

# Award brings more grist to the 'Mill'

SEBAY Mill owners Billy and Sheena McEwen are one of only six recipients in Scotland to win a VisitScotland 'Special Achievement Award' the tourist industry's highest accolade for quality and excellent.

They were presented with the glass trophy by VisitScotland chief executive Philip Riddle at the event to launch the new Orkney Tourist Brochure in the Kirkwall Hotel last Wednesday.

Mr Riddle in handing the couple the award for their self-catering business said: "You set an example which we all in the industry strive to achieve."

VisitScotland Quality and Standards introduced the Special Achievement Awards last year to recognise tourism businesses which make that extra-special effort to provide for visitors.

Sebay Mill, in Tankerness was recognised for its high quality product but also in particular for its effort in making the visitor's experience wholly Orcadian in nature; through use of local arts and craft to decorate the accommodation, to fresh local produce in the visitor's welcome pack.

Clearly delighted, Billy said: "I am really proud to receive the award, not just for me, but for the whole of Orkney, as we are all one big team and we are working together to raise standards all round."

"We have also been trying to help other people by sharing the experiences we have had. We are really proud to be Orcadian and want the visitor to enjoy their Orkney experience."

He said it was a real contrast



**RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE:** Sheena and Billy McEwen with their 'Special Achievement Award' at Sebay Mill in Tankerness, this week.

ORKNEY PHOTOGRAPHIC

of emotions as he got the news that Sebay had won the award while his furniture and floor covering business in Kirkwall had been caught up in the floods which swept Kirkwall the week before last.

In his talk to members of the tourist industry last week, Mr Riddle – who took time out to visit Sebay Mill – said: "One of the things the industry in Orkney can really do is find ways of making sure

that everyone is raising their standards.

"It is all about promoting quality and projects like Sebay Mill are a really good example of that. High quality. There Billy and Sheena McEwen promote the whole Orkney experience."

Area director Barbara Foulkes said: "It is so important for the 'visitor experience' that we focus on providing world-class, high quality products. We should be rightly proud of

what the tourism industry here has achieved so far and I am delighted that some of this hard work has been recognised with this Special Achievement Award for Sebay Mill."

• The Sebay Mill award comes hot on the heels of Stewart and Jacky Anderson gaining a national Thistle Award – a tourism Oscar – for the excellence of their five-star Rickla Guest House in Harray, last week.