

[Press release: New era at Sellafield as Thorp reprocessing ends](#)

The site's Thorp plant has completed its 24-year mission to reprocess spent nuclear fuel from around the world.

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Opened in 1994, Thorp is one of only two commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing plants in the world.

It has reprocessed more than 9,000 tonnes of fuel from 30 customers in nine countries around the world. It generated an estimated £9bn in revenue.

The last batch of fuel to be reprocessed began its journey through the plant at 11.32am on Friday 9 November.

There will be no redundancies as a result of the switch-off. All employees in roles no longer required have been offered alternative jobs in the business.

Thorp will continue to serve the UK until the 2070s as a storage facility for spent fuel.

Meanwhile, Sellafield is being reinvented as a centre of expertise for nuclear clean-up.

This will unlock 100 years' worth of opportunity for the site's workforce, supply chain, and community.

Paul Foster, Sellafield Ltd's Chief Executive Officer, said:

As we look forward to an exciting future, we want to celebrate the best of our past.

The end of reprocessing at Thorp is one of the most important events in Sellafield's history.

Thorp has been a West Cumbrian success story. It has delivered jobs, skills, pride, and prestige.

Our community came together in the fight to get it built, through the 'Trust Us' campaign.

Together we completed one of the largest and most complex construction projects ever undertaken in Europe.

And during 24 years of operations, we safely reprocessed 9,331 tonnes of fuel from 30 customers in nine countries.

We helped to keep the lights on in the UK and around the world and generated £9bn in revenue for the UK.

I'm immensely proud of Thorp's contribution and I'd like to thank the workforce for their unwavering dedication and professionalism throughout a period of unprecedented change.

Thorp (or the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant) is one third of a mile long.

It dominates a huge central strip of the Sellafield site and is the largest structure on the site.

Costing £1.8bn to build, it was paid for by its future customers.

The decision to cease reprocessing was taken in 2012 in response to a significant downturn in demand.

The international market for reprocessing has shifted significantly since Thorp's construction, with the majority of customers now opting to store rather than reprocess their fuel.

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[Press release: Back to school to inspire engineers of the future](#)

Highways England is building bridges to inspire the next generation of engineers through a variety of educational activities across the South West.

[Press release: Back to school to inspire engineers of the future](#)

Ongoing and planned engagement with schools and colleges in Wiltshire, Somerset and Cornwall is helping to highlight numerous engineering opportunities within the highways industry and inspire young people to consider engineering as a rewarding career.

Next week the company will be involved in a bridge-building exercise with pupils from a Somerset school. The team behind the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling scheme will visit Countess Gytha Primary School in Queen Camel on 23 November, helping Year 6 pupils to design and build K'Nex bridges as well as giving the youngsters an insight into the design of the route and what animals have been found during survey work.

Hannah Sanderson, Project Manager for the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme, said:

Highways England is very focused on inspiring young people to consider engineering as a rewarding career.

It should be a fun experience for the youngsters, and we're really looking forward to taking our branch of engineering into the classroom.

Responsible for improving, managing and maintaining England's motorways and major A roads, the company is working with schools and colleges across the country as part of the Year of Engineering campaign.

By bringing young people face to face with engineering experiences and role models, the campaign aims to showcase the creativity and innovation of engineering careers and widen the pool of young people from all backgrounds who are willing to consider the profession.

As part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Insights programme, Highways England also took part in a recent initiative

with Wiltshire schools.

Maria Madeley, a primary teacher and science co-ordinator at Minety School, spent a week with the company earlier in the year, gaining an understanding of the engineering and geotechnical work around structures and roads across the strategic network.

This enabled Maria to build a curriculum around road building for her Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. And after Highways England spent a day teaching the children about smart motorways, bridge building and the geology of rocks, it culminated in a British Science Association-funded How Real Stuff Works event at Malmesbury School.

Minety School teacher Maria Madeley, left, with Garry Packer and Emma Grayson of Highways England and her pupils' bridge design at the British Science Association's How Real Stuff Works event at Malmesbury School

Elsewhere, the team behind the A417 Missing Link project engaged three Gloucestershire schools in chocolate-based STEM projects recently, while earlier this year the A303 Stonehenge project team met with Amesbury Primary School pupils, educating the children about the company's environmental and archaeological work, as well as safety and engineering aspects of the proposed scheme.

Esther Gordon-Smith, the team's legacy and benefits lead, also took part in Wiltshire Council's Science and Engineering Fair last month, delivering a 'STEM serves society' presentation to teachers and school leaders. The A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross team are also seeking to build relationships with schools and communities alongside the route in Cornwall, and have just launched a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) initiative.

The schools' outreach programme is designed to engage children from four to 18 in fun, hands-on activities.

Any schools interested in receiving a STEAM visit, can email: A30ChivertontoCarlandCross@highwaysengland.co.uk

For more information [visit the Year of Engineering website.](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.