Built for generations: celebrating 70 years of Breedon Fyfestone

Andy Henderson has spent four decades working at Kemnay Quarry, following in his father's footsteps after growing up in a house on-site

Fyfestone, Breedon Group's natural stone-effect concrete blocks, is celebrating 70 years of production

A Scottish-made building material is celebrating 70 years of production – with one worker having witnessed more than half of its history first-hand.

Fyfestone, a high-quality concrete block manufactured by Breedon Group at Kemnay Quarry in Aberdeenshire, was first developed in the 1950s as an alternative to traditional granite. Designed to replicate the look and finish of natural stone, it is used to construct walls in both domestic and commercial properties.

Now, as Fyfestone marks seven decades of production, Breedon has shared the story behind one of the families that has worked at the quarry for two generations and more than 70 years.

Andy Henderson first started working at Kemnay Quarry in 1986, following in the footsteps of his father, Joe who was General Manager before him. Having grown up in a family home on the site, the quarry has been part of Andy's life since long before he began his own 40-year career there.

"It's quite something when you think about it. We've been caretakers for two generations and I feel quite proud to be involved in something that's going to outlast me," Andy, who is Operations Manager, said.

Andy had not always planned to follow his father into the industry. He was studying electrical and electronic engineering at Aberdeen University when an opportunity arose at Kemnay Quarry and he began his career as a general laborer.

Speaking about starting his career at Kemnay, Andy said: "The funny thing is, my father was unsure If I was 'quite up to the job' at first. I'd hope that now, 40 years later, he'd have something different to say about that!"

Since then, Andy has progressed through the ranks and is now Operations Manager, where he is responsible for overseeing daily manufacturing operations, managing staff and meeting production targets.

Fyfestone is made by mixing granite aggregates with cement to produce a concrete mix. The concrete is then placed into moulds before being compressed under around 400 tonnes of pressure, creating a dense and durable product designed to closely resemble natural stone.

The material has been used for building projects across the UK, including Balmoral Castle, Devonport Docks and Manchester's Malmaison Hotel, as well as at Breedon's own headquarters at Pinnacle House in Leicestershire.

During his four decades at the quarry, Andy has witnessed significant transformations at the site, including the introduction of automated, computerised systems and robotics to support daily operations.

He said: “70 years later, the craftsmanship behind Fyfestone hasn’t changed, but the technology certainly has. What was once a very manual process, with materials being batched by hand, is now automated and computerised. Embracing new technologies has made our day-to-day operations safer, smarter and more efficient, ensuring a classic product continues to stand the test of time."

Jeremy Edinborough, General Manager at Breedon said: “Producing Fyfestone at Kemnay for 70 years is something we’re incredibly proud of. The product has stood the test of time, and its longevity is testament to the quality of the material and the expertise of the people who have produced it over the years.

“Andy’s story really brings that history to life. He grew up at Kemnay, followed his father into the business and, 40 years later, is still here helping to produce the same material. There can't be many people with a connection to their workplace quite like that.”

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About Breedon Group

Breedon Group plc, a leading vertically-integrated construction materials group in Great Britain, Ireland and the United States delivers essential products to the construction sector. Breedon holds 1.5bn tonnes of mineral reserves and resources with long reserve life, supplying value-added products and services, including speciality materials, surfacing and highway maintenance operations, to a broad range of customers through its extensive local network of quarries, ready-mixed concrete and asphalt plants.

The Group's two well-invested cement plants are actively engaged in a number of carbon reduction practices, which include utilising alternative raw materials and lower carbon fuels. Breedon's 4,900 colleagues embody our commitment to 'Make a Material Difference' as the

Group continues to execute its strategy to create sustainable value for all stakeholders, delivering growth through organic improvement and acquisition in the heavyside construction materials market. Breedon shares (BREE) are traded on the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange, with Breedon a constituent of the FTSE 250 index.