

70 years and counting

a.b.e. CONSTRUCTION CHEMICALS is one of few South African companies which has managed to operate successfully for 70 years. The ever-growing company is today one of the leading suppliers of specialised construction products to the building, civil engineering and building maintenance industries.

The roots of the JSE ALT-X listed company are older than 70 years as its earliest origins can be traced to the acquisition of 50% of the English company, International Bitumen Emulsions (IBE), by the Durban shipping company, Corrie Man George back in 1932. The South African operations of IBE were then named 'African Bitumen Emulsions' (a.b.e.).

In 1939, a.b.e. started distributing its

range of primarily bitumen products to municipalities in what was then still known as Natal province.

In 1965, Shell bought 50% of a.b.e. and Much Asphalt acquired the other half of a.b.e. from Corrie Man George. In 1975, a new holding company, abecol, of which Shell and Murray & Roberts each owned 50%, was established and this led the way for a.b.e. opening industrial and roads divisions. Two new branches – in Bloemfontein and East London – were also opened.

Murray & Roberts (M&R) in 1989 acquired the entire shareholding of a.b.e. but,

The new Silver Star Casino on the West Rand is one of many new prestige projects for which a.b.e. products were specified.



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Four a.b.e. products for Durban Harbour tunnel repairs

a.b.e. CONSTRUCTION CHEMICALS supplied four products for the concrete repairs of the Transnet tunnel which is laid underwater around the perimeter of the Port of Durban's Pier 1.

Deon de Kock, a.b.e.'s Technical Sales Consultant in Durban, says the company's durarep FR, epidermix 344, duraflex and durakol G HM, were applied by contractor, GVK Siya Zama, to repair concrete spalled areas in the container terminal's services tunnel.

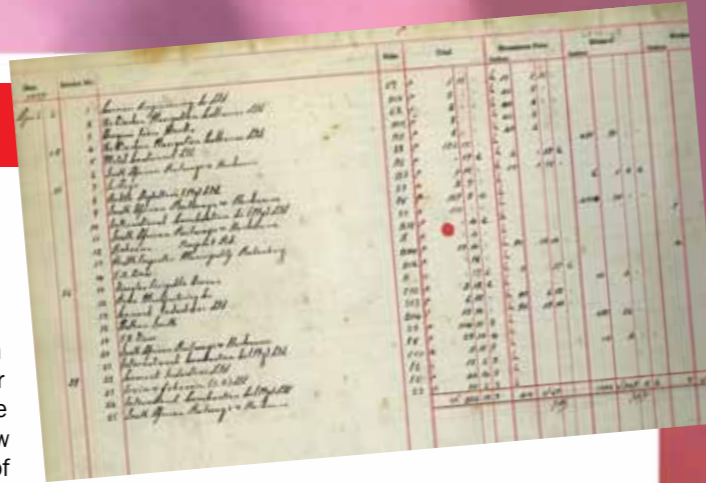
"durarep FR and epidermix 344 have for long formed a highly effective combination for concrete repairs. In this case, the system was used to increase the tunnel's resistance to chloride and carbon dioxide penetration and extend the durability of the structure," De Kock states.

durarep FR is a fibre-reinforced structural repair mortar, suitable for vertical and overhead applications. Some of the features and benefits of the product are:

- Ready to use and simple to apply;
- High ultimate strength;
- Resistance to salt, frost and thawing;
- Chloride-free;
- Non-shrink;
- Superior bonding to concrete;
- Four to six times stronger abrasion resistance than plain rendering;
- Pre-blending produces constant quality and performance; and
- Non-toxic.

"a.b.e.'s duraflex flexible waterproofing slurry was also applied to all internal walls and floors of the tunnel to prevent the sea-water from penetrating the tunnel on the edge of the pier. All joints were subsequently sealed with durakol G HM sealant," De Kock adds. durakol G HM is a gun-grade, two component, manganese cured polysulphide sealant.

Four a.b.e. products were specified for the concrete repair work in Durban harbour's Pier 1 tunnel.



a.b.e. Construction Chemicals' 1939 ledger shows a vastly different method of book-keeping compared with today's computerised accounting.

seven years later, sold 50% of the company to Chemserve. The following year, Steelwood Africa, bought half of the a.b.e. shareholding from M&R – and acquired the balance in 1999.

The most recent noteworthy event in the history of a.b.e. was its successful listing on the JSE ALT-X two years ago, which followed the sale of 26% of the company to the BEE company, Auburn.

Interesting relics from a.b.e.'s early days today serve as historical mementos. The 1939 company ledger reflects sales to the likes of "South African Railways & Harbours" (£126), International Combustion (£169 pounds), and British Asphalters for a mere pound and 15 shillings.

a.b.e.'s super laykold, super laycyl, brixal and flintkote are four liquid waterproofing products that are this year also celebrating 70 years on the South African market.

SPOTLIGHT ON QUALITY

70
Years of
Quality



A passion for quality and innovation got us where we are today, and with your commitment will continue to light the way into the future.



IT'S NOT AN EXPENSE
IT'S AN INVESTMENT.