name Octo Plant Hire.

Although the name has remained, his original eight-machine fleet has not remained at that number and making up most of his haulage machines is a brand with a familiar ring to it.

Burger had grown up on a sugar farm near Pongola where his late father, Hennie Schoeman, had used Bell Equipment's legendary Haulage Tractors and three-wheeled Cane Loaders. By the time Burger had returned from a two-year working stint in the United Kingdom with enough precious pounds saved to buy a piece of earthmoving equipment, his first stop was at Bell Equipment's Used Division in Johannesburg.

"I bought a used 25-ton excavator that had done 8 000 hours for cash from Bell Equipment and got the impression that this company took its customers seriously, no matter their youthful age," he says. "This excavator was hired to clients in the Transkei and I owned it for four years."

With positive cash-flow generated by a machine on which he owed no money, Burger could soon buy a used Bell B20B Articulated Dump Truck (ADT), which

was hired to a well-known construction company from Cape Town and used in Oranjemund for two years before the same company moved onto a large new road construction project on the Outeniqua Pass linking George and Oudtshoorn.

"Here my clients needed more haulage machines, and I bought two used Bell B25C ADTs, each with 8 000 hours, from a large plant hire company in the North West Province. These legendary Bell C-series ADTs gave our clients sustained service on this major project for the full three years of the contract."

Again, positive cash flow generated by equipment that he owned without debt presented Burger with the opportunity to buy a new Bell HD1430 Excavator. This was followed by another Bell HD1430 Excavator and a Bell 770D Grader, both bought new.

"My steadily growing fleet of machines seemed to be in demand in all the far-flung places and we worked from near the Kgalagadi National Park in the Kalahari to a new golf estate at the Storms River Mouth where I ended up having no less than five Bell ADTs, including

two Bell B18D 6x6 machines with really low hours that I bought from a local farmer," Burger says. "During this time, I added a new Bell 315SG Backhoe Loader that proved to be very popular with clients due to its versatility, and a used Bell 2406 Articulated Haul Tractor that pulled a grid roller."

Burger makes a strong point of the fact that so many of his Bell ADTs boast high hours, which indicates how good the original design and build was, and still is. "We have so much faith in the older D-series Bell ADTs and have learned to rebuild them ourselves," he explains. "Our technical team headed up by our 'red-seal' mechanic, Louis Badenhorst, who is assisted by two other mechanics, a boilermaker and a spray painter, has a ready pool of available parts at hand as we stockpile those rare items that Bell Equipment may not readily have in stock."

"We are really geared to fully repair or rebuild Bell D-series ADTs and have spare engines, transmissions, differentials, lift cylinders and even chassis in stock and can guarantee a 24-hour turnaround on a Bell ADT that has suffered an essential breakdown."

Octo Plant Hire's Bell ADT fleet alone has surpassed the company's original eight-machine mantra and now numbers 27. The D-series models range from B18D to B30D, and Burger won't use larger ADTs as they wouldn't fit the lowbed trailers he uses to move the machines between sites. Some older ADTs have been converted to water tankers and those used to haul slurry material have been fitted with tailgates.

Burger took us to a silica mine near to his head office at Brits in the North West Province to see firsthand how a Bell B25D and two B30D ADTs performed in a pit situated against a high koppie with steep ramps providing access to the mining area.

"These three Bell D-series ADTs have all clocked between 14 000 and 24 000 hours and with our own tender loving care, you see them here hauling dense overburden and the abrasive silica ore up these steep ramps with relative ease," he adds proudly. "This is what we do the most of and have built a reputation on loading and hauling. Despite our seemingly older fleet, our clients know we deliver a sustained service due to our diligent preventative maintenance of our fleet that we have intricate knowledge of."

Having had his equipment hired by contractors around the country, Burger has high praise for the technical support his company has received from Bell Equipment with its wide footprint, trained personnel, and parts availability.

