

Moray woolmill awarded top EU accolade

Knockando: Just four UK projects honoured

BY KIERAN BEATTIE

The trust which helps to preserve a historic Moray woolmill, which has been spinning and weaving for more than 200 years, has received a prestigious award from the European Commission.

The Knockando Woolmill Trust is one of just four pro-

jects across the UK to receive a European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage and Europa Nostra Award for its work in preserving the region's history.

With earliest records of the Aberlour mill stretching as far back as 1748, the site has been passed through generation upon generation of Moray fami-



OLD SKILLS: Weaver and former owner of the Knockando Wool Mill, Hugh Jones, at work on the loom. Photograph: Sandy McCook

lies. The European Commission jury granted the site's charitable trust the award for its work in raising £3.5million to restore

the mill's A-listed buildings and traditional machinery.

Open to the public, the mill still creates woven fabric as it has done for 200 years.

The jury said: "The Knockando Woolmill is special due to its unbroken production of textiles over the last 200 years. This is exceptional in Europe and the survival of this type of production is rare.

"Though it is a local endeavour and is linked very much to its regional identity, the woolmill's production of high-quality textiles to a growing global market makes it an internationally significant endeavour.

"Its very survival in today's globalised world is deserving of European, if not international, recognition."

As well as a visitor centre, the Knockando mill also has a workshop to educate young people in traditional crafts.



Knockando Woolmill has been spinning and weaving for more than 200 years

The jury said: "The community involvement, the generation of new employment opportunities and the attraction of visitors to this relatively remote region is a wonderful example for comparable locations throughout Europe."

A spokeswoman for the mill said the trust was de-

lighted to receive "Europe's highest honour in the heritage field".

The spokeswoman said: "This prestigious award reflects extremely well on everyone involved. We all knew it was a special project and it is fantastic that it has received such widespread acclaim."

The mill, which lies just north of Ballindalloch, currently sells its products around the world through the internet, and welcomes thousands of visitors through its doors every year.

For more information visit www.knockando-woolmill.co.uk

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