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electrotechnical industry

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DECEMBER 2024/JANUARY 2025 | £4.50

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systems course

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tomorrow**
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board with
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helps apprentices
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current diversion

Hitting the right note

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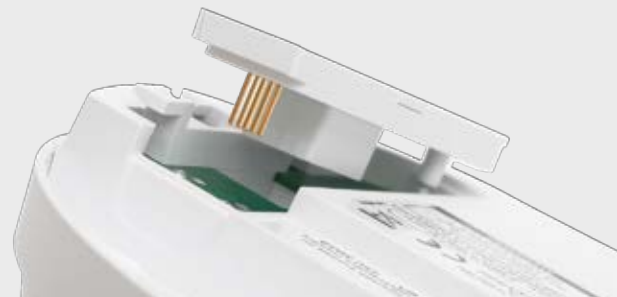


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THE ROBOT REVOLUTION

Looking forward

THE Christmas holidays are often a little quieter in the industry than the other 50 weeks of the year, so it's a good time to take stock, plan for 2025 and reflect on the past 11 months.

This came to a head for me slightly earlier this year when, in mid-October, an IT issue meant we had no access to the internet for 24 hours. This was just the jump-start I needed to clean my office and remove 10+ years of papers, so I set to work and spent the next five hours getting my office back to a more manageable state.

More importantly, it allowed me to refresh my knowledge of past activities, including payment and Project Bank Account seminars and letters to long-gone ministers about industry regulation, payment protection and encouraging more apprentices.

As we head into the 125th year of SELECT, it's almost embarrassing to say that these issues were also the headline issues of the first meetings of the association – and sadly, some things never change.

As I write, another Tier 1 contractor, ISG, has gone down, with £47 million owed to trade debtors and £34 million in retentions that's never likely to be seen. A number of construction firms have already gone to the wall as a result, with people's lives, mental health and reputations shattered; a sad indictment that governments across the years have had a chance to fix but despite repeated promises, have done **NOTHING**.

Many in the sector exploit their bargaining power to impose unfavourable payment terms on smaller sub-contractors, leading to an environment where financial survival becomes a daily battle.

To address these issues, the industry **MUST** embrace a cultural shift towards transparency and fairness, with stronger enforcement of initiatives such as the Construction Industry Payment Charter and Prompt Payment Code.

Companies **MUST** prioritise ethical payment practices, understanding that the health of the entire industry depends on the financial stability of its various stakeholders.

Moreover, there should be an effort to educate **ALL** parties about the legal frameworks and rights surrounding payments. Too often, sub-contractors find themselves unaware of their rights, leading to a power imbalance that perpetuates the cycle of late payments. (If you want to read more, the

Construction Industry Collective Voice has produced an excellent guide which is available to download from www.cicvforum.co.uk for free).

As I said before, these issues aren't new and indeed, they resonate with the thoughts of John Ruskin, a 19th century social critic and art patron, who emphasised the responsibilities of both employers and society when he wrote: "It's unwise to pay too much, but it's worse to pay too little.

"When you pay too much, you lose a little money – that's all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do.

"The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot – it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better."

We would do well to heed the wisdom of Ruskin, whose advocacy for ethical practices serves as a reminder that fair payment is not just a financial transaction but a moral obligation.

By fostering a culture of respect and accountability, the construction industry can build a more sustainable future that honours everyone.

So, as we hurtle towards 2025, remember that wherever you are on ladder of procurement and payment, be kind and do the right thing. It's not that difficult, is it? 🙏



ALAN WILSON

Managing Director, SELECT

"THE INDUSTRY MUST EMBRACE A CULTURAL SHIFT TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY AND FAIRNESS"



to a fairer future

I'M looking forward to the festive break as it's been a busy six months since being handed the SELECT chains of office by my predecessor Alistair Grant in June.

After the President's Cup in July, my first President's Lunch in September was an excellent occasion, during which I was delighted to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to a truly deserving winner in John Noble.

This was followed by a whirlwind of events throughout October as I met friends old and new from all corners of our industry.

The Electrical Distributors' Association dinner was followed by the ECA Awards in London and I barely had time to unpack my suitcase before I was off to the EuropeOn conference in Berlin; all very busy but also very interesting.

In our industry, it's vital to never stand still and always be curious about new ideas and ways of working, and the many events I've attended over the past few months have opened my eyes further about the great work we all do – and are yet to do.

