

Mineral Planning

Quarry wins top award

28 June 2016, by Jez Abbott,

A Scottish quarry was awarded a 'quarry of the year' gong this week by the British Aggregates Association (BAA), which has warned the industry on operating standards.

Hugh King & Co scooped the award for its Hullerhill sand quarry at Kilwinning in Ayrshire. The business has been producing sands for over 160 years.

Hullerhill is one of three three quarries, one – Hullerhill - producing white sand and two producing brown, and the company started in the 19th century dragging sand off nearby beaches.

Today it produces more than 100,000 tonnes of sand annually with a workforce of around 30 staff headed by managing director Graeme King, sixth generation of his family to run the business

BAA made the award at its annual general meeting and conference in Buxton, Derbyshire, this Monday, 27 June.

Hugh King & Co health and safety officer Martin Gunning told Mineral Planning: "Graeme King is extremely knowledgeable and in recent years we have diversified not only products but expanded our remit."

BAA Eric Darlow said: "This is a special award, but not an automatic annual award – if quarries don't meet our exacting standards, we won't give the award."

Darlow also gave out two BAA assessment of operating standards scheme awards, one of which also went to Hugh King & Co.

The other went to Cloburn Quarry Co, a red granite pit in South Lanarkshire, Scotland. Director Paul McManus received the award in front of more 80 delegates.

The scheme checks quarries are run competently and in line with environmental legislation through assessment and independent review of safety.

But Darlow, who chairs the assessment panel that oversees the scheme, warned:
"Seventy members are quarry companies and 20 have passed through the scheme.

"A dozen have completed the three-year assessment, making over 30 successful awards. I would have anticipated such a beneficial scheme after 10 years would have 80% of members joining with at least a half completing the three-year assessment.

"That was a reasonable target but we are pretty much where we started 10 years ago. We are losing a vital means of publicity and PR.

"Good PR is the oxygen of success and by not adopting such a standards scheme other organisations may think BAA members are not so interested in their workforce.

"That is grossly undeserved: about 20% of member have worked hard to reach a reasonable standard of occupational health and safety, which has helped our industry. But given the times we live in, is that enough?"