

SASTA FIELD / FACTORY DAY AT BELL EQUIPMENT



On Wednesday the 10th July 2013, Bell Equipment hosted 24 SASTA members at their Factory in Richards Bay. After arrival and a cup of coffee, the delegates were welcomed. In my address, I reminded members that they had all paid R50 to show commitment to the day, and as Bell had very kindly agreed to host us, SASTA council decided to donate this money in the form of classroom stationery to Bell who support a local farm school. This donation was gratefully accepted by Tim Beningfield.

We were then shown a DVD which gave us a very good insight into the commitment, size and complexity of this made in South Africa award winning company. We then split into three groups for our tour of the factory. For anybody who has never seen fabrication of this magnitude, it was indeed amazing. To see a few pieces (albeit very large pieces) of carefully cut and bent metal being welded together at one end of the factory, becoming the axle of a 50 tonne dump truck at the other end was fascinating.

From the factory we were then taken to a field demonstration of a prototype cane loading machine from Bell Equipment called the Matriarch. The difference between this loader and the conventional bell loader is

- 1) This vehicle has four wheels not three. Two drive wheels at the front and two caster wheels at the back, with all four wheels straddling the row.
- 2) The drivers cab and grab turn to the side to load the waiting trailer, while the wheels remain stationary.

This would appear to be a very interesting variation on an accepted norm and it remains to be seen how popular it will become.

Finally the day was completed by a visit to the Bell Museum (The first official visit by a group), where the amazing story of Bell Equipment all started in 1954. Some of the more adventurous members were taken for a ride around the test track in one of the rather large dump trucks, then after a very agreeable lunch and light refreshments, we departed.

Our thanks once again to Tim, Warren and Lee.
Keith Mc Farlane - Council Member

