

## Quarry of the year named

20 June 2017, by Jez Abbott,

A small pit has been crowned quarry of the year by industry leaders who bid a warm farewell to a well-known colleague who retired this week.



Laurence Carmichael with the quarry of the year shield. Picture: Mineral Planning

Longwood Quarries won the award at the British Aggregates Association (BAA) annual conference held just outside Birmingham this Monday.

The seven-staff quarry in Blankney near Lincoln has supplied screened lime and crushed aggregates to the farming and construction industry for more than 50 years.

Quarry manager Laurence Carmichael said the award was for high operating standards, good health and safety and comprehensive training.

He told Mineral Planning: "Many people in the sector are older, and training is not something they really want to do. But when you explain its importance and how it helps them, they come around."

Longwood Quarries also won a BAA operating standards scheme certificate, along with WCL Quarries in Muckley Corner, Staffordshire, with manager Mark Deadman accepting the certificate.

Harleyford Aggregates' quarry manager Dan Folley picked up the third certificate awarded on Monday for meeting the BAA operating standards at Sipson quarry at Heathrow.

The conference, marked by a minute's silence for victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, recognised the efforts of standards and awards panel chair Eric Darlow, who has retired after ten year's in the post.

Darlow has been in the quarrying industry for 60 years and started aged 17 as a trainee. For 30 years he was HM inspector of quarries and was also a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) policy expert.

He was awarded an MBE for services to the quarrying industry in the 2012 new year's honours list.

"It has been a great joy working for the BAA and has helped me understand the importance of smaller quarrying companies," he said.

"When I was head of the inspectorate, though my intentions were pure, I felt we could solve the industry's appalling accident rate at the time by concentrating almost solely on big companies.

"It was a mistake and I have made amends. This is a wonderful way to end a career that I would not have changed for anything."

Darlow said his replacement as panel chair, Steven Cole, was a "committee founder and stalwart, whose knowledge and competence are well known to the industry".

BAA director Robert Durward said Darlow brought "four things to health and safety": a lifetime's industry experience, unrivalled knowledge of regulation, and authority thanks to his policy work.

"Finally, he has also brought integrity: he has no hidden agendas and no spite. He took a basic concept and turned it into a highly efficient operating standards scheme."