The future truly is electric, and meeting so many talented and committed electrotechnical professionals across the UK and Europe gives me hope for the next 12 months and beyond. It also made me realise how ahead of the game SELECT

is – particularly our relationship with politicians and policy-makers at all levels, which is the envy of our European friends. Yes, some things are still tough, and the issues of payments and shortage of labour never really seem to go away.

However, there is also plenty to be optimistic about, as the rise of renewables, robotics and AI means that suitably qualified electrical professionals will be in more demand than ever.

This was brought home to me at the SJIB Apprentice of the Year final in Edinburgh in October, where I met three young men who epitomise all that's best about our industry.

You can read more about the event in this issue, but I really was impressed by how committed they were to learning, improving their skills and powering our future safely.

After being a guest at many such events, I also realised the effort and hard work that goes into organising them, and I've been truly impressed by the back-room team at SELECT.

Until I'd seen them in action, I didn't appreciate the amount of dedication that ensures our association continues to represent **ALL** our interests in an ever-changing sector.

Have a fantastic festive period when it comes and whether in the factory or on the fairway, I look forward to seeing many of you in 2025. 🎄



MIKE STARK

President, SELECT

"THE FUTURE TRULY IS ELECTRIC, AND MEETING SO MANY TALENTED AND COMMITTED ELECTROTECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS ACROSS THE UK AND EUROPE GIVES ME HOPE FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS AND BEYOND"



News

BIG NAMES ARE NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ubbink and Europa are the latest big names to join our Associate Member scheme, which ends the year with 42 manufacturers and service providers.

Ubbink specialises in roofing, ventilation and heating products and is a market leader in roof ventilation. It also produces service terminals, flues for heating appliances and a range of roof windows for flat roofs and recently added a range of heat recovery products to its portfolio.

Europa Plc has been supplying electrical components to wholesalers, major catalogues and other mainline distributors across the UK since 1974.

Their product range includes switchgear, enclosures, junction boxes, cable accessories, distribution equipment, circuit and surge protection devices, plugs and sockets, motor starters and control gear.

Iain Mason, Director of Membership, Events & Communications, said: "We are delighted to welcome Ubbink and Europa. Our Associate Members will play a key role in the association's 125th anniversary activity throughout 2025 and we look forward to introducing them to Members."

➔ Associate Member news: Pages 52-57



Sponsorship partners are the real deal

Support from generous Associates and wholesalers will help us deliver a range of celebrations to mark our 125th anniversary

S ELECT has secured a number of significant sponsorship deals that will help us deliver a wide range of events and activity to mark our 125th anniversary in 2025.

Associate Members and wholesalers have generously stepped up and agreed to support the association over the next 12 months as we celebrate another landmark year for the world's oldest electrical trade association.

Aico will be sponsoring the 2025 Toolbox Talks, which once again will be visiting 12 venues across Scotland in May and June, delivering topical technical updates. The market-leading experts in home life safety will also be sponsoring our eight Branch Updates and AGM in March, at which they will present.

Scolmore has agreed to be the headline sponsor of our 125th Anniversary Grand

Ball, which will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Glasgow on 14 November 2025. At the same event, **Edmundson Electrical** will be our official table sponsor, **Schneider** the drinks sponsor, **CEF** the guest speaker sponsor and **Electrium** the entertainment sponsor, while our legal partners **Morton Fraser MacRoberts** will sponsor the evening's piper.

Luceco Group will once again be headline sponsor for the President's Cup at Dunblane New Golf Club on 28 July, with **Scolmore** and **Electrium** sponsoring the longest drive and nearest the pin prizes respectively.

Hispec is also sponsoring our autumn Branch Updates in October 2025 and, in addition, has kindly agreed to sponsor the celebrity birthday messaging that will be screened across social media.

Electrium will help bring a year of celebration to a close as it lends its support to our prestigious Past Presidents' Lunch in Edinburgh on 5 December.

And at all our activity, **Holland House Electrical** will have its name emblazoned on our special 125th anniversary apparel after agreeing to be our workwear sponsor for 2025.

In addition to sponsorship, **Aico**, **National Ventilation**, **Electrium** and **Dimplex** will be exhibiting at our Professionals' Day, which will be held at the V&A Dundee on 18 September.

