

Headlines

Headlines is the newsletter of Hydrock: a leading provider of consultancy and specialist contracting services for construction, infrastructure and the environment

March 2009

Sunday Times 'Best Companies' Survey Puts Hydrock On Top!

The highly prestigious 'Sunday Times Best 100 Companies to Work For Survey 2009' has placed Hydrock amongst the top companies to work for in the UK for the fourth year running. Hydrock achieved 13th place and was commended by the Sunday Times: "culturally, the firm ensures that families come first, and it promotes a sense of fun, consistent communication and swift policy delivery at work." Dr Brian McConnell, Hydrock Managing Director, said: "This is a powerful message which will help us to continue to recruit the highest calibre staff, and shows that our people are motivated to give best service to our clients."



Hydrock MD Dr Brian McConnell (right) receives the award

Hydrock prepares for safe cement works demolition

Hydrock has been advising Cemex UK on the decommissioning, demolition and remediation strategy for Rochester Cement Works, which is due to close in June 2009. Since last year Hydrock has undertaken site investigation works, surveyed the buildings and plant for recyclable materials, and used the tonnages of steel, concrete and asbestos in a commercial appraisal of the works required. Hydrock will work with Cemex's Plant Managers to ensure that the decommissioning of the works is undertaken safely and economically, before managing the demolition and remediation works to remove the buildings, asbestos and contamination, leaving a safe 77ha development platform. Contamination issues at the site are relatively minor, although to avoid needless disposal to landfill, works are likely to include multi-phase extraction of hydrocarbons which are impacting groundwater, bioremediation of soils, and some screening and stabilisation/solidification (s/s) of contaminated soils. Hydrock's Project Director Dr Mike Higgins stated: "It's a great honour to be trusted with these works, and we will build on the hard-won experience gained safely demolishing and remediating Chinnor Cement Works in 2007/08 to ensure we deliver a safe, economic solution at Rochester for Cemex UK, who are a valued client of Hydrock."



Major Mine Stabilisation Project Extended

Hydrock has been awarded a £4.2m extension of the contract to stabilise abandoned mine workings underneath the MOD Foxhill site, Bath, under the Land Stabilisation Programme administered by the Homes & Communities Agency (formerly English Partnerships). Investigation works at the site have been ongoing for a year and a half and Hydrock is confident that 95% of the extent of the mine workings have been determined. The site neighbours the Combe Down Stone Mines where Hydrock has been working for seven years to stabilise abandoned mineworkings. The project will require Hydrock to make a direct underground connection to the Foxhill mines so that the Combe Down infrastructure, pipelines, equipment and personnel can be employed to stabilise the area. The MOD is handing project management of the site to Bath and North East Somerset Council, and the project is due to be completed by the autumn. David Dunkerley, Chair of the Combe Down Stone Mines Community Association commented: "We now look forward to the completion of stabilisation of the whole Combe Down area and the return of the village to safety."



"Yet another Gold Star for service from Hydrock!"

Roger Bullivant Ltd

Comedy curtain raised on time

The grand opening of a new comedy club in Bath went ahead on schedule thanks to Hydrock's inventive engineering solutions and several significant structural interventions. These included a new terraced auditorium floor of plywood grillage being installed over the unusual existing sloping floor - which was constructed of boarding on battens, on thin mass concrete sleeper strips at close centres, laid directly on the stiff clay soil - and the installation of a 4.5m clear span opening in a loadbearing wall to create a vista from the main entrance through to the auditorium. Hydrock's structural engineering team, Structures1, adhered to the tight schedule to convert the Grade II Listed, 1920's Beau Nash building with architect Stubbs Rich, for client Komedica.

