

# News story: National celebration of engineering held at Westminster Abbey

The vast contribution engineers make to society was in the spotlight as Westminster Abbey played host to a special national service today (22 November 2018) to celebrate the engineering profession and its work in inspiring the next generation.

The service, the first of its kind, was led by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, to mark the government's Year of Engineering and the bicentenary of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). The event was jointly organised by HM Government, ICE, and the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng).

Representatives from across the engineering community, engineering charities and government gathered together to celebrate great British engineers past and present, including Thomas Telford and Robert Stephenson, who are buried at the Abbey, and the inspiring engineers working at the forefront of innovations that will shape our future.

Students from local schools were also invited to attend, with the service providing a chance to reflect on how industry and government have joined forces throughout 2018 to bring engineering to life for young people from all backgrounds – and the importance of this continuing in 2019 and beyond.

The service included personal testimonies from engineering ambassador Roma Agrawal MBE, Associate Director at AECOM and famed for her work on The Shard, and Colonel Deborah Porter, Deputy Commander of the Defence Medical Group, on how engineering had changed their lives and enabled them to help and inspire others through their work.

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling said:

In a year which has seen government and industry join forces to raise the bar for inspiring the next generation of engineers, what could be more fitting than to come together to celebrate the contribution that engineers have made and will continue to make to all of our lives?

The Year of Engineering has been a chance to show young people across the UK all that this profession has to offer them – and to spread the message that engineering needs talented young people from all walks of life to tackle some of the biggest challenges we face.

I hope today's service serves as an important reminder not just of our proud engineering history but of the role young people will play in writing its next chapter.

Andrew Wyllie CBE, ICE President, said:

This special occasion gives ICE an opportunity to celebrate its bicentenary and to thank its members for the positive impact they have made to all our lives. Civil engineers have transformed people's lives for the better and will safeguard the future for their families. As we come together to celebrate the passion, creativity, and commitment which exists across all engineering, we also recognise the importance of inspiring and nurturing a new generation of engineers.

Professor Dame Ann Dowling OM DBE FREng FRS, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said:

Engineering expertise will be critical to tackling the global challenges we face in the years to come. Engineers will play a central role in addressing the effects of climate change and rising sea levels, and in ensuring that our growing population will have access to food, water, clean energy and affordable healthcare. We hope future generations will be inspired by the opportunities engineering offers to shape their world, to discover new ways to improve lives in the future and to help meet the needs of the twenty first century and beyond.

Find out about the [Year of Engineering](#), including activities, events, videos and school resources.