

ROKBAK

PRESS RELEASE
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Two Rokbak RA30s chosen for ‘Quarry of the Year’

Smith & Sons (Bletchington) has added two Rokbak RA30 articulated haulers to its fleet at the award-winning Gill Mill Quarry in Oxfordshire, with the trucks impressing with torque, manoeuvrability and low fuel consumption.

It is understandable that one of the best quarries in the UK requires the best equipment. That’s why, since October 2022, a pair of [Rokbak](#) RA30 articulated haulers have been loading and hauling primary ballast at a quarry for [Smith & Sons \(Bletchington\) Ltd.](#), a leading producer and supplier of primary and recycled aggregates for Oxfordshire and its surrounding counties.

In the first year of their arrival, the two [RA30s](#) shifted nearly half a million tonnes of material between them at [Gill Mill Quarry](#). The Gill Mill aggregate processing plant is the flagship site for Smith & Sons (Bletchington) and was declared ‘Quarry of the Year’ by the [British Aggregates Association](#) for its operating standards at the end of 2020.

“The Rokbaks that we’ve got are integral to our operation insofar as their suitability to the site – they’re not too small and they’re not too big,” says Gill Mill Quarry Manager [Jeff Murphy](#). “With the constraints that we’ve got on some of the roads, they suit our needs, and we find them efficient and easy to operate. They’re very operator friendly.”

Operations at Gill Mill start at 6:30am with a standard maintenance check on equipment, and run until 5pm, five days a week. Daily checks including damage inspection and fuel level monitoring are conducted from a maintenance sheet. Once completed, operations commence and the trucks bring up premium ballast to be converted into building materials.

The RA30 articulated haulers, each with a 28 tonne (30.9 US ton) maximum payload and a 17.5m³ (22.9yd³) heaped capacity, currently work on load and carry operations, dumping material into a hopper, with the material then fed to the main plant through a conveyer system. The distance travelled by each RA30 is approximately one mile per load, with each truck making between 25 and 30 roundtrips a day.

Smooth operators

“We’ve got two dedicated Rokbak dumper operators on site,” explains Jeff. “The feedback we’ve received from them is very positive, with the trucks being very manoeuvrable, easy to operate and very user-friendly.”

Each Rokbak cab has pressurised capabilities and a premium performance HVAC and air flow system. Clear instrumentation and an LCD display for operational and service feedback, including fuel consumption, is intended for simple operation and service data extraction.

“My personal pick is the rear-view camera, with a very big, clear screen ideal for all weather conditions, day and night,” says operator Warren Mobey. “If we didn’t have it, it would make things harder for us. Relying on just mirrors is not a way we could probably operate at Gill Mill.

“However, the mirrors easily defrost in the morning,” Warren adds. “In summertime it’s essential that you have good air-con, which in the Rokbak is excellent. It’s like a whirlwind going at you!”

The two units were purchased from [Molson Equipment](#), one of the UK’s largest independent new and used equipment dealers, with a 6000 hour fixed price service contract and a 3 year / 5000 hour powertrain warranty. The trucks arrived following an initial recommendation from another Molson customer, a longstanding supplier of plant and services to Smith & Sons (Bletchington).

“The positive feedback about our aftersales service and the quality of the Rokbak trucks that customer ran played a big part in creating this partnership,” explains [Dan Guibarra](#), Sales Manager, Molson Equipment.

“Now at Gill Mill, the durability and build quality of the Rokbak haulers shines through on this well-run site. Smith & Sons feedback has been very positive on the fuel consumption, with a saving of circa 7% compared to its previous machines.

“The versatility of these machines means that Smith & Sons can move them around site. The trucks have the grip and torque to keep operations running smoothly, even during the wet and slippery winter months.”

The RA30 has a maximum torque of 1880 Nm @ 1400 rpm, which proves extra useful when operating across difficult ground and provides good traction in wet conditions.

“Torque and rim pull are areas we focus on when it comes to the design of the trucks,” says Rokbak Regional Sales Manager EMEA [Kenny Price](#). “They need to have that torque and pull when they’re fully loaded to move in an efficient manner.”

“Beneath our depot is Oxford Blue Clay, which is often utilised for restoration purposes but difficult to traverse,” says Jeff. “However, the Rokbak trucks have been fantastic with that great torque when moving through clay. We find them a real benefit.”

Community service

Gill Mill quarry opened in 1989 and has planned reserves until 2035. Lying next to the River Windrush at Ducklington, a village near the West Oxfordshire town of Witney, the 135-acre plant produces a wide range of washed sands and gravels for use in many projects, from the construction of roads and bridges, to building homes and hospitals. The Gill Mill operation extracts around 450,000 tonnes of oolite limestone sand and gravel per year, which is then sold to the local construction market. 80% of all sales are delivered within 20 miles of the quarry, which has won numerous awards for achievements in sustainable development, restoration and commitment to biodiversity and nature conservation.

Reducing environmental impact is a key tenet of the Rokbak brand. As part of the [Volvo Group](#), Rokbak is aligned to the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) for significant improvements to carbon emissions, with specific aims including a 30% reduction in CO₂ by 2030, a 50% factory operations emission reduction by the same year and becoming net-zero by 2040.

These commitments have influenced the design of the Rokbak trucks, the daily operation of the company's Motherwell factory and the Rokbak sustainability roadmap. Reducing its impact on the environment has seen Rokbak employ strategies stemming from fuel consumption analysis, examining alternative fuels, extending maintenance cycles and lessening maintenance consumables. This has also led to the reduction of total cost of ownership (TCO) for Rokbak customers.

Ends.

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ABOUT ROKBAK

Rokbak is a manufacturer of off-highway articulated haulers that are used in mining, quarrying, and construction applications around the world. A member of the Volvo Group and headquartered in Motherwell, Scotland, UK, Rokbak has two models of articulated haulers, with payloads ranging from 28 to 38 tonnes (30.9 to 41.9 US tons).

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