National Ventilation, **Daikin** and **Dimplex** will also exhibit at the SELECT AGM and technical update at DoubleTree

+ PAGE 9 / Autumn Branch Updates are full of talking points that matter to our Members

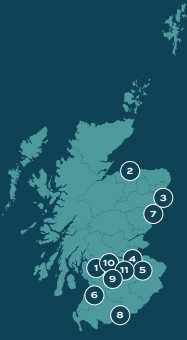
+ PAGE 10 / SELECT'S Yvonne Wilson takes up new role as Secretary with CPG

+ PAGE 10 / Warm tributes are paid after the death of our Past President Bob Taylor

+ PAGE 11 / Uni visit helps SELECT to build relationships with the talent of tomorrow



↑ Our events are a great opportunity to catch up with other Members



11 FIRMS HAVE BECOME SELECT MEMBERS SINCE 1 OCTOBER 2024

1. Willpower Electrical Services Ltd, Glasgow
2. Martyn McKillop Electrical Services Ltd, Elgin
3. Apardion, Aberdeen
4. Advantage Electrical Services Ltd, Edinburgh

5. Jackson 247 Electrical Services Ltd, Loanhead
6. Elecsafe Ayrshire, Kilmarnock
7. T Mulholland Electrical, Montrose
8. Purdie Electrical, Dumfries

9. Prostar Installations Limited, Motherwell
10. Hawk Eye Systems Ltd, Glasgow
11. Greenwave Renewables Ltd, Bathgate



↑ Holland House is sponsoring SELECT staff workwear

by Hilton Edinburgh – Queensferry Crossing on 5 June. And **Megger** has also donated nearly £10,000 worth of inspection and testing equipment which will be offered as prizes at our events throughout the year.

Iain Mason, Director of Membership, Events & Communications, said: “The response from our Associate Members and wholesalers has been phenomenal and we are truly grateful for all the support we have received so far.

“The level of support from some of the biggest names in the industry will help us deliver exceptional events

for Members across Scotland throughout 2025. We look forward to seeing Members at these events and developing even closer relationships with our Associates.”

Linda Rolfe, Events Manager, added: “We still have exhibition spaces and commercial partnerships left for 2025, including our e-newsletter, podcast and Professionals’ Day, which I would be delighted to discuss with any companies who may be interested.”

To find out more about sponsorship and exhibition opportunities, please contact Linda at linda.rolfe@select.org.uk or call us on **0131 445 5577**.

Upcoming Member webinars

➔ **Associate Member Hispec** will be hosting an exclusive Member webinar in the new year, covering connected fire detection and carbon monoxide (CO).

The free session at 1pm on Friday 24 January will help you learn about commercial and domestic fire detection and how both can be seamlessly integrated into a full-life safety and housing solution. The one-hour webinar will also outline the harmful effects of CO.

To find out more and register, go to bit.ly/hispec-web

➔ **Our legal partners Morton Fraser MacRoberts** are hosting a webinar in the new year – and want **YOUR** questions.

The firm, which runs our Legal Helpline, is hosting an online session on 29 January at 1pm about the basics of payment in construction contracts and how to get paid.

They have asked Members to submit queries which can be answered during the session.

To register for the webinar go to bit.ly/mfm-webinar and to submit your question for consideration, email memberservices@select.org.uk

➔ Legal column: Page 44

OUR 125TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS

125TH ANNIVERSARY GRAND BALL



TOOLBOX TALKS



PAST PRESIDENTS' LUNCH



PRESIDENT'S CUP



BRANCH UPDATES SPRING / AUTUMN



BIRTHDAY VIDEO MESSAGING



PRIZE GIVERS AND EXHIBITORS



WORKWEAR





↑ Left to right, David Henderson, SECTT; Craig Herriott, Flexel; Kevin Griffin, Chair; Bob Cairney, SELECT; Stuart McKelvie, SELECT; Robert McGoogan SELECT; Neil Smith, BEAMA

GUIDE HELPS SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY

To help businesses stay warm for less this winter, Business Energy Scotland has put together a new guide packed with tips that can be used right away to save energy and money.

It is also offering a series of free training webinars designed to help businesses learn practical ways to reduce energy use, cut costs and stay comfortable through the colder months.

Find out more at www.businessenergyscotland.org/get-ready-for-winter

Flexel extends a warm welcome on Electrotech visit

ASSOCIATE Member Flexel was the host as SELECT's Electrotechnical Committee once again hit the road for its latest meeting.

Committee members headed to Glenrothes on 13 October for a catch-up on technical issues and concluded with a guided tour of the production plant by Flexel Regional Manager Craig Herriott.

The visitors enjoyed an insight into the production of a range of Flexel products, including far infrared panel heaters, with the chance to ask questions afterwards.

