

Stress cracks on the double barrel inner drum of the plant at Much Asphalt's busy Benoni operation demanded quick action and a new inner drum was ordered from Astec Industries in the USA in October last year.

Delivery was expected in the third week of December. This timing worked well as one of Much Asphalt's contracts for OR Tambo International Airport –

involving the Hotel and Charlie taxiways – was due for completion on 23 December and the drum was scheduled for replacement thereafter.

Three weeks of delays during loading and while at sea meant that emergency repairs had to be made to the existing inner drum during the Christmas break. The Benoni plant had to be fully operational on 10 January to

produce the 220 000 tonnes required for the OR Tambo runway contract still in progress.

The new inner drum arrived on site in mid-February and was duly installed, together with a new outer shell. The Astec plant was quickly back in production and working 18 hours a day to complete the OR Tambo Airport contract on schedule on 21 April 2007.

DRUM BEAT



We must not forget the basics



Much Asphalt
chief executive
Phillip Hechter.

While we work hard to meet the demands of accelerated infrastructure development, we should not forget the basics. In fact, as we produce more, we need to be doubly aware of the safety of our people, the protection of our environment and the sustainability of our business in our quest to be a world class company.

Dedication to customer service and product quality must remain paramount in boom times. To this end we are continuing to invest in training to improve our skills and in plant and laboratories to enhance efficiencies. This issue of Surface Talk contains several examples.

We are now seeing the benefits of the training programme carried out last year by marketing

consultancy Kirton Associates to improve internal and external customer relationships. Regular customer audits will enable us to monitor service levels and improve where necessary. The support of our customers in this regard is much appreciated.

As our economy grows, the danger of ground, air and noise pollution increases. Much Asphalt is taking environmental issues seriously and will invest R6-million in upgrading its plants over the next three years to ensure compliance with international standards. Linked to this are ongoing interventions to ensure health and safety of our staff and visitors to our plants.

– Phillip Hechter

We say farewell to the founder of Much Asphalt

All at Much Asphalt join in bidding a sad farewell to Max Pike, the founder of Much Asphalt in 1965, who passed away in March this year.

Max headed up our company for 20 years and his successor at the helm of Much, Dave Orton, delivered the eulogy at his funeral. Dave's words captured the essence of the Max Pike many of us knew and we repeat some of his words here.

"I first met Max in the early nineteen seventies. The scene was typical: a major road contract in trouble, a year behind programme. We were all there, fighting: a worried client, a tough consulting engineer, an inexperienced main contractor and Max, the asphalt sub contractor, also there with his problems.

"That was my first sight of Max's outstanding leadership and mentorship qualities. His calm, logical, gentlemanly manner, overlaying his special people skills, was a major factor in getting us all back on track.

"Needless to say that, at the end of the day, Max got paid for all of his suspect asphalt and it is still there on that road, 30 odd years later!

"But I really came to see the man that he was when I succeeded him on his retirement from the firm he had begun 20 years previously, Much Asphalt.

"At that time, Max was undoubtedly the 'king of blacktop' in South Africa.

"Through Protea Asphalt in the North, Much in the South and Petrocol countrywide, he had a hand in road surfacing everywhere.

"He had been instrumental in setting up the bitumen industry trade organisation, Sabita, which became supremely successful in bringing together all the players in the industry: the clients, the consultants, the researchers, contractors and suppliers.

"This was one of Max's consummate skills, the desire and ability to bring together potentially conflicting factions to resolve their differences amicably.

"Another of his major innovations, along the same lines, was that other famous institution – the Much Annual Braai – where all of the protagonists in the road building industry in the area got together once a year. It was here that he could combine his other love, that of a good party, with his wish to get all the people together to sort out their problems over a beer and a chop.

"That institution still flourishes in that manner to this day, and Max rarely missed a year until this year.

"It was during Max's farewell retirement round of all of the Much branches that I saw the love and respect that all of the Much staff had for him; it was never said to his face, but he was 'Uncle Max' to all of them.

"With his 'old world' gentlemanly charm, Max would always try to make everyone a winner. He often said to me that there is a place in the sun for everyone, and when you were with Max, the sun was always a little warmer."



Max Pike



Learning how it should be done in practice.

Workshops promote best practice in hand laid asphalt

Almost 100 individuals have received certificates from Much Asphalt to date this year after completing our **Best practice workshop on hand laid hot mix asphalt.**

The workshop is presented by consultant Dave Wright on behalf of Much. It was re-launched in August last year as a result of extraordinary demand by many individuals looking for new skills, as well as entrepreneurs and companies wishing to educate their employees. It was presented at several centres around the country in the second half of 2006. This year to date we have hosted workshops in Polokwane, George and Cape Town.

