



**The 'Monster
Whitechapel
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In September 2017, our engineers started a nine-week battle against a giant fatberg that was discovered in an East End sewer. Fatberg is a word invented by Thames Water to bring the very serious problem of sewer abuse to life.

The Whitechapel fatberg was one of the largest ever found - a rock-solid mass of fat, oil, wet wipes, nappies, and other unflushables weighing a staggering 130 tonnes. It was blocking a stretch of Victorian sewer the length of two Wembley football pitches.

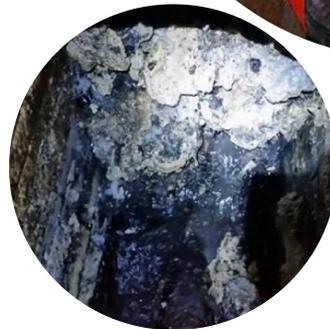
Background

The story of the ‘Monster Whitechapel fatberg’ attracted attention from around the globe, with stories running across the world’s media. It reached around a billion people from more than 150 countries, including America, Australia, Germany, Chile, Greenland and Zambia.

This provided us with a great opportunity to promote and reinforce our ‘Bin it - don’t block it’ campaign, which aims to educate customers.

Only the three P’s – pee, poo and [toilet] paper – should ever be flushed down the toilet. Cooking fat, oils and grease (FOG) and wet wipes, sanitary products and nappies should never go down the drain or toilet.

- **Largest fatberg ever found in September 2017**
- **A 130 tonne rock-solid mass of fat, oil, wet wipes, and other unflushables**
- **Blockages caused by sewer abuse can lead to sewer flooding affecting homes, businesses and the environment**



The infamous Whitechapel fatberg.

Consequences of fatbergs.

Often people don’t realise the consequences of putting things other than human waste and toilet paper down their toilets and drains. The reality is, eight times every hour a Thames Water customer suffers a blockage caused by ‘sewer abuse’.

The more fatbergs there are, the more damage they cause to sewers. This results in us having to dig up roads to fix broken sewers – all of this causes huge disruption and expense, with blockages costing the business around £1 million a month to clear.

The Whitechapel fatberg made it very clear that the sewers are not a black hole in which to dump household rubbish. We hope the ongoing publicity from our stories will help bring the number of blockages down and help us to protect our customers and the environment from pollution.

Raising fatberg awareness.

Following the initial story first covered by the London Evening Standard, we continued to raise awareness around the Whitechapel fatberg in a number of different ways. This included:

- Promoting a unique exhibit called 'Fatberg!' at the Museum of London which showcased a piece of the Whitechapel fatberg, and explained what fatbergs are, how they form and how they're removed from London's sewer network by our specialist teams.
- Publishing stories on how the fatberg was being converted into biodiesel and how we're increasing the size of our Network Protection Team working with food establishments to manage fats, oils and grease instead of them ending up down the drain.
- BBC Radio 1's Greg James recorded the first ever radio show from the side of a fatberg in a sewer and wrote a short speech to highlight the problems caused by sewer abuse.

- A pioneering Channel 4 documentary, 'Fatberg Autopsy: Secrets of the Sewers' analysed the contents of five tonnes of fatberg to discover the chemistry, biology and toxicology as well as how non-flushable items such as wipes contributed to its formation.
- Unveiling a commemorative manhole cover in Whitechapel Road to mark the first anniversary and serve as a tribute to those who defeated the monster fatberg and further highlight the message about 'Bin it – don't block it'.

We hope the media frenzy around the Whitechapel fatberg has inspired many people's behaviour and to think twice about what they flush away in future.