"Dealing with Bell Equipment and its warm people over many years has made it a pleasure to do business. I value the friendships I've built within the company that took me seriously and helped to get me going as a young man," Burger says. "I've known Gerald Lottering, Bell Equipment's Branch Manager in Rustenburg, for a long time and meeting Bell's new Sales Representative for our area, Suzelle van Deventer, has brought a new energy to our relationship with a world-class supplier of quality earthmoving equipment."



From left: Octo Plant Hire's Chief Mechanic, Louis Badenhorst, with the Owner of Octo Plant Hire, Burger Schoeman, Bell Sales Representative, Suzelle van Deventer, and Bell Equipment Rustenburg Branch Manager, Gerald Lottering.

JCB JS305 Excavator impresses Lapua in zinc ore application

Willem Wium believes that he is loyal to a brand that looks after his business and this he has found with a certain yellow brand of excavator that seems particularly hardy while working in challenging conditions.



A son of the Free State, Willem hails from the historic town of Philippolis in the west of the province and worked in banking for 15 years before venturing into buying and selling livestock, a job he by his own admission really enjoyed. "Life however moves one in different directions and in about 2007, I found myself dabbling in hydraulics in the mining industry in Rustenburg," Willem tells us. "I registered my company, Lapua (Pty) Ltd, in Rustenburg in 2011, which specialises in all aspects of hydraulic repair and maintenance in the mining industry, on surface and underground."

An opportunity to take his services further afield to the Aggeneys area of the Northern Cape arose in 2016 when he tendered successfully to do hydraulic maintenance on the zinc mines there. His company's tasks would include repairing and maintaining the hydraulics on drill rigs, trucks and loaders used on both underground and surface mining and all aspects of high-pressure hydraulic hoses and fittings. This was challenging as the service was required around the clock for 365 days of the year.

"Challenging though it may have been, we stuck to the task and our dedication seemed to pay off as in 2019 our clients asked us whether we'd be interested in doing material handling and related tasks as well," Willem says. "We would be tasked with building safety berms bordering haul roads and loading platforms and manage the ore on the run-of-mine stockpile that was fed into the plant for beneficiation."

To do this Willem needed yellow equipment and he contacted his friend Anton Schonken, owner of Lusthof Civil and Plant Hire based in Cradock, for advice. "Anton is a big fan of JCB equipment and he suggested we look at the brand as well especially as we needed hardy excavators for work in the sphalerite rock where zinc ore is found."

With a specific gravity ranging from 3,5 to 4,1 sphalerite is known to be tough on metal as Willem has found.

"We first bought a JCB JS360 Excavator and it gave us excellent service to 5 000 hours when we decided to trade it in on a newer machine," Willem says. "Working in the sphalerite rock, ground engaging tools on the JCB JS360 Excavator's bucket would only last a week."

At the time that Willem looked to trade in their JCB JS360 Excavator on a newer model, he was pleased to learn that Bell Equipment, with its wide service and support footprint, was now the distributor of JCB equipment in South Africa. He duly met with Brendon Gird, the Bell Equipment Sales Representative from the Cape Town branch.

"We took delivery of our new JCB JS305 Excavator in October 2022 and the buying experience with Bell Equipment and Brendon Gird was a pleasant one," Willem adds. "This new machine will add value to our existing fleet of two other JCB Excavators, a JS305 and JS205 respectively, and it will be used for at least 300

hours a month, which is why we bought it with an extended warranty to 6 000 hours on its wet drivetrain.

"I believe in putting down a healthy deposit when financing such equipment so that the machine can generate enough income to pay for itself," he explains. "With the extended warranty we have the assurance of the sustained technical support that Bell Equipment is known for and the maximum benefit of good production that our clients at the mine are entitled to."

"Let it be known that we and our clients are really happy with the performance of our JCB Excavators."

Lapua's JCB Excavators are hired out on dry rates as the client supplies the diesel and although fuel consumption is monitored they have, according to Willem, always stayed well below any fuel cap.

