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Northern Irish builder best in Britain

Cookstown builder Stephen Mulligan beat the cream of the country's builders to be crowned the Most Waste Efficient Builder at this year's Master Builder of the Year Awards 2007 for his work on 21 beautiful new cottages on the banks of Lough Erne, built using recycled and salvaged materials.

Expert property developer and TV presenter Sarah Beeny presented the award to MB Contracts (Mulligan Brothers) for their work on Kilmore Quay, a development of traditional Irish-style cottages built reusing steel, timber and insulation taken from the homes demolished on the site and using roof tiles recycled from car dashboards.

Client Derek Harrison of Portadown was impressed by the 're-use wherever possible' practices of builder Stephen Mulligan and his team, who, when they discovered old roof insulation in the derelict cottages they were demolishing, simply bagged it up and re-used it in the walls of the new cottages.

While attending a local **SelfBuild Show**, builder Stephen heard about Ecostar roof tiles, an innovative recycled rubber and plastic product made from old car dashboards, which look just like natural slate and he persuaded the client to use them.

"Last winter, there were really high winds and lots of rain but we had absolutely no problems with the recycled rubber tiles – in fact unlike rigid slate tiles, they flex in the wind," said Stephen Mulligan. "Using recycled materials is a great way of saving money for clients," Stephen added, "and it makes us more competitive too."

Envirowise were particularly impressed with Mulligan Brothers' commitment to waste minimisation in this project. Said Mike Payne of Envirowise, "They have really demonstrated an ethos of reuse wherever possible in this project."

The Master Builder of the Year Awards, now in its eighth year, is organised by the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), the UK's largest building trade association.

These annual awards celebrate the outstanding work delivered by the vast majority of builders who can only be nominated by highly satisfied clients.

MB Contracts (Mulligan Brothers) of Cookstown triumphed to win the national award in the Waste Minimisation category, which is supported by Envirowise.

Speaking at the Awards ceremony, FMB director general, Richard Diment said: "This year we have seen a greater range of projects than ever before, but also far more widespread use of energy efficient and renewable materials – this strikes at the heart of the FMB's determination to 'Build a Greener Britain'.

"The relationship between client and builder is fundamental to the success of every building project and it is heartening to see so many builders basing their business on the traditional qualities of politeness, trust, consideration and courtesy. These Awards celebrate builders who show excellent customer service, combined with exceptional professional skills. Again this year we have found an abundance of projects meeting these criteria," Richard added.

"Our congratulations go to Stephen Mulligan and his team for this well-deserved award, but equally our thanks go to Derek Harrison who appreciated their excellent work," said Richard.

Stephen Mulligan and Derek Harrison each win a luxury all inclusive weekend break for two at any of the UK Paramount Group of Hotels.

Master Builder of the Year 2007 is organised by the Federation of Master Builders in association with Nissan Motor (GB) Ltd, and supported by American Express, Aon Ltd, B & CE Benefit Schemes, British Gypsum Ltd, Buildstore & The National Self Build & Renovation Centre, ConstructionSkills, Energy Saving Trust, Envirowise, HBXL, Hilti, Homebuilding and Renovating, LABC, NHBC, Paramount Group of Hotels, Professional Builder Magazine, Sage (UK) Ltd, Screwfix Direct, Travis Perkins, and Master Builder magazine.