The tour was preceded by the hybrid committee meeting, during which topics included DNO issues, development of electrical NOS, the DPC for Amendment 4 of BS 7671:2018 and reports from JPEL/64, BEAMA, BSD and others.

Bob Cairney, Director of Technical Services, said: "I would like to thank Craig and Flexel for their hospitality and to all the SELECT Members and industry colleagues who joined us in person and remotely to discuss technical issues."

DELIVERING CASH FOR CHARITY

SELECT has continued its support for the Electrical Industries Charity (EIC) by raising £1,200 at various events over the past 12 months.

The Beat the Buzzer game was once again a popular money-spinner at our Toolbox Talks in May and June, with Members competing on a new design in a bid to top the leaderboard.

SELECT also raised £1,015 at the third President's Lunch, sponsored by Electrium, which was held in Glasgow in September.

Guests dug deep at the event, which also saw the EIC's Marcella McArthur give an overview about the

charity and congratulate SECTT's Barrie McKay for his charity zipline across the River Clyde.

Events Manager Linda Rolfe said: "We raised a total of £1,204.91 for the EIC in 2024 and will be again looking for donations at events during our 125th anniversary year to help the charity which supports our Members and the wider industry."

Read more about how the EIC can help you or your family at www.electricalcharity.org



↑ Marcella gave an EIC update at the President's Lunch

Updates are packed with talking points

Meetings cover a wide variety of important topics, including energy efficiency and damp and mould

ENERGY efficiency, damp and mould, heat pumps and alarm sensors were among the hot topics at our autumn

Branch Updates.

Representatives from Daikin, Power Quality Expert (PQE), Vericon Systems, FireBlitz and National Ventilation delivered the topical technical updates at our second series of local get-togethers of 2024.

Andy Greenhorn from Vericon Systems kicked things off in Dumfries on 1 October, where he discussed the challenges social landlords face with damp and mould issues.

Damp and mould was again the topic at the Lanarkshire event on 3 October as Colin Hepplewhite from National Ventilation discussed positive input ventilation. Rob Barker from PQE discussed energy efficiency measurements and electrical energy management at the meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Daikin's Grant Coates and Stephen Hutchison helped debunk some of the common myths about air source heat



pumps at the Ayrshire and Tayside get-togethers.

And James Cavan from FireBlitz met SELECT Members and outlined the latest fire safety products at our final event in Inverness on 30 October.

Updates on activity were also given by a SELECT Director of Function and member of the Presidential Team, with a Training Officer providing latest apprentice and adult trainee news from the Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT).

Iain Mason, Director of Membership, Events & Communications, said: "We would like to thank our Associates for taking the time to speak to Members and keep them updated with the latest industry developments."



↑ Rob, centre, collects his award

HONOUR FOR ASSOCIATE PQE

Associate Member Power Quality Expert (PQE) has been rewarded with a special honour by test equipment manufacturer Sonel SA.

Director Rob Barker received the statuette in recognition of his years of cooperation and commitment as the Polish firm's authorised distributor and UK import agent.

The award came as part of the company's 30th anniversary gala in Warsaw, which was attended by partners who sell Sonel products in more than 100 countries around the world.

ADVICE ON TWIN CABS

Following the Budget, contractors are being advised to start looking at plans to buy or update their twin cab pickup.

From, April 2025, most twin cabs will be regarded as cars for income tax purposes.

Mike Hepburn, Employment tax Senior Manager at BDO, said: "Currently these vehicles can be regarded as a van and in certain circumstances no benefit in kind (BIK) will arise when they are used predominantly for business use.

"However, transitional BIK arrangements will apply for businesses that purchase, lease or order a double cab pickup before 6 April 2025."

➔ BDO Christmas party tax advice: **Pages 40 & 41**



↑ Past Presidents Eric Rae, Alistair Grant and Alick Smith attended the Aberdeen meeting



↑ Bob Taylor

TRIBUTES PAID TO PAST PRESIDENT

SELECT was saddened to learn of the death of Past President Bob Taylor, who passed away on 30 September.

Bob was President of the Electrical Contractors' Association of Scotland – as it was then – from 1984 to 1986. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1998 and was also a regular at our annual Past Presidents' Lunch.

SELECT Managing Director Alan Wilson said: "Bob was a popular and active Member who maintained a keen interest in SELECT and its many activities throughout retirement.

"He is fondly remembered and well thought of at the association and our condolences go to his family and his many friends and former colleagues."

Yvonne takes on CPG Secretary role

SELECT'S Yvonne Wilson has been appointed Secretary of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Construction.