"Working where we do in this part of the hot and dry Northern Cape, preventative maintenance is a key feature of our daily pre-start checks as dust and heat combined can play havoc with lubrication and cooling systems," Willem continues. "We hose down dust, especially near radiators, and see to it that air filters are clean as the summer temperatures often exceed 40 degrees Celsius."

Due to the abrasive and dense nature of the rock where Lapua's JCB Excavators are used, Willem has had special reinforced rock buckets built by a third-party supplier using VRN400 steel. "These reinforced rock buckets are slightly smaller than the standard buckets the JCB Excavators are supplied with and what amazes us is that despite the abrasive underfoot conditions, the JCB Excavators' tracks seem to not show any excessive wear."

When asked about his company's plans looking ahead, Willem is adamant that the near future will see him needing more excavators as he expands his service offering and we share his confidence that new JCB Excavators will soon be dotting the picturesque Northern Cape skyline.



Willem Wium owner of Lapua (Pty) Ltd.

KRC Farming – one of the first customers to buy Bell Series 5 Tractors

In January 2019, a tornado hit a farm near Panbult in Mpumalanga and blew flat standing timber that ranged in age from eight to twenty-five years, breaking the trees off as if they were matchsticks.

The farm owners' challenge was to move this timber out of the compartments to the mill as quickly as possible before a blue stain set in, caused by a fungus, that would reduce the quality and price of the timber they were trying to salvage, and which could still give them some value.

Ruan and Christian Paul are the fourth-generation farmers on this land which they farm with their father Kurt, hence the name of the business being KRC Farming. "Our forefather arrived from Germany with a group of missionaries in 1856. His grandson, Reginald, our grandfather, bought the first land in 1928 as the farm Driehoek where we are still today," Christian Paul says. "He started off farming poultry and beef cattle and turned to growing black wattle for the tanning and charcoal industries in the 1950s."

The boys' father, Kurt, came to the farm after finishing school and his military service in 1987 and started planting pine trees as saw wood. Today 60% of the farm is utilised for pine trees, 30% for normal agricultural crops like maize and 10% for beef cattle.

"We're proud to say that we look after the entire cycle of the timber growth, from silviculture to overseeing the thinnings processes and eventually the harvesting as well," Christian says. "We give the thinnings and harvesting out to local communities and so create jobs, do skills transfer and general upliftment as well while overseeing the expenditure on consumables such as fuel and lubrication that the community needs during these times. In this way, they also learn about money management and fiscal controls."

KRC Farming first used agricultural tractors to haul their timber to the local sawmill, about 20km away. Then in the year 2000, Kurt Paul decided to switch to the Bell 1766 Haulage Tractor for haulage and Bell 125A Loggers for loading infield and at roadside depots. The farm owned five Bell 1766 Tractors pulling 20-ton double-axle trailers and all five machines had been rebuilt at some stage. Currently there are two Bell 125A Loggers, four Bell 220A Loggers and a new Bell 225F High Power Logger in constant use.



Daniel van Huyssteen, Bell Sales Representative (left) with Christian Paul standing at one of the older Bell 1206 Tractors.

According to Christian, after assessing the damage caused by the tornado, they were desperate for haulage machines as they fortunately had spare trailers. They were able to acquire two Bell 1206 4x4 Tractors on the used market.

"I remember my dad, Kurt, chatting to our Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, who would lend a big hand by arranging for a new prototype Bell 1736AF Tractor to be made available to us as a loan machine, and what we experienced firsthand with this new tractor really impressed us."

The new all-wheel drive Bell 1736AF Tractor spent a month at KRC Farming. During that time it so piqued the Paul brothers' interest that older brother Ruan kept reminding Daniel van Huyssteen to let them be the first to know when this model was released to the broader market.

"This happened a mere eight months later when Daniel called and told us the good news and so in July 2021, we took delivery of two Bell 1736A 4x2 Tractors and one Bell 1736AF 4x4 and we believe we were one of the first customers to own the new Series 5 Bell Tractors," Christian says smiling. "Their performance has been superb, and each has clocked around 1 500 hours, with the Bell 1736AF used for extraction from infield to roadside and the two Bell 1736A machines used for the haul to the mill."

