

Raising the status of stone



**Cotswold
Natural
Stone**

Cotswold Natural Stone has introduced strong new branding carrying the message that it is ‘inspiring lives and legacies in stone’. Its introduction coincides with the opening of a Natural Stone Gallery showcasing the benefits and beauty of stone.



Since Luke Conlon bought out his brother from Cotswold Natural Stone in 2020 he has been working on developing the company’s Grange Hill Quarry and a new centre of excellence for stone on an acre of land in Shilton, Oxfordshire, that was part of an RAF airfield in World War II.

Those plans have now come together and in June the company held a series of open days at the Stone Gallery to introduce the new concept and brand to developers, planners, architects, clients and the trade.

Three lucky visitors also won bottles of Champagne and a stone carving of a Champagne cork with the new Cotswold Natural Stone logo and the ‘lives and legacies’ message engraved on it – a smaller version of the one pictured below, which is a sculpture in the gardens around the Stone Gallery.

In a glass-walled meeting room in the stylish new Gallery, which houses the company’s offices as well as the showroom, a video played, showing Grange Hill Quarry. It looked tidy and efficient under the management of Greg Bridges, who has a background in engineering and joined the group in 2020 as Operations Director. He has brought his skillset and wealth of knowledge to head up the new production facility at Cotswold Natural Stone.

Another new member of the team is Paul Keyte, previously with Johnston Quarry Group, who is now the Sales & Business Development Director of Cotswold Natural Stone, having been recruited after he left Johnston’s.

Greg and Paul join a team of 60 at the company, which includes those at APS Masonry in Osney Mead, Oxfordshire, which Cotswold Natural

Stone took over in 2016. The plan now is to move APS to new 2,500m² premises in Grange Hill Quarry, drop the APS name and incorporate the business into Cotswold Natural Stone to strengthen the corporate image.

The new brand proposition and identity, with the strapline of ‘Lives and Legacies in Stone’, bring it all together. The logo was created by designer Paula Talford working in conjunction with illustrator Andrew Davidson, who designed the King Charles III coronation postage stamps.

The distinctive and instantly recognisable logo will appear on the company vehicles, staff uniforms and literature. Paula says the new branding reflects a company that already has a range of top quality products and services.

The new branding is brimming with significance, capturing Cotswold Natural Stone’s location in the Cotswolds, its history, values and craftsmanship, as well as a human approach to business.

The figure in the logomark is ‘Cuda’, a goddess and leader of the Dobunni tribe, presiding over the lands that are now known as the Cotswolds. There is evidence that the name of the Cotswolds derived from ‘Cuda’s Wold’ (Cuda’s lands).

Cuda worked alongside her tribe of renowned craftspeople, nurturing and looking after the land. This is reflected in Cotswold Natural Stone’s ambitions and values, emphasising the sustainability of natural stone and the company’s express intention of becoming ‘net zero’ in carbon emissions, set out for all to see on posters displayed on the outside wall of the Stone Gallery.

It is a message reinforced on jars of honey made by bees living in hives at Grange



Above and left. The new stone centre and Stone Gallery opened by Cotswold Natural Stone in Shilton, Oxfordshire, in June as part of the re-branding of the company as a supplier of its own Grange Hill Quarry Cotswold limestone and other British and European stones.

Below. Body Language 2, carved in Ancaster Weatherbed limestone by artist Martin Cash. It is one of several sculptures by local artists on show and on sale at the new Cotswold Natural Stone centre. Price: £8,500.



Cotswold Natural Stone

Hill Quarry and sold in the Stone Gallery. The nectar is gathered by the bees from an abundance of wild flowers planted in a nature reserve created around the quarry by Cotswold Natural Stone.

Cuda's crown in the logo is made of masons' tools, with the rare native Cotswold Pennycress flower at the front. The flower is found in Barton Bushes Nature Reserve, a biological site of special scientific interest a mile-and-a-half from Grange Hill Quarry. Cuda's clothing and hair reflect the rolling landscapes of the Cotswolds, all encapsulated by the letter 'C' for 'Cotswold Natural Stone'.

The 'inspiring lives and legacies in stone' strapline is to emphasise to designers, architects and developers that stone is so much more than simply a beautiful product, and that the materials and services supplied by Cotswold Natural Stone are there to be embraced, enjoyed and celebrated for many generations to come.

Although Cotswold Natural Stone has its own quarry – and there is plenty of stone from Grange Hill on show in Shilton – there are also other British and European stones displayed there.

Outside are galleries with panels of different styles of building stone and walling, and in the landscape are kerbs, paving and setts, ashlar walling of planters and the bridge over an ornamental pond, and even the gravel is crushed waste from Grange Hill.

A beautifully crafted stone pavilion (where some of the staff posed for the photograph bottom right) shows stone roofing and masonry, including columns, door and window frames and an impressive fireplace.

Inside the 300m² Stone Gallery, which has been created from a building that was the shower block of the former airfield, there are 14 panels of flooring in materials including York Stone, Portland and Bath, as well as stones from France, Germany, and Spain, some of it also used externally as paving. There is stone furniture and fireplaces, and a Portland limestone spiral staircase.

The focus on British and European stones is part of Cotswold Natural Stone's commitment to carbon reduction, which is a central theme of its message, especially to planners and developers.

Luke Conlon says he invited Paul Keyte to join the company to add to its professionalism. And Paul says the stone centre is important because the stone industry still needs to educate people about the benefits of natural stone, including its environmental, low carbon advantages. There is also nothing like seeing and touching stone in real life to fully appreciate its beauty, says Paul. "People coming here will be inspired by stone."

If you would like to make an appointment to visit, email enquires@cns-group.co.uk. ■



Top. The Stone Gallery is on the right, set in an acre of landscaped gardens edged by panels showing different styles of building stones and walling. Cotswold Natural Stone's own Grange Hill Quarry has 12 lines with MEC splitters producing building and walling stone.

Above. Cotswold Natural Stone's commitment to net zero emissions set out on the outside wall of the new Stone Gallery.

Left. Owner Luke Conlon (centre) with Paul Keyte (left) and Greg Bridges. Paul has joined Cotswold Natural Stone as Sales & Business Development Director and Greg is Operations Director.

Below. The Cotswold Natural Stone team in part of the display at the new, inspirational stone centre and Stone Gallery at Shilton in Oxfordshire.