Our Skills & Client Relations Manager was appointed to her new role at a meeting of the CPG on 6 November and takes over from Gordon Nelson, Scotland Director of the Federation of Master Builders.

Yvonne will now be responsible for organising meetings, agreeing topics, sourcing and briefing presenters and encouraging MSPs to attend, along with other administrative tasks.

Gordon said: "The CPG enables MSPs, industry stakeholders and other interested parties to engage directly with each other to raise awareness



↑ Gordon Nelson, Monica Lennon MSP and Yvonne Wilson

of the opportunities and challenges facing the sector.

"I am delighted to hand over the reins to Yvonne and I am sure she will do an excellent job in coordinating this essential conduit between industry and government."



↑ The CPG Construction meeting on 6 November



↓ Galashiels CEF

SPREADING THE WORD

SELECT has been hitting the headlines recently, with our campaign posters taking pride of place at two wholesalers in the south of Scotland.

The eye-catching banners – complete with images of Members and the message 'Wherever you are, we're here' – were displayed prominently at branches of CEF in Galashiels and Dumfries.

The displays were arranged by Membership Representative Fiona Smith, who covers the Branch area.



↑ Dumfries CEF



↑ Keith at UHI Perth

Keith gets to know our future stars

Technical Adviser's uni visit shows how we're reaching out to the talent of tomorrow and building strong relationships

S ELECT continued to raise its profile and build relationships with the talent of tomorrow during a recent visit to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) in Perth.

Technical Adviser Keith Hagan covered a range of technical topics when he held an informal talk with second-year apprentices and adult trainees on 31 October.

The session included an open-floor discussion about unidirectional and bidirectional protective devices as part of Amendment 3 to BS7671:2018, as well as the upcoming publication of Amendment 4.

Keith also quizzed learners about why the regulations need to change so often.

The use of modern protective devices was covered next as Keith outlined the journey from basic BS 3036 rewirable fuses in the 1970s to today's MCBs,



↑ Keith Hagan

RCDs, RCBOs, AFDDs and SPDs. He also talked through the various modes of renewable technology such as solar PV, wind and battery storage, and discussed how loads have dramatically changed with the advent of modern LED lighting, electric showers, EV charging equipment and air source heat pumps.

To finish up, Keith hosted a discussion on neutral current diversion (NCD), including its causes, the effects on a TN-C-S PME earthing arrangement, how to detect it and what to do if it's discovered.

He said: "It was good to discuss the learners' progress at this early stage in their careers and give them an insight into how the electrical industry is ever-changing and evolving compared to when I started my apprenticeship in 1977. I'd like to thank Electrical Engineering Lecturer George Mailer for the invitation and hope the learners found it worthwhile."

TECHNICAL TEAM'S SCHOOL TRIP SUCCESS

SELECT's Technical team helped inspire the next generation of young electricians during a recent visit to a school in Edinburgh.

Consultant Technical Adviser Billy McRobert delivered an introduction to construction and the role of an electrician to around 80 pupils at Leith Academy.

During the day, Billy set the S3 youngsters challenges to build circuits and incorporate more complex switches, mirroring problems that electrical engineers tackle in the real world.

The visit was arranged by Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), which connects employers with education to help young people develop the skills needed for the workplace.

Phil Dickson, DYW School Coordinator, said: "I can't thank Billy enough for his time. He was an amazing role model for our young people and I'm sure they'll all remember their experiences for a long time to come."

Billy also delivered a presentation on neutral current diversion (NCD) at a seminar hosted by Associate Member CORGI Technical Services at Double Tree by Hilton Glasgow, Cumbernauld.

During the talk on 6 November, Billy discussed typical UK configurations, export/import considerations and testing philosophy before answering questions from the audience of safety and compliance professionals.

Calum Mansell, Technical Safety Manager – Electrical at CORGI Technical Services, said: "SELECT has consistently supported our ASCP technical events, where its input and engagement are well received by our members."

➔ SELECT inspires college's NCD prototype: Pages 34 & 35



↑ Billy chats to pupils at Leith Academy

Blazing a trail

Members and staff acted as the first delegates when a pilot session of our latest training course in fire detection and fire alarm systems was recently rolled out in Ayrshire

A

FTER the successful launch of our electric vehicle (EV) charge point installation course last year, we turned our sights to another new training module requested by Members.

Developed with input from across the industry, the result is the SQA

Customised Award in Design, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems, AKA course number 203.

The Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) has rated the one-day module at Level 7 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), which reflects the level of care and dedication that's once again gone into developing it.

And that hard work paid off with a full house of Members and staff as the pilot course was rolled out at the Fenwick Hotel in Ayrshire on Wednesday 23 October.

The test session was delivered by Training Development Adviser Stuart McKelvie and Consultant Technical Adviser Billy McRobert, who both contributed to its development.

Director of Technical Services Bob Cairney and Technical Adviser Bruce Findlay also went back to school and sat in as delegates, along with eight SELECT

Members including Past Presidents Donald W Orr and Kevin Griffin and Lanarkshire Branch Chair Craig McGowan.

Stuart said he was pleased with the roll-out, telling me: "The pilot course went extremely smoothly, with the candidates clearly engaged and asking plenty of questions.

"Having Bob and Bruce in the audience also meant they could observe things from the



↑ Delegates and staff line up after the successful pilot

WORDS
JENNY CRYANS
Training Manager



↓ There were plenty of questions during the session



↓ The course was delivered by Billy, left, and Stuart



delegates' point of view, and we made some minor adjustments as a result."

Billy added: "It was great to launch another SELECT training course with such a popular session and we look forward to rolling it out to Members from February."

Delegate feedback was extremely positive, with post-session comments including "the course notes are comprehensive" and "plenty of time was given to complete the workbook exercises and multiple-choice questions, which were pitched at the right level".

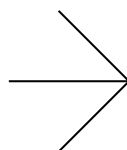
From a personal point of view, it's been another satisfying

launch and we're currently busy planning the course's delivery across Scotland in the New Year as part of the association's 125th anniversary celebrations.

We'd like to hear from any Members who may be interested in the course, so have outlined the format and requirements below to help you see exactly what's involved.

OVERVIEW, AIMS AND REQUIREMENTS

This one-day course has been developed for electricians, fire alarm engineers or installers and is



"SUCCESSFUL DELEGATES WILL BE IN A POSITION TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE EVER-GROWING DEMAND FOR THESE SKILLS WITHIN NEW CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS"



↓ Billy McRobert welcomed delegates to the one-day pilot course in Ayrshire



↑ Bob Cairney, right, was among the delegates

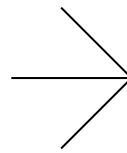
COURSE CONTENT

- The law and legal requirements
- Terms and definitions
- System categories
- Design considerations
- System types
- Detection types
- Spacing and siting of automatic detection equipment
- Detection zones
- Alarm zones
- Cable and wiring
- Control and indicating equipment
- Power supplies
- Communications
- System commissioning
- System maintenance
- System documentation.



↑ Delegates tackled assessments during the course

"THE PILOT COURSE WENT EXTREMELY SMOOTHLY, WITH THE CANDIDATES CLEARLY ENGAGED AND ASKING PLENTY OF QUESTIONS"



also suitable update training for Members assessed in SELECT Work

Category 3.4.

The session aims to provide candidates with the basic knowledge to undertake the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire

detection and alarm systems in line with the British Standard BS 5839-1.

As a result, successful delegates will be in a position to take full advantage of the ever-growing demand for these important skills within new constructions and the implementation of legislation and insurance requirements.



↓ The new course is designed to cover a range of topics



↓ Kevin Griffin studies the course notes



↓ Donald W Orr and Craig McGowan during the pilot

FORMAT AND ASSESSMENTS

Three workbook assessments are to be completed during the day, which will allow candidates to focus on key learning objectives and test understanding.

The IET Guide to Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems can be used for reference during the assessments, which each take a maximum of 20 minutes as follows:

- **Assessment A** – knowledge of the key principles in *The IET Guide* and Section 2 of the Building Standards Division Non-Domestic Technical Handbook.
- **Assessment B** – design and installation of various detection devices.
- **Assessment C** – circuit wiring, inspection, testing, certification and maintenance.

A multiple-choice questionnaire will also be held at the end of the day, with 45 minutes allowed for completion.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO BRING

Delegates who want to take the new course must have a copy of *The IET Electrician's Guide to Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems* publication (as amended).

They must also spend a minimum of ten hours' pre-study time going through it prior to the course itself.

If you don't have a copy of this publication, it can be purchased through the SELECT Shop on the SELECT website. Alternatively, please

call our Technical Admin Team on **0131 445 5577** or email **orders@select.org.uk**

Please note that if you don't have the above publications available on the morning of the course, you won't be able to attend as they are referred to throughout the session.