The Cape Town workshop was held at

the request of the Western Province government for small contractors in the Paarl area involved in its Expanded Public Works Programme. The provincial government has expressed interest in further courses for small contractors in other local districts.

"We intend to take this specialist workshop to as many local and provincial authorities as possible," says Much Asphalt's marketing director, John Onraët.

The workshops are offered as a technically enhancing, value-added service to customers and delegates are not charged attendance fees.

"The aim is to establish a uniform, industry-wide standard for high quality

hand laid hot mix asphalt," John explains. "We would like to ensure that small to medium contractors deliver durable and cost effective asphalt surfaces to their clients. The course provides best practice guidance on the selection, use and application of our many different products."

The workshop commences with a presentation on how asphalt is manufactured and progresses to how it should be correctly applied and compacted. Delegates receive a printed manual that is useful as a reference for specifications and quality of finished surfaces. Certificates are awarded to all delegates.



Our recently opened Polokwane office has hosted its first workshop.



Contractors involved in the Western Province government's Expanded Public Works Programme attended a workshop at Much Asphalt Eerste River.



Mobile plant supplies N1 through Hex River Valley

Nomad 2 has been erected at Prima Quarries in Brewelskloof, Worcester, to supply SANRAL's Kanetvlei contract.

On completion of the Kanetvlei contract currently in progress, Much Asphalt will have supplied surfacing for the N1 freeway from Worcester to Laingsburg.

Mobiles manager Francois van der Spuy reports that Much Asphalt's new mobile plant, Nomad 2, was recently erected at Prima Quarries in Brewelskloof, Worcester.

This plant will supply asphalt to Black Top Surfaces for SANRAL's Kanetvlei contract. Arcus Gibb is the consulting engineer on the project.

The contract covers more than 40km of the N1 freeway from Kanetvlei past De Doorns and into the scenic Hex River Pass. It requires the milling and inlay of some 2 500t Colto (medium) continuously graded asphalt as well as an overlay with Colto (medium) continuously graded bitumen rubber asphalt.

Nomad 2 is set up to mix bitumen rubber only, supplied by Colas from a blending plant nearby. Our static plant at Worcester has supplied the inlay mix, which is now almost complete.

At Kanetvlei this contract joins the Glen Heatly contract, recently completed by Haw & Inglis and also supplied out of our static plant in Worcester. At the Hex River Pass it joins the Touws River contract recently completed by the Hex River



JV (between Haw & Inglis and Roadmac), which was supplied out of Much Asphalt's Nomad 1 mobile plant situated on the contract site. "On completion our asphalt will therefore cover the N1 from Sand Hills outside Worcester all the way to Laingsburg," says Francois.

Of technical interest is the choice of a continuously graded bitumen rubber asphalt with 60/70 pen base bitumen for the Kanetvlei project. The section to Touws River was surfaced with a semi-open graded bitumen rubber asphalt using an 80/100 pen base bitumen for the modification. It is expected that the continuously graded product will be

less susceptible to damage from oil and diesel spillages and that the rut resistance will also be improved.

The main contractor intends completing the surfacing before winter sets in as cold weather will become a significant constraint. Workable road temperatures only occur for about four hours a day in mid-winter and snow is common. The Much Asphalt team is being led by Elias Molyi (seconded from Gauteng), assisted by mobiles team member JJ Joubert and Danny Govender (seconded from KZN). Six matriculants were also recruited from the local community.

Limpopo province gets coldmix

Polokwane branch manager William Nenjerama reports that bulk and bagged coldmix is now available to Much Asphalt customers throughout Limpopo province.

"We have commenced coldmix production after carrying out thorough research on the binder softening ingredient, which is a special flux," says William.

He adds that there is a lucrative market for coldmix in Limpopo Province, which comprises 27 local municipalities

and eight district municipalities all within 200km of Much Asphalt's Polokwane plant.

"However hot asphalt supply to many outlying areas is difficult, hence the need for cold asphalt. I look forward to also supplying Mpumalanga and the North West Provinces once we get production into full swing."

For more information, please contact William Nenjerama at 073 169 7028.

Improving customer service at the weighbridge

Distribution supervisors and staff from around the country gathered at Eerste River in February to discuss best practice.

A workshop for Much Asphalt's distribution personnel around the country in February aimed to improve communication with internal customers at each asphalt manufacturing facility and with purchasing customers at the weighbridge – where we welcome our customers to our branches, and where we send them off with our products.

