

News Release

Sewerage works honoured with rare heritage award

IMechE Awards Crossness Engines Hallmark Heritage award.

Immediate

One of the country's most famous sewerage works, which saved the lives of thousands of Londoners from cholera and typhoid, has been honoured with a special heritage award at its Thames Water site in Abbey Wood. The Victorian Crossness Engines (pictured below) once coped with 26 million gallons of raw sewage when it was operational in the 1860s and cost £3 million (£3 billion in current money!)

A team of volunteers working for the Crossness Engines Trust got together back in the 1980s to restore the unsung historic London landmark which would otherwise have fallen into dilapidated ruin. The Trust was awarded a rare Engineering Heritage Hallmark Award (EHHA) from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) in recognition of the Trust's outstanding efforts.

Over 90,000 volunteer man hours and a stream of fundraising efforts meant that one of the engines, named Prince Consort, at Crossness is now operational. There are a series of engines there that are named after Queen Victoria's husband and her children. A gravitational sewage system leading up to a reservoir and into Crossness meant that contaminated sewage streams could be diverted away from London homes and into the Thames – resulting in lives saved from the deadly diseases.

John Ridley, a retired mechanical engineer in his 80s, spearheaded the massive restoration project in the 1980s. He said: "The award is fantastic. This Victorian sewage works is a landmark, and is an amazing part of our heritage. It took a lot of work to restore it but it is part of London's legacy which people can now enjoy."



Pic: Crossness Engines as it stands today



Pic: Isobel Pollock, Chair of the Heritage Committee, presents award to Jonathan Rooks, Chairman of the Crossness Trust and volunteer David Wilkinson

Notes to Editors

- For further information please contact the IMechE Press Office only on 020 7304 6877 or 07730 644134 or email media@imeche.org.
- The IMechE established the EHHS (Engineering Heritage Hallmark Scheme) in 1984 in recognition of objects/artefacts/locations of significant mechanical engineering importance. EHHS criteria states the object must be: ***industrially innovative, be associated with a person or event, which has made a significant contribution to society and/or mechanical engineering, or possess a unique feature, by being a prototype or only surviving example.***