COSTS AND BOOKING

SELECT will be delivering this course from February 2025, with dates now available on our training calendar and a waiting list in operation.

The cost for SELECT Members is £280 + VAT (£336), which includes the assessments and SQA certificate on successful completion.

To book, please email **training@select.org.uk** or call the team on **0131 445 5577**. We will add you to the waiting list and make contact when suitable dates are available ■

🕒 Training for an older workforce: Pages 36 & 37



↓ Attendees covered a lot of ground during the session



↓ Delegates were given all the information they needed



↓ Billy takes a question from Craig McGowan



Get ready for overhaul of worker rules

WORDS
CATHERINE GILLON
Director of
Employment Affairs,
SELECT



The UK Government recently passed the Employment Rights Bill, which aims to tackle poor working conditions and promote economic growth. Here, we look at the main talking points – and how it could impact Members and their business

IF YOU'RE an employer, it's vital to ensure your business stays on the right side of the changes to employment law that are coming down the track.

The Employment Rights Bill 2024 proposes a number of wide-ranging legislative changes, in 28 different areas, which will affect employers and their staff.

Let's see how they could have an impact on you and your employees...

BASIC RIGHTS FROM DAY ONE INTRODUCED

Workers will now receive numerous statutory rights from their first day on their job, ranging from parental leave to protection from unfair dismissal. These day one rights will apply to employees irrespective of their status, position or pay. For example, the two-year period before an employee can claim unfair dismissal is being removed, meaning that an employer must have a fair reason for dismissing someone and follow a fair process, regardless of the employee's length of service. However, the government has confirmed there will be no reforms to the current regime until at least autumn 2026.

SICK PAY AND OTHER RIGHTS STRENGTHENED

The Bill removes the waiting period for statutory sick pay and the lower earnings limit, so employees can claim statutory sick pay from day one of their absence. It will also ensure a fair

earnings replacement for those who earn below the current sick pay rate. In addition, the Bill removes the qualifying period for parental and paternity leave, which can now be taken from day one of employment. Employees will also be able to take bereavement leave in relation to other individuals, not only their children.

ZERO-HOUR CONTRACTS BANNED

The new Bill says that employers can no longer use zero-hour contracts that exploit or mistreat workers and must offer contracts that reflect regular work patterns. Employers will also be obliged to give reasonable notice and compensation for any shift changes or cancellations faced by workers.

'FIRE AND REHIRE' SCRAPPED

The Bill also puts a stop to the practice of 'fire and rehire' and 'fire and replace' that leaves workers at the mercy of bullying threats. Instead, the government is providing effective methods in place of shortcomings in the statutory code on dismissal and re-engagement.

"CHANGE IS COMING, SO IT WILL PAY TO FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE MAIN POINTS SO YOU'RE PREPARED WHEN IT DOES BECOME LAW"

PROBATION PERIODS EXTENDED

Probation periods will be extended from their previous length, with new staff having access to the benefit from their first day on the job. Employers must carry out proper assessments on their employees' suitability for a role, as well as reassure them of their rights from day one.

FLEXIBLE WORKING IMPROVED

Workers will now have the right to request flexible working arrangements from their first day of employment. Employees can make two requests per year and employers must respond to requests within two months of receiving them. They can deny a request **ONLY** if it falls within one or more of the eight statutory reasons.

STAFF 'SWITCH OFF' ENCOURAGED

The Bill promotes the right to switch off from work, with employers no longer able to make unnecessary communication with employees outside working hours. The main aim of this change is to establish a better work-life balance for staff and will also look into ensuring there are sufficient rest periods between work days.

To find out more about the Employment Rights Bill, scan the QR code or visit www.gov.uk. For other employment advice, including guidance on contracts, disciplinary matters and payment issues, contact our experts at employment@sjib.org.uk or call the special SELECT helpline on 0131 445 9216.



PREGNANT WOMEN PROTECTED

New mothers now have legal protection from dismissal for at least six months of them returning to work. The Bill also looks into providing better support for employees going through the menopause at work, whatever stage this may be.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CRACKDOWN

There will now be an obligation on employers to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment – a change from the duty which came into force on 26 October 2024, which required only that employers take "reasonable steps".

FAIR WORK AGENCY ESTABLISHED

The government has promised to establish a single enforcement body called the Fair Work Agency, which will strengthen the enforcement of statutory employment rights across all business industries.