Returning fuel burn of between 6 and 8,5 litres an hour depending on the application has left the KRC team well satisfied considering the current cost of fuel. "We feel we did a wise thing by buying these Bell 1736 Tractors with extended warranties to three years or 6 000 hours on the wet drivetrains as Bell Equipment's locally based mechanic in Piet Retief, Stefan Coetzer, really keeps his hand on the machines and sees to it that the correct service kits, consumables and replacement parts are always in stock," Christian says. "We may consider replacing the Bell Tractors once the warranty has run out but until then, we believe they will give us an excellent return on our investment."

"To our collective minds and having used many other tractor models, the Bell 1736A and AF models are the best tractors Bell Equipment has ever built."

Christian is of the guarded opinion that with the price difference on the all-wheel drive Bell 1736AF not being that much more than the two-wheel drive model, they should have considered a total all-wheel drive fleet as the all-wheel drive can be switched on and off.

The farm also owns a used Bell B20B Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) of which they removed the bin and replaced it with a 20 000-litre water tank with which to fight forest and veld fires. Two older Bell ADTs, a Bell B17C and B25C respectively, are used to haul fill material to maintain the many roads that criss-cross the farm.



Bryan's Auto Electrical is well pleased with its new JCB Backhoe Loader



If you want to stay competitive in the small plant hire market, ensure that your machines, especially backhoe loaders, deliver sustained uptime and don't push that type of machine beyond twelve thousand hours of service.

These are the words of a technically-minded person with firsthand knowledge of the challenges that buying used machines for the small plant hire market can bring and who has come to the realisation that buying a new machine is first prize.

Bryan Allan started his auto-electrical business in East London in 1995 and over time built up a loyal following in the construction, transport, and agriculture market,

which stretched far and wide across the province. Running a one-man show, Bryan was always on the lookout for additional income and found this when two backhoe loaders from a friend's deceased estate came onto the market.

"In 2016, I was able to buy two JCB Backhoe Loaders, a 2012-model JCB 3DX Super and a 2014-model JCB 3DX that had done 4 000 and 2 000 hours

respectively," Bryan says. "These machines had been used in the local plant hire market and I took over some of the existing customers in addition to doing some marketing of my own as well."

According to Bryan, the plant hire market in East London, especially that for small plant, is very competitive and riddled with unscrupulous operators who cut rates but offer poorly maintained equipment. Building a name for offering well-maintained equipment that ensures uptime and value for money brings repeat business, as he has found. His machines are mainly hired in the greater East London area but have gone as far west as Queenstown where they would be moved on low-bed or roll-back transport. For nearer sites, they are simply driven there as they are registered with number plates.

By the year 2022, the older of the two JCB Backhoe Loaders had clocked 12 000 hours and Bryan decided to sell it out of hand along with a full-service history. "It sold very quickly as word had got around that this machine had been well maintained. With cash in hand, I could afford to buy a new JCB 3DX Eco from Anthony Enslin at Bell Equipment in East London," Bryan tells us. "It was reassuring to know that Bell Equipment, with its proven track record of support and wide footprint, was now the distributor of JCB equipment and I chose the JCB 3DX Eco as I believed with it not having a turbocharger it would be a bit more economical, which has proved to be the case."

Since its delivery in August 2022, the new JCB 3DX Eco has been hired to a housing developer where it is used for between seven and eight hours a day doing layer works for establishing roads and trenching for services on a new housing estate in East London. "Our client supplies the fuel but with an average consumption of between 6 and 6,5 litres of diesel an hour, coupled with the assurance of high availability, everyone seems happy with this new addition to our small fleet," Bryan says. "The older JCB 3DX machine is now nearing 9 500 hours of service and I will be looking to exchange that for a similar new machine soon when I will again approach Bell Equipment."

Bryan has praise for his two Backhoe Loader operators who he says take good care of his machines. They adhere to daily checklists and diligent lubrication regimes, so ensuring the machines' longevity and their own jobs. He does the out-of-warranty servicing and repairs himself thus keeping his hand on the state of his equipment.