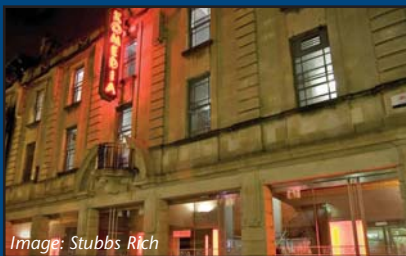


Image: Stubbs Rich

Green Future For Flagship College

Solar water heating, a biomass boiler, 'Windcatcher' natural ventilation and photovoltaic cells integrated within roof lights are just some of the environmentally-friendly features that Hydrock's mechanical and electrical (M&E) team has designed into the new Social Centre at the Tremough Campus of the Combined Universities in Cornwall. Hydrock's multidisciplinary consultancy services team, which included structural, civil, M&E, geotechnical and infrastructure, also worked to maximise the development footprint of the Social Centre and accommodation blocks, at a site with stringent planning constraints and a steeply sloping profile. The work forms part of an overall enhancement and expansion of the campus, leading to the creation of a "flagship centre" for the Combined Universities in Cornwall. This phase follows the construction of the 'Peter Lanyon' teaching block, opened by Prince Edward in December 2007, for which Hydrock provided M&E engineering services in the creation of recording studios, lecture theatres and administration offices.



Social Centre



Safety First!

Hydrock's commitment to maintaining high Health & Safety standards was reinforced with a Health & Safety Day held in January. The day involved presentations and practical demonstrations to staff on a variety of subjects, including safe working practices with drilling equipment, and use of PPE. This is the latest in a series of Hydrock Health & Safety initiatives which has included publication of Hydrock's own Health & Safety Guidance book and the launch of a 'Safety First Scheme' which rewards employees for successfully passing Health & Safety checks.

EA remediation project reaches major milestone

Hydrock achieved the first major objective of a significant groundwater remediation project for the Environment Agency ahead of schedule and on budget, in spite of unexpected additional requirements. The contamination issue at Helpston, near Peterborough, was caused by dumping of the weedkiller mecoprop in two landfill sites during the 1980s. At the time it was believed a geological fault would prevent contamination migration, but private and public water supplies over two miles to the east of the landfills have been affected. Creation of a hydraulic barrier across the primary pollution pathway is the first important step toward resolving the issue, and Hydrock met its January containment targets despite the unanticipated requirement for an additional series of abstraction wells, following appointment to the project last April. Hydrock treats the contaminated groundwater in a treatment plant on site, and is looking at ways of removing the contamination at source to reduce the timescale and cost of remediation. "The Helpston Project is a brilliant example of delivering for the environment," commented Norman Robinson, EA Environment Manager. "Achieving hydraulic containment has been a technical challenge of the highest order." The project will continue to 2018 to improve the water quality of a main groundwater resource.



Hydrock shines at industry awards

Hydrock's success and hard work has been recognised at three prestigious industry events. *sustain* magazine nominated Hydrock in the 'Land' category of the 'Trade & Industry' sector. The awards recognise the "hard work, commitment and creativity, radicalism and rigour, inspiration and perspiration of all those achieving distinction and success in the field of Sustainability." Hydrock was also nominated in both the 'Ground Engineering' and 'Business Growth' categories of the Construction News Specialists Awards 2009, winning a special commendation for the former. The Specialists Awards are dedicated to "recognising and rewarding the best specialist contractors in the business." In addition, Hydrock will be presented with a Considerate Constructors award on 31st March. The awards commend sites which are managed in a considerate, sustainable and safe manner.



Mines Team To The Rescue!

Hydrock's Mines Rescue Team was called into action as an underground blaze broke out 100ft below the surface at Leaffield Mine, Wiltshire, in February. The site is 12 miles from Hydrock's Combe Down Stone Mines project, Bath, where a highly trained and experienced Mines Rescue Team is on hand at all times to ensure the safety of the 200+ engineers there. They provided support and cover for the Dinas Mines Rescue Team, and both teams entered the mine while the fire was still burning. Andrew Williams of the Hydrock Team, said "We could hear the fire in the distance but were unable to see further than our own hands." Thankfully there were no casualties, although as a precaution the police requested local residents remain indoors at one point. The Hydrock Team, together with the Dinas Mines Rescue Team, attended the site the following morning on standby, ready to enter the mine if required. Tony Forster, HM Inspector of Mines, commented: "The Hydrock rescue team immediately responded displaying the courage, commitment and skill we have come to expect from Mines Rescue workers, that should never be taken for granted. They are a credit to the rescue service and to their employer."



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