"The weighbridge is our point of sale and provides front line interaction with customers," says marketing director John Onraët. "The interaction between our distribution staff at our weighbridges and customers is crucial to our image and we have thus decided to put more focus on this area of our business. A workshop in February allowed our distribution staff around the country to network, share best practice, iron out common problems and draw up action plans to improve customer service."

As a result of the workshop and ongoing interventions, we hope customers visiting Much Asphalt will notice improvements at our weighbridges, such as:

- Better and more informed communication
- Better handling of complaints



- Improved service delivery
- Improved credit control
- Safety and environmental awareness
- Better understanding of technical issues.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Heard on Kulula 255 just after a very hard landing in Cape Town. The flight attendant came on the intercom and said, "That was quite a bump and I know what y'all are thinking. I'm here to tell you it wasn't the airline's fault, it wasn't the pilot's fault, it wasn't the flight attendant's fault . . . it was the asphalt."

Preparing talented scholars for technical careers

Between 2001 and 2004, 115 (2%) out of 5 373 matriculants in Cape Town's Khayelitsha township obtained a Higher Grade pass in maths. Only 139 of 2 748 matriculants obtained a Higher Grade pass in physical science.

Against this background Much Asphalt has thrown its weight behind the Science Education Resource Initiative (SERI), an NPO that identifies learners in Khayelitsha schools with aptitude for maths and science and prepares them for science, engineering and commerce courses at universities. This is done in partnership with the Centre of Science and Technology (COSAT), a specialist grade 10 to 12 science, maths and IT school based at the False Bay College in Khayelitsha.

COSAT has achieved considerable success in its seven years of existence. In 2005, for the fifth consecutive year, it achieved a 100% matriculation pass rate. Of 40 candidates that year, 24 (60%) obtained university endorsements with passes in physical science, maths and biology/accountancy on the higher grade. Most COSAT students further their studies at tertiary institutions in the Western Cape.

Much Asphalt provides financial support for the project. "With the dire shortage of human resources, specifically in our specialist field of operation, the net for talent resourcing must be cast while the pool is in its formative stage," says Much Asphalt marketing director John Onraët.

Taking up the challenge to improve asphalt mixes



West Rand

It was decided to use a continuously graded medium for the general purpose freeway mix and a TRH8 continuously graded coarse mix for the intersection mix. The TRH8 coarse mix was chosen above SMA mixes (these have a history of rut resistance) due to the difficulty of manufacturing SMA in small quantities and flushing problems as a result of early trafficking.

Available aggregates in the area were evaluated and selected for quality and shape. Plant trials were performed and the mixes are now being refined.

East Rand

Development of asphalt mixes that met the Gautrans specifications started in 2003 for the OR Tambo International Airport contract and the past three years have seen continuous improvements. Due to large volume requirements for the runway contract, dolerite was selected over quartzite (bigger commercial quarry that could deliver bigger volume). The high design traffic class and thickness of the overlay (50mm) called for asphalt with slightly larger aggregate than the Colto continuously graded medium (including 10% 13.2mm aggregate). The old TRH8 coarse envelope was selected.

A quartzite design was also prepared for use as wearing coarse as back-up

for the runway contract, giving Much another ideal opportunity for the rut mix challenge.

Plant and paving trials of the two mixes were performed and the dolerite mix has been further refined to meet all the design criteria. The quartzite mix is still in the process of refinement.

High Modulus Asphalt (HiMa)

Gautrans later decided to include HiMa in the challenge and to give Sasobit (using German technology), as well as Sapref/Shell (using French technology) the opportunity to develop mix designs that will also be paved and analysed. Much Asphalt has teamed up with Sasobit as well as Sapref/Shell for this purpose.

Sasobit appointed Soillab to do mix designs using aggregate from our Eikenhof plant. Three different mix designs have been done and will soon be verified with plant trials. Samples of the aggregate used at our Benoni plant (Holcim Rooikraal) were sent to Shell Global Solutions in France for development of a mix design.

We look forward to the paving trials that will soon take place in Pretoria. Our thanks to Gautrans for creating an opportunity to develop our products to satisfy the increasing demands placed on our roads.

Much Asphalt has developed four potential new products in response to a call by Gautrans for asphalt mixes to withstand high stresses at busy intersections and for general freeway use.

No constraints were placed on the asphalt type or grading, but Gautrans specified that only unmodified binders could be used.

