

Diamond Year For Jcb Backhoe As Company Looks To Future

JCB's iconic backhoe loader today celebrated 60 years in production – with the promise of more exciting innovations to come on a machine that has, literally, helped shape the world.

Company founder Joseph Cyril Bamford invented the concept of the backhoe and the first JCB model was manufactured in 1953 after he combined a lightweight backhoe with a Major Loadall tractor loader. It created, for the first time, a single machine which combined a front shovel and rear excavator arm.

And while it may have taken 20 years for JCB to build the first 50,000 JCB backhoe loaders, under the leadership of JCB Chairman Lord Bamford, the company has gone on to manufacture the machines in the UK, India and Brazil and to date more than half a million JCB backhoes have rolled off production lines around the world.

From that early JCB MkI backhoe, the concept developed rapidly, with the launch of the Hydra-Digger in 1956 and the heavier, more powerful JCB 4 in 1960. Today backhoe loaders are the fourth most popular machine in terms of global plant equipment sales – despite the evolution of new and competitive products over the past 60 years. And JCB's iconic backhoe is the biggest selling in the world – and has been for 13 consecutive years, dominating the market it created.

Today Lord Bamford said: "It is staggering to think that it's 60 years since we produced the first JCB backhoe. The increasing versatility and innovation associated with this machine has been unrelenting and that is something that will continue apace in the future."

Tim Burnhope, JCB's Chief Innovation and Growth Officer said: "The backhoe loader is not 60 years old, it's 60 years young and this iconic machine has only just started its journey. The JCB backhoe will continue to develop and grow. It is a concept that has much to offer going forwards.

"It is a hugely important machine and in the next few years we will see the backhoe loader develop rapidly as a powerful and versatile tool carrier. Because of this versatility, it is far more than just a digging machine and our customers are starting to reinvent the backhoe loader for themselves, based on what it can offer as a tool carrying machine."

Over the last six decades JCB has continually developed and enhanced

the backhoe concept. The company was first with turbocharged engines, powershift transmissions, four-wheel drive and extending dipper arms, all leading to increased performance and productivity. The concept has also broadened in scope, to include everything from a compact skid-based 1CX, through the all-wheel steer 2CX, the ever-popular 3CX to the equal-wheel 4CX, and most recently the powerful 5CX models.

One of the most exciting developments came with the unveiling of the High Mobility Engineer Excavator (HMEE). It is the world's fastest backhoe loader, travelling at up to 55mph on both roads and cross-country, with a crew-protection variant, enabling battlefield commanders to have logistics capabilities in front patrols.

The company has developed its technology and engineering expertise as well, now building its own market-leading range of Stage IIIB/Tier 4 Interim diesel engines, its own transmissions and hydraulic systems, even the cabs are designed, assembled and fabricated in-house, allowing JCB to control quality and design at every stage of the build process. This has led to greater advances in productivity, economy and operator comfort, through the use of lock-up torque converters, offering true 40km/h travel speeds, Advanced Easy Control servo control levers and the fuel-efficient Ecomax engine. This engine alone can save a customer up to 9% in fuel.