

The
aggregates industry
at a glance





Facing the future

The UK's aggregates and quarry products industry is at the hub of the nation's life. Our existence revolves around a built environment that owes its strength and structure to stone and to the quarries that provide it. They give us places to live and also places where we learn, work, play and much more.

Balancing all these factors is essential if we are to satisfy today's needs while not detracting from the world we pass on to future generations.

- There are over 1,300 quarries in Britain supported by a fleet of marine aggregate dredgers. Together, they produce some 210 million tonnes of aggregates a year
- The balance of our needs comes from recycled and secondary aggregates. Sales have grown to around 67 million tonnes a year - 24 per cent of the total market in Britain
- Around 90 per cent of aggregates are used for construction, much of it for making products such as ready-mixed concrete, concrete products, mortar and asphalt
- An average house consumes around 60 tonnes of aggregates. Quarry products play their part from the foundations right the way up to the tiles on the roof. In addition, quarry products are used for footpaths and access roads, and for the construction and maintenance of utilities.



Social progress

Few industries interact with society at so many levels as quarrying. Its products are as essential in keeping the nation's infrastructure going as they are in satisfying the needs of a typical family for a new home.

The health and safety of employees is the industry's top priority. The sector was the first to sign up to the Health & Safety Commission's *Hard Target* initiative. It has beaten its initial five-year incident reduction target to date and has now set its sights firmly on zero as its ultimate target.

The industry is committed also to engagement with its various external stakeholders - none more so than local communities.

- The QPA's *Hard Target* initiative resulted in a 73 per cent reduction in health and safety incidents between 2000 and 2005. A further 50 per cent cut is targeted by 2009
- A total of nearly 10,000 national vocational qualifications have been achieved by industry employees over recent years
- Nearly 200 sites operated by QPA members now have community liaison groups. QPA members also held 33 public open days and welcomed over 700 schools visits in 2004
- A total of 120 archaeological investigations were underway at QPA member quarries in 2004.



Environmental protection

The industry takes its environmental responsibilities seriously with nearly 800 QPA members' sites subject to certified environmental systems. Issues such as noise and dust are comprehensively addressed.

While virtually all aggregates are moved by road at some point in their journey, extensive use is made of rail and increasing use of inland waterways. Marine aggregate dredgers have the great advantage of being able to deliver close to the heart of urban areas.

Land restoration is one of the industry's great achievements. There are many examples of land that has been "borrowed" for quarrying being returned at a higher quality or for beneficial new uses. The industry is an important contributor to biodiversity and geodiversity.

- Some **36** million tonnes of aggregates were moved by non-road transport modes in 2004
- Around **14,300** hectares of land was being quarried, **434** hectares had been prepared for quarrying and over **860** hectares were restored by QPA members in 2004
- QPA members planted over **195,000** trees and nearly **20,000** metres of hedgerow in 2004
- More than **700** of the UK's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) have their origins in quarrying
- The area of the seabed licensed for marine aggregate dredging in 2005 totalled **1,179km²** - **0.136** per cent of the UK seabed. Of this, only **137.6km²** (**11.7** per cent) has been dredged.

Natural resources

Aggregate resources are being used with increasing efficiency. Over the last decade total use has been relatively stable, but the industry has supported a 27 per cent increase in construction activity.

With some 67 million tonnes of material in annual use, Britain is top of the European league for producing recycled and secondary aggregates.

Marine aggregates contribute around 13 million tonnes to construction needs - the equivalent of some 50 medium-sized land quarries.

The industry also depends on the use of other valuable resources - notably water and energy. Water needed in production processes is typically abstracted from local water courses under licence, and is often recycled.

- Of the 281 million tonnes of aggregates produced in the UK in 2004, 76 per cent was from land and marine primary sources and 24 per cent recycled and secondary
- We consume some 4.8 tonnes of aggregates per head in Britain, which is substantially less than the European average of 6.9 tonnes
- The aggregates and quarry products industry emitted 9.98kg of carbon per tonne of total production in 2004 - 0.6 per cent of the UK's total.



Economic prosperity

The quarry products industry has a turnover of over £4 billion and employs some 38,000 people directly and an estimated 50,000 indirectly.

The industry supports many downstream industries. In particular, it feeds essential materials to the construction sector, which makes a £100 billion contribution to the economy. It also supplies essential non-metallic minerals to industries as diverse as steel and agriculture. Versatile aggregates help to improve the fertility of our land and clean up acidic power station emissions.

At local level, quarries and allied operations are significant contributors to local and regional economies, not just through the jobs they provide and the business rates and taxes they pay, but through their spending with suppliers ranging from hauliers to engineering companies.

- The industry provides employment for an estimated **88,000** people - **38,000** directly and **50,000** indirectly
- Much of the **281** million tonnes of aggregates produced in the UK in 2004 were used in manufacturing **23** million cubic metres of ready-mixed concrete and **27** million tonnes of asphalt. In addition, they are used in concrete products and mortar
- Aggregates and quarry products are key contributors to the **£100** billion pa value of construction output which is **7** per cent of the economy
- Total aggregates are equivalent to **4.8** tonnes per person. Over **20** million tonnes pa are used in industries as diverse as iron and steel, cement, power generation, ceramics, glass, pharmaceuticals and agriculture.



Providing Essential Materials for Britain

The trade association for companies involved in supplying crushed rock and sand and gravel from land and marine sources, asphalt and flexible paving, ready-mixed concrete, silica sand, agricultural lime, industrial lime, mortar, slag, recycled materials and construction and quarrying plant

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