"They were already experienced with backhoe loaders when they started working for me, which is an advantage and their understanding of the value of preventative maintenance is a bonus," he says. "My long-term plan is to start winding down the auto-electrical business and to eventually own five JCB Backhoe Loaders along with possibly two 20-ton excavators, which I'm positive Bell Equipment could supply me, and this could set me up well for a profitable business life in plant hire."



Bell Sales Representative, Anthony Enslin (left), with Bryan Allan, owner of Bryan's Auto Electrical.

Skogger with felling head provides an ideal solution for Umvuni Solutions

When a well-established timber harvesting contractor in the Mpumalanga Lowveld wanted to speed up infield bunching and presentation of felled timber, his solution created the imaginary comparison to when a featherweight boxer takes on a heavyweight rival in the same ring.

John Roux founded his company Umvuni Solutions from his family's farm in the Low's Creek area in 2012. 'Umvuni' is the Zulu word for 'harvester' and this is what this company does, harvesting timber in a radius of 140km from its base.

"My dad has got us all involved, me on the operational side and my sisters Ronél, Esmé, and Lindi on finance, data capturing, and safety respectively," says Ian Roux, John's son. "Our farm called Three Sisters has been in the Roux family since 1931."

Ian is proud of his father's achievements which span many years in the timber growing areas of Mpumalanga and Eswatini and tells of him building roads in forests for large timber growers and paper producers and doing conversions of timber hauling and handling equipment.

"My father has come a long way with Bell Equipment and owned his first Bell Cane Loader, with serial number 18, in 1976 in the Mpumalanga Lowveld area," Ian says. "He worked in Swaziland on many Bell Articulated T25 Timber Trucks loaded with a Bell Logger which he owned from 1992. When it came to the most recent innovations that Bell and Matriarch were bringing to the market he, as a respected veteran of the timber contracting industry, had the inside track on new equipment."

"My dad really loves mechanical equipment, especially that which has the potential to make our jobs easier."

Umvuni Solutions as a harvesting company runs a fair fleet of machines which comprises skidders, excavators with timber processing heads, shovel yarders, and timber handling loggers. With pressure mounting for increased production, the company really needed a machine that could bunch and present the hand-felled timber quicker than a grapple skidder did.

"For reasons of safety in the compartment, our chainsaw gangs fell trees a day in advance of the extraction and processing teams, but we found that the skidders, although powerful, were in certain cases too slow in bunching and presenting the felled whole tree lengths for processing," Ian explains. "What we needed was a nimbler machine that could extract, bunch, and present the tree lengths quicker and this we found with the Bell Skogger."



Umvuni Solutions took delivery of their first Bell Skogger in November 2021 and, according to Ian, it made an immediate difference to their production. "The Skogger is a far nimbler machine than a skidder although the latter is more powerful," he says. "The Skogger is so manoeuvrable as with its tight turning circle and grab on the boom, the operator can quickly pick felled tree lengths, bunch them and drag them to where the skidder can take them on to the roadside for processing."

Ian adds that another advantage is that the Bell Skogger does not need to be transported on a low bed but can be driven to different compartments.

"We were pleasantly surprised to be told of yet another feature of the Skogger that we weren't even aware of when planning to buy the machine, and this

has had an additional positive impact on our production and safety within the compartment." John and Ian discovered that they could fit a custom-made felling head to the Bell Skogger, in this case, the MT50FH, which is like that found on the Bell Fastfell.

"We bought the felling head in January 2022 and found that while it needed two additional hydraulic pipes, it was essentially a 'plug & play' system that took less than three hours to swap out with the machine's grab," Ian explains. "Safety in the compartment is a huge factor for us and our clients and we have safety officers at every step of the harvesting and production cycles. Having the felling head on the Skogger now enhances this safety as it can easily replace five chainsaws in certain compartments depending on the gradient and terrain."



