

New door for bat cave

HOLY SMOKE, Batman! The water industry's gone batty over its latest innovation, courtesy of Southern Water and Technocover. The clever innovation is a bat-flap.

Southern Water came up with the unusual adaptation in replacing doors to two hillside tunnels leading to a disused water borehole, near Ventnor on the Isle of Wight.

Dating back to the late 1800s, the tunnels cut deep into the Great Woods Hill to a well that once formed part of a spring water collection system feeding the public water supply to Shanklin. Although no longer used, the tunnels and borehole remain part of Southern Water's assets, making it responsible for their upkeep and any related health and safety issues.

Southern Water had used wooden doors to close off the tunnels and at one time they had been bricked up. But teenagers consistently vandalised the entries, leaving secu-



The bat crew (l-r): David Nye, Southern Water's manager for the Isle of Wight; Jerry Dawson, Technocover's business development manager; and Bat guru Graham Street, of the Isle of Wight bat hospital

rity and public health and safety compromised.

David Nye, Southern Water manager for the Isle of Wight, says: "We needed to look at installing something stronger to safeguard the public and keep youngsters out, while preserving access for the purposes of structural surveys."

He also suspected that bats might be using the tunnels, "so we called in the island's resident

bat expert to consult on how we could accommodate their needs in the design of replacement doors".

Technocover was called in to design and produce an appropriate security solution. Working with Graham Street, co-founder of the IoW bat hospital, they provided a 20mm by 300mm bat aperture in the doors complete with wooden perch to the front and rear.