

Colin Evans MBE

Colin Evans, site supervisor at Hanson Aggregates' Penderyn quarry in South Wales, had a date at Buckingham Palace on 28 October 2005 to receive his MBE, after being appointed in the Queen's Birthday Honours earlier this year for services to health and safety in the quarry industry.

Colin, who is the union-appointed safety representative at Penderyn, was nominated for his work to encourage employee participation in occupational health and safety, and in particular his efforts to promote quarry-based events in support of the annual European Week for Safety and Health.

In 2002 he ran a programme of events at his own and neighbouring quarries. The following year he organised five days of safety



lectures and demonstrations throughout South Wales and persuaded Bill Callaghan, Chair of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC), to give the opening address at Builth Wells quarry.

He has received a number of industry awards to recognise his hard work, but admitted that when news of the MBE reached him: 'You could have knocked me down with a feather.'

'I don't do what I do to win awards,' he said, 'but I was highly delighted to be recognised in this way.'

EFFECTIVE

QNJAC declaration on worker involvement

The HSC/E published a 'Collective declaration on worker involvement', in 2004, which can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/workers/involvement/involvement.pdf. It includes recognition of the *'positive impact trade unions have on health and safety performance'* and that *'trade union safety representatives through their empowered role in consultation show the strongest relationship with safety compliance'*.

The declaration also recognises the challenge of encouraging active worker involvement in health and safety in non-unionised workplaces (such as most quarries), and the need for innovative ways to promote and support such involvement.

With this in mind, the QNJAC in October 2005 adopted a statement of principle on engaging the workforce, and related guidance, both of which will shortly be published on the QNJAC website (www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/qnjac/guidance.htm).

The subcommittee on worker representation is chaired by Neal Reynolds, GMB representative, from Hanson's Livox Quarry in South Wales.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

QNJAC statement of principle on worker involvement

Every worker has a right to work in places where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled.

Every worker should have a voice and will be given opportunities to influence health and safety in the places they work.

We actively promote positive relationships between all people working on our sites, and those having control of work. We recognise the role that worker and union safety representatives play in improving worker health and safety consultation.

We will:

- expect all workers to get involved;
- encourage operators, employers, contractors and others in control of workplaces to ensure that workers are listened to and given real opportunities to help improve their working conditions;
- encourage operators, employers, contractors and others in control of workplaces to ensure that sufficient resources, including training, are made available to improve worker consultation;
- develop and share good practice in the industry.

Our aim is to achieve a long-term culture change in the quarry and related industries, to improve working conditions for everyone.

Competence for employee representatives

The QNJAC developed its own training course for worker representatives, launched in 2001, the content of which was agreed as the necessary minimum training for an employee to be able to function effectively as a committee member under regulation 40 of the Quarries Regulations 1999.

The QNJAC's target is for all worker representatives to be trained, as a minimum, to the standards of the QNJAC course by 2010, which is a very powerful indication of the industry's commitment to worker involvement as a means to ensure sustained health and safety improvement.

The course is delivered by the TUC, and can be arranged in-house or accessed via the Open College network at various venues across the country. Course details are available from Jackie Williams, TUC Education Officer on 0207 636 4030, or at www.tuc.org.uk/learning/tuc-9547-f0.cfm.

Organising for health and safety

The TUC has produced a new resource for use by branch safety officers, full-time officers, and groups of safety representatives to help improve the organisation of health and safety in the workplace, recruit new safety representatives, and make safety committees more effective. It can be accessed at www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-10626-f0.cfm.