According to Ian, the Skogger can place a tree better and in a safer way after it has been felled, which makes for more order in a compartment. He goes on to explain that where there are rocks on the surface of a compartment, hand felling would still be preferred as the chainsaw operator can manoeuvre himself in amongst the rocks to get to the tree, but this was the case in less than 25% of the areas where they harvested.

"At first glance, it's plain to see that the Bell Skogger is a purpose-built quality forestry machine that can also work in the rain and runs much quieter. We and our clients are impressed with its safety features like the fully enclosed and air-conditioned cab that protects the operator and reduces fatigue," Ian says. "We debated where to draw operators from and settled on two who had been logger operators as they were used to operating grabs in front of them as opposed to skidders which load at the rear. We also trained a third operator who had been a chainsaw operator as it's good to have a backup."

The Roux's are equally impressed with the Skogger's fuel consumption, which at between nine and 10 litres an hour is only fractionally more than what their three-wheeled Loggers use at 8 litres an hour with the

Skogger's payload and capabilities so much more. These capabilities brought the solution for what they had originally tried to achieve, to improve the performance of their skidders by having bunches of felled trees presented in such a way that the skidders had easy access to haul the timber to the roadside. This generated enough workflow with the need for a second Bell Skogger soon realised and this second machine with its grab and MT50FH felling head was delivered in August 2022.

"Thanks to excellent advice from Bell Equipment's knowledgeable Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, himself a qualified forester, we have achieved what we set out to do and that was to speed up the workflow of our skidders, hence the comparison of two boxers with the Skogger being the featherweight showing up the heavyweight skidder," Ian says. "Acquiring the Bell Skoggers has come with a huge boost in that we now have two dual-purpose machines with their grabs and felling heads. We can comfortably have one operating as a feller and the other doing extraction and in doing so, reduce our people numbers in the compartment, which will lead to quicker and safer production. These machines can also work comfortably on moderately steep slopes."



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen (left), with Umvuni Solutions Senior Supervisor, Zenzo Mabheba, and Umvuni Solutions General Manager, Ian Roux.

Launch of new Bell Heavy Industries division



With almost seventy years of demonstrated expertise in complex engineering, heavy fabrication, and machining for its own range of material handling equipment, Bell Equipment is now offering these specialist services to all industries in the country through its newly formed division, Bell Heavy Industries (BHI).

Bell Equipment's Group Business Development Director, Stephen Jones, emphasises the current scarcity of companies providing these vital services locally. "South Africa has seen a huge reduction in engineering companies and, in response, we have strategically positioned our South African manufacturing facility to fill this void by providing project engineering and contract manufacturing through BHI.

"The growth of Bell as a well-established mining, earthmoving, and agriculture equipment manufacturer, both domestically and in terms of exports around the world, is a testament to the skills available and the quality of products that we make in Richards Bay. We're confident in our ability to expand into other industries and believe this will benefit not only the manufacturing sector but the whole country."

Bell has also received accolades for its demonstrated performance from organisations such as the South African Capital Equipment Export Council (SACEEC), the Mining Equipment Manufacturers of South Africa (MEMSA), and the Department of Trade and Industry, which hosts the South African Premier Business Awards together with Proudly South African and Brand South Africa.

The 45 000m² undercover manufacturing area in Richards Bay complies with the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System and welds to the internationally recognised ISO 3834-2 Appendix 10 standards. It is well equipped with specialist machines including both horizontal and vertical CNC (computerised numerical control) machining centres, 5-axis boring machines, laser cutters, high-definition oxyfuel and plasma cutters, bending brakes, and advanced welding



BHI is capable of oxyfuel cutting up to 75mm material thickness, plasma cutting up to 32mm, and laser cutting to 12mm of a variety of metal sheets.

The Bell team in Richards Bay of over 800 machinists, welders, and assemblers is among the best in the country thanks to the company's own training centre, which plays a crucial role in internally developing world-class skills from the surrounding community.



technology. A blasting plant, phosphating tanks, sealed spray booth, galvanising bath, and an automated powder coating installation are available to take care of surface treatments.

