

World tunnelling record: STRABAG breaks 25.8 kilometre mark in single TBM drive at the Woodsmith project in England

Facts & Figures

STRABAG COMPANY:
STRABAG AG, UK Branch

STRABAG SHARE:
100%

SEGMENT:
International + Special Divisions

CLIENT:
Anglo American Woodsmith Ltd.

- **Tunnel boring machine (TBM) Stella-Rose completes more than 26 km of tunnelling in a single drive**
- **Project to mine polyhalite in Yorkshire making good progress**
- **Subterranean 37 km conveyor system to ensure environmentally friendly material transport from mine to harbour**

Contact

STRABAG SE
Birgit Kümmel
Head of International Communications
Tel. +49 221 824-2480
pr@strabag.com

Vienna, 7 December 2023 In June 2019, STRABAG's tunnelling specialists began excavating a 37 km tunnel beneath the North York Moors National Park with a Herrenknecht tunnel boring machine (TBM). Now the project team has a very special reason to celebrate: the tunnel drive for the Woodsmith mine near Whitby in the north-east of England has reached the 25.8 kilometre mark, setting a new world record for the longest single tunnel boring machine drive. The 1,775-tonne machine with a diameter of 6 metres, named Stella-Rose, has been boring underground for around four and a half years.

However, it's not only the tunnelling that is breaking records at the Woodsmith project. STRABAG UK is building the world's longest conveyor tunnel for a permanent mineral transport system (MTS) on behalf of Anglo American. When completed, the MTS will be used to transport ore from the world's largest polyhalite deposit from under the North York Moors National Park to Wilton, Teesside, for further processing. Polyhalite, a naturally occurring mineral that can be used as a fertiliser in organic farming, is extracted from the Woodsmith mine via two 1.6-km shafts connected to the underground conveyor belt, a system which was chosen to minimise the environmental impact at the surface. With an internal diameter of 4.9 m, the conveyor tunnel and transport system are designed to handle a throughput of up to 20 million tonnes of material a year.

Following completion of the overall project, Anglo American and STRABAG are expecting to have the record officially confirmed by Guinness World Records. Until that happens in 2026, the STRABAG site team will have to be patient. About 450 people are directly employed on the Woodsmith project, with around 75% of them local to Teesside. STRABAG's preference for working with local construction partners and suppliers has also created many further jobs in the region.

