

# Arise, Our Donald!



*Pictured left:* Donald Stirling with Anne McGuire MP, former Minister for Disabled People.

*Pictured below:* Donald proudly displays his medal following a presentation ceremony at Buckingham Palace last October. He was presented with his MBE by the Prince of Wales.

**A** RIGHT ROYAL DAY WAS HAD BY HAVEN Products' employee, Donald Stirling, when he attended Buckingham Palace on October 30 last to be presented with an MBE for his campaigning work for the rights of people with learning disabilities across Europe. The "overwhelmed" 54-year-old from Inverness in Scotland was presented with the prestigious award by the Prince of Wales in the Palace's Grand Ballroom.

Donald, who has worked for Momentum's social enterprise firm Haven Products since 1984, overcame his own barriers to become a founding member of the Scottish self-advocacy movement and a champion for people with learning difficulties.

His seat on the Scottish Council of ENABLE Scotland made him the first-ever person with a learning disability to play a governing role in a major voluntary organisation in Scotland. He then achieved international success by becoming the first disabled trustee of a major European organisation – Inclusion Europe – a role which took him to Brussels, Tallinn and Amsterdam, amongst other destinations, to spread the word about equal rights for people with disabilities.

Over the years Donald has combined this activity with holding a position as a production operator, undertaking a range of packaging and collating work for a variety of clients, as well as specialising in repairing library books for

Highland Council. Donald says, "I am overwhelmed at receiving the award and the enormity of it is still sinking in. Prince Charles was very friendly and took time to speak to us all. He asked me about my campaigning work and then congratulated me. It was a real honour. It was a really exciting day for everyone and it was great seeing inside Buckingham Palace, which was very beautiful, especially the ballroom that we were in for the ceremony."



Donald was joined on the day by movie legend Christopher Lee who was knighted for services to drama and charity, while veteran rock guitarist Joe Brown collected his MBE for services to music and Marina Dalglish, the wife of football star Kenny Dalglish, also received an MBE for services to breast cancer patients in Merseyside.

Around 80 per cent of Haven Products' highly-skilled and trained workforce has a disability. Haven offers a range of services and solutions to companies looking to outsource parts of their production process. ■