The Bell team in Richards Bay of over 800 machinists, welders, and assemblers is among the best in the country thanks to the company's own training centre, which plays a crucial role in internally developing world-class skills from the surrounding community. "This is complemented by our highly skilled team of welding, quality, and industrial engineers, along with onsite calibration facilities, equipment to perform material checks, and a number of highly specialised co-ordinate measuring machines.

"Together with our strong focus on process development, BHI can guarantee consistent quality to customers. BHI can also tap into a wealth of group resources, notably a team of over 100 South African design engineers, enhancing its suitability for local manufacturing across diverse industries," adds Stephen.

Bell Equipment's manufacturing operation, which is 55% Black-owned and 24% Black women-owned, contributes to B-BBEE scores and creates localisation opportunities for potential customers. "Over the years we have established a global supply chain with access to world-class suppliers. Procurement staff are well skilled in international logistics and our strategic sourcing department has strong commodity expertise, which ensures stringent input cost control.

"We have always maintained that manufacturing has massive transformation potential for the South African economy and employment, so we are optimistic about this new division and will be actively engaging with those looking for the expertise we now offer outside of our traditional market segment," he concludes.



Onsite calibration facilities, equipment to perform material checks, and several highly specialised co-ordinate measuring machines ensure consistent quality.

COOLER BOX
GREEN
45 LITRE



R2 300⁰⁰

COOLER BOX
BLUE
25 LITRE



R1 550⁰⁰

CAMP CHAIR



R1 300⁰⁰

OPERATOR CAP



R90⁰⁰

ROUND PEAK CAP - U-FLEX
GREEN



R220⁰⁰

JCB GREY CAP
GREY



R150⁰⁰

BOMA BRAAI KIT



R2 100⁰⁰

BELL TOOL
BLACK



R200⁰⁰

BELL PINT THERMAL MUG
MIDNIGHT BLUE & OLIVE GREEN
600ML



R350⁰⁰

LADIES GOLFER



R420⁰⁰

SPORT TOP



R230⁰⁰

CYCLING TOP



R550⁰⁰

LEATHER - DUFFEL BAG



R3 200⁰⁰

LEATHER - LAPTOP BAG



R2 900⁰⁰

LADIES - SLING BAG



R650⁰⁰

MULTI-PUPOSE MAT
BAR MAT, GAMER MAT, MOUSE PAD
OR DESK MAT



R250⁰⁰

JCB 8855 - SLIP-ON BOOTS
BROWN, SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 300⁰⁰ NONE STEEL

JCB 8844 - LACE UP BOOTS
BROWN, SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 300⁰⁰ NONE STEEL

LEATHER - COSMETIC BAG



R110⁰⁰

LEATHER - WALLET
BLACK



R560⁰⁰

KOBELCO EXCAVATOR SCALE MODEL



R2 700⁰⁰

BELTS
BLACK/BROWN, LEATHER STITCH/
BURNISHED



R270⁰⁰

VELDSKOEN
YELLOW
SIZE: 5 - 11



R960⁰⁰

FS3 PULL-UP BOOT STC
BROWN
SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 080⁰⁰

ADT B45E SCALE MODEL



R1 100⁰⁰

ADT B60E SCALE MODEL



R1 300⁰⁰

JCB 3CX BACKHOE SCALE MODEL



R1 400⁰⁰



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Season's greetings to all our Bell Bulletin readers

Our gift to you this festive season is a bumper edition packed full of some of our favourite customer features.

We thank you for your support during this year and trust that you have enjoyed reading about our customers and our products.

We look forward to bringing you more inspirational stories in 2024 and wish you a safe and peaceful festive season and best wishes for the New Year.

The Bell Bulletin Team

The Bell logo, featuring the word "BELL" in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font. The letters are white with a thick black outline, giving it a three-dimensional, metallic appearance. The logo is positioned at the bottom left of the page, below the text "The Bell Bulletin Team".**BELL**