

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.