

Elizabeth Prize for Engineering is shifting the focus for a key post-Brexit industry in Britain, reports James Hurley

VICTORIA BLOOM/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

The selfie, an invention that changed that world

The engineers behind the innovation that secured the global Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering this year can take credit for helping a vast array of industries, from aiding medical science to empowering stargazers (James Hurley writes). They also unwittingly helped to invent the selfie.

Eric Fossum, George Smith, Nobukazu Teranishi and Michael Tompsett created the digital image sensors that have allowed cameras to be put in smartphones, astronomers to study galaxies billions of light years away and scientists to consider cell structures in unprecedented detail.

The four scientists represent different generations, with a 37-year gap between the youngest and the oldest, who worked in the United States and Japan between the 1970s and 1990s. They have shared

the £1 million prize in recognition for their work.

Lord Browne, chairman of the foundation that organises the prize, presented the award this week and said they had been responsible for nothing short of a "cultural revolution".

Mr Fossum has said he could have never envisaged his work would lead millions of people around the world to take selfies or record "silly cat videos".

The Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering is a British-based global award recognising innovations that benefit mankind. It was launched in 2011 by David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband. This is the third time it has been awarded. Previous winners include Sir Tim Berners-Lee, among others, for inventing the internet, and Robert Langer, the chemical engineer behind advances in controlled drug delivery.



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