

Terex Trucks helps dig deep for rare Dorset clay

30 March 2016 by Terex Trucks

Wareham may be just a couple of miles inland from Purbeck's Jurassic Coast - yet it's not dinosaur bones that a fleet of Terex Trucks are helping to uncover, but some of the world's richest clay deposits.

As you look over the huge whorls made by truck tyres in the sand on the lip of Doreys ball clay quarry, fossils and ammonites spring to mind. The site just outside Wareham, Dorset, is, after all, right next to an ancient coastline whose layers of rock record some 185 million years of history.

But this is very modern treasure being mined here. The 450,000 cubic metres of ball clay to be found 35 metres below ground is amongst the most sought-after in the world. The clay's hard-firing properties make it suitable for a wide range of processing applications.

A large percent of the clay from this pit will be exported to Spain to be made into luxury ceramic tiles. The rest will be processed for use in the pharmaceutical industry or transported to India to make pylon cables insulators.

A family affair

The Doreys site is one of several in the area owned by Imerys, a world leader in mineral-based products. The quarry is operated by local family-firm Andrews Plant Hire and Haulage, whose owner, Peter Andrews, has been in business in Wareham since 1969 and now has two of his six sons working alongside him in the firm.

Terex Trucks has also been part of the family for over almost twenty years. From initially owning three trucks, Andrews now runs a fleet of nine Terex Trucks machines - one TA30 and eight TA 300s - all hard at work at six different clay quarries in Dorset and South Devon.

The trucks carry out two main tasks: transporting overburden materials and completing land restoration projects. In the case of the Doreys pit, five Terex Trucks machines are working non-stop to remove huge volumes of sandstone and 'bad clay' excavated by the diggers and then hauling it to a different part of the site. It will then be mostly used as back-fill to restore an adjacent quarry, from which the clay has already been removed, with 60,000 tons of sand sold from the site.

'This part of Doreys was a greenfield site until a year ago,' explains Peter. 'We put up screening bunds to shield the pit from the main road and built a road across the site over what was previously bog land. It's taken

us six months to take a big imprint off the site and get to the point where the clay can be removed.'

The Terex Truck machine at the Doreys pit each make 50-60 deliveries a day of overburden to the restoration point, being loaded in under a minute and a half with up to 30 tonnes. That adds up to between half and three quarters of a million cubic meters of overburden and restoration materials a year out of a total of 1.5 million cubic metres for all Andrews' clients.

The restoration part of the process complies with strict local authority environmental regulations, which ensure that the quarries, once depleted, are restored as far possible to wetland, heath or farmland. A few years from now, Doreys will no longer be the thrumming centre of activity it is today, but restored to its former rural calm, the 35-meter gash in the earth once again serene grassy farmland.

Wider tyres make light work

What makes Terex Trucks so good for this environment? The answer's at your feet. The Purbeck area may be gently rolling countryside delivering up fine-quality clay, but it's heavy-going terrain in long wet winters, when the sand turns to a soupy yellow sludge.

'Terex Trucks are perfect for our application. They have more power than other haulage trucks and stand up well to what can be pretty rugged conditions. The wider-than-average tyres on the machines allow the wheels to float over the top of the surface, instead of just spinning and jumping when the ground is very wet.'

This flotation design is a far cry from the days when clay was first mined in the area in closed pits in the early 1800s and any overburden materials were transported by donkey and cart.

Such sophisticated design benefits are not the only reason for Andrews' loyalty to the brand. 'We find that the Terex Trucks back-up is second to none,' explains Peter. 'If there's ever a breakdown, the engineer will be here with us on site in less than an hour. It's never a problem getting things repaired quickly and if ever a machine needs a factory modification, Terex Trucks will send another one down as a temporary replacement.'

'On a couple of occasions over the years, we've had new Terex Trucks models as soon as they've come off the production line. The company has monitored their performance and we've been able to give feedback on any breakdowns or modifications needed. It's a relationship and a product that's worked very well for us.'

Source: Terex Truck

Terex TA 30 On LECTURA Specs

Terex TA 300 On LECTURA Specs