The following manufacturers/contractors, together with specialist design consultants, took up the challenge:

- Much Asphalt – Vela VKE (mixed by Much Roodepoort and paved by Black Top)
- Rand Roads – Arcus Gibb (mixed by Much Benoni and paved by Rand Roads)
- Akasia Asphalt – Vela VKE (mixed and paved by Akasia)
- Black Top – Nico Wilcocks (mixed and paved by Black Top)

The mix designs from Much Asphalt were split between the Benoni (East Rand) and Roodepoort (West Rand) operations.

Sabita keeps municipalities informed



Much Asphalt was among several suppliers to the asphalt road building industry present at a recent workshop hosted by Sabita for councillors of Cape Town and surrounding municipal areas. The workshop, addressed by several experts in road design, construction and maintenance, aimed to educate councillors on the importance of

maintaining the Western Cape's road network. Discussions included the current size and state of the municipal road network, funds needed to maintain it and budgetary constraints, the causes of road deterioration, best maintenance practice, the consequences of poor maintenance strategies and the best way forward.

Asphalt links new church to the community

Much Asphalt's Coedmore branch has assisted a new Anglican church in Umlazi township south of Durban by surfacing the area outside the church and linking it to the road. Much Asphalt's Greg van Wyk inspected the site and arranged a sub-contractor to remove the building rubble and prepare the site for surfacing. Much supplied the crushed stone base material and hot-mixed asphalt, while SA Asphalt prepared the base and placed the surfacing. The pictures show the church site before and after the surfacing project.



Durban's Pier No 1 gets a facelift

The revamp of Pier 1 in Durban Port for Transnet is on schedule by contractors Basil Read and Devtech Civils.

The consultants, Hatch McDonald and Goba, are maintaining high standards for safety, health, regulatory and environmental control and quality (SHREQ). Before any contractor can work on site, induction courses must be completed and workers must be certified capable of their specific tasks.

Hibiscus Asphalt negotiated the asphalt paving contract, with the material supplied by Much Asphalt's Coedmore Plant in Durban. The quantities required are 7 300 tonnes of base and 3 670 tonnes of wearing course. The contract comprises two phases, of which phase 1 is complete. This involved laying 888 tonnes of base and 510 tonnes of wearing course by 15 September 2006. Although the weather was not kind, correct planning enabled Hibiscus to meet the fast track deadline with no compromising of quality.

The total contract is due for completion by October 2007.



Helping Aids sufferers

Ten employees of Much Asphalt Eikenhof, led by branch manager Vivien Seiderer, chose World Aids Day on 1 December 2006 to visit patients suffering from Aids at the Far East Rand Hospital and distribute foodstuffs sponsored by the company. Pictured are Much Asphalt staff with sisters at the hospital.



Client function at Eerste River

Seen at Much Asphalt's annual client braai at Eerste River on 16 February . . .



From left: Ian McDonald (CoCT); Duncan Murphy (Jeffares & Green); Ben Veldman (PAWC); and Mike Winfield (Martin & East).

From left: Graeme McGregor (Arcus Gibb); Justin Sprekley (Martin & East); Ockert Keyzer (Zebra); Malcolm Knipe and Davin Giles (Prima Quarries).



From left: Marie Steyn and Therese Koch (Rennies); Beverli Coetzee (Much Asphalt).



From left: Rozaan Jones, Jonathan Daniels and Dudu Kubheka (Much Asphalt).



From left: David Bullock (Unitrans); and Phillip Hechter (Much Asphalt).



From left: Willie Burger (Arcus Gibb); Bennie Greyling (Much Asphalt); Frikkie Burger and Steven Gerber (PC Transport).



From left: Morgan Strydom (Much Asphalt Cenlab) and Theo Moolman (Much Asphalt).



From left: Norman Anderson (Marine Civils); John Onraët (Much Asphalt); and Arrie Rooi (retired from Much Asphalt).

Industry partners do battle for 94.7 trophy

Last year's 94.7 Cycle Challenge in Johannesburg was the scene of a battle for supremacy between Much Asphalt and long term business associates Rand Roads and WG Werne Quarries. A floating trophy (in the form of a framed R100 note) is awarded to the company with the five best combined finishing times. In addition to having at least five members, each team must include at least one woman in its top five. The

Much Asphalt team for last November's 94.7 event included (from left) William Nenjerama (Polokwane branch); Freddie Durrow (Benoni Branch); Melanie Thomson (Regional); and Tom Gilbert (Regional). Missing from the picture is 5th team member Daryl Jorgensen of our Coedmore, Durban, branch. (Rand Roads holds the trophy – for now – after clocking a combined score 10 minutes faster than the Much team.)



Do you have any interesting news regarding Much Asphalt's people, products or projects?
Please contact Lynne Hancock at 082 441-5813 or email lynne@lhcom.co.za