

SRB SPLIT ROLLER BEARINGS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Split bearings were invented more than 100 years ago but were not used extensively until relatively recently. The main reasons for this were:-

1. The original manufacturer monopolised the market which resulted in high prices
2. Although a revolutionary advance in bearing manufacture, the original design did not allow for interchange ability with conventional Spherical bearing Plummer blocks. This was due to the support bolt holes and centre heights of split bearing being incompatible with Plummer blocks.

In 1978 Revolve (a 40 year old UK bearing manufacturer) realized the business opportunity and developed the Split Roller Bearings (SRB) product to compete in this niche market. OE Bearings (Pty) Limited signed an agency agreement for Sub Sahara Africa with Revolve in 1997, and has since grown the market and become the market leader in Split bearings in Southern Africa.

In growing the market, OE Bearings has converted many Conveyor bearings and Mine main ventilating Fan bearings from Plummer blocks to Split Roller Bearings. The main advantages

of SRB Split bearings over Spherical bearings:-

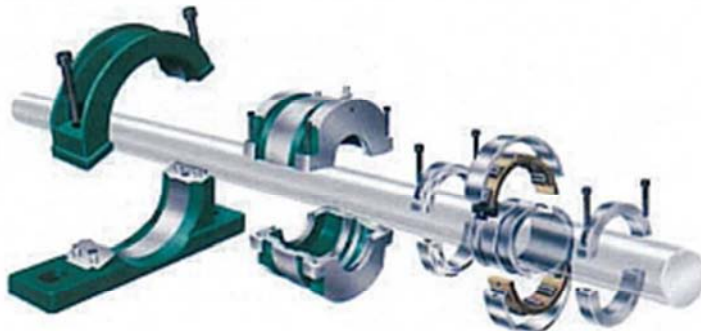
1. The ease of replacing a failed or damaged spherical bearing with an SRB split bearing results in a considerable reduction in the down time and loss of production and consequently improved Profit.
2. In most cases, where it is not possible to remove a gearbox, a coupling or a holdback in order to replace a failed spherical bearing, this equipment has to be cut off. The cost of the damage to this equipment would be far greater than the cost of a replacement SRB bearing.
3. The vast number of conversions successfully completed, have led many companies to specify SRB Split Roller bearings on new conveyors and Fans. Examples of these companies are: Anglo Platinum, Impala Platinum, Xstrata, Transnet, Asmang, Debewana and Aquarius to name but a few.

Having a "hands on" approach to their business, OE Bearings have recognized the need for the compatibility of SRB bearings with Plummer blocks. This has led to a joint development with Revolve of the "SN" and the "SD" range. This new design has become the standard in

industry and has forced our competitors to copy the design. Whilst the "SN" and the "SD" range is already available in both Light and Medium series bearings, the competitors have, as yet, only managed to copy the Light Series range.

As a further development based on extensive field experience and the success of the "SN" and "SD" range, OE Bearings has developed a new range which was launched at Belton 16. The new design, "SNQ", is an extension of the "SN" and "SD" range with the exception that the split line is angled so that the base of the Support can now slide beneath the shaft.

This design will further reduce the time required to replace a Plummer block with a SRB. At a sneak preview of the SNQ range in Zambia at Copper Belt Commercial Show, the interest was over whelming, the Engineering Manager of Mopani Copper mines remarked "that is very clever" and he could immediately see the benefit to his mines. The reaction at the CMA Belton 16 conference, was similar to that of the visitors to Copper Belt Commercial Show many existing and new customers have expressed an interest in using the new "SNQ" design.



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