TRADE UNION LAWS UPDATED

The Bill presents updates to trade union legislation, aligning with economic needs. This includes removing unnecessary restrictions on trade union activity, e.g. minimum service for new employees. The Bill also ensures better industrial relations between businesses and staff and looks into areas such as negotiations and bargaining.

The government is also planning other legislative changes that include:

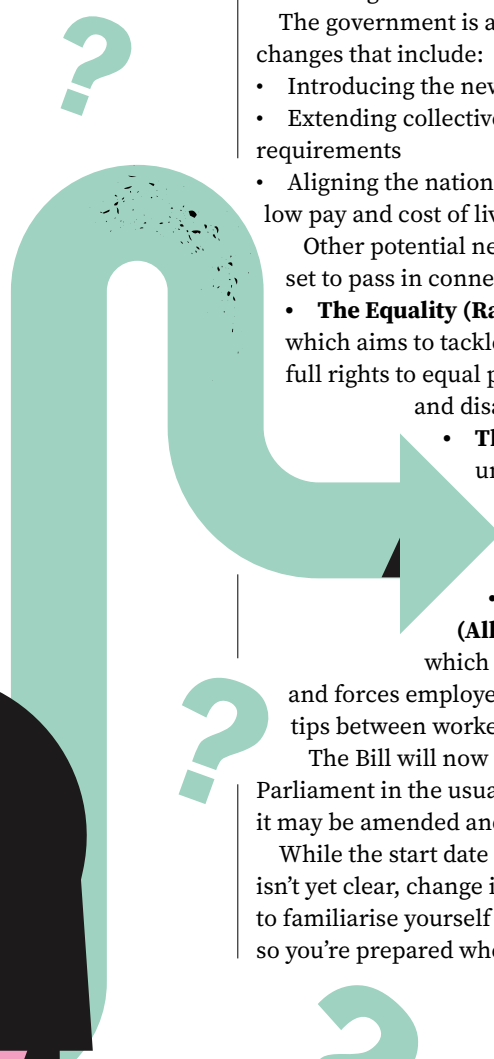
- Introducing the new 'single worker status'
- Extending collective redundancy consultation requirements
- Aligning the national minimum wage to tackle low pay and cost of living issues.

Other potential new laws and amendments set to pass in connection with the Bill include:

- **The Equality (Race and Disability) Bill**, which aims to tackle inequality by providing full rights to equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people.
- **The Worker Protection Act**, under which employers have a legal duty to prevent sexual harassment of workers.
- **The Employment (Allocation of Tips) Act**, which passed on 1 October 2024 and forces employers to distribute qualifying tips between workers fairly.

The Bill will now progress through the UK Parliament in the usual way, during which time it may be amended and further changes made.

While the start date for this new legislation isn't yet clear, change is coming, so it will pay to familiarise yourself with the main points so you're prepared when it does become law. ■



The lighter side of Christmas

SELECT Member John Wilson and his team worked day and night throughout November to help spread some colourful festive magic across the south-west of Scotland



↑ John and his team hard at work putting up the lights

WILSON Electrical is among the many Member firms who've been busy putting up Christmas lights across Scotland

over the past few months.

The Dumfries-based company has spent weeks carefully erecting festive decorations in towns and villages across Dumfries-shire, ready for the big switch-on.

"IT'S A LOT OF HARD WORK BUT DEFINITELY WORTH IT WHEN YOU SEE EVERYWHERE LIT UP"

Director John Wilson said: "We cover a wide area in Annandale and Eskdale, doing the lighting in Gretna, Rigg, Eastriggs, Dornock, Langholm, Lockerbie, Johnstonebridge, Annan and Lochmaben, plus we cover Kelloholm, Castle Douglas and Kirkcudbright in Nithsdale.

"In addition, we rig out the Christmas trees in Greyfriars Church, Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Georgetown Library and other locations in Dumfries, as well as in Kirkconnel, Sanquhar, Moffat, Annan and Lockerbie, so we're kept really busy.

"To install everything takes us five weeks with a five-man crew, working seven days a week for up to 14 hours at a time, with 6am to 11pm days not unusual as we approach deadline.

"Technically it's reasonably straightforward, but as you'd expect it's fairly time-consuming with plenty of testing and safety checks – and knowing it'll then take us four weeks to dismantle it all again come January!"

John's final switch-on was 1 December at Johnstonebridge – but the team didn't have time to rest as it was then straight into preparing to install the Lights of Hope in Dumfries as part of the People's Project.

John explained: "This initiative means that when Christmas is over and the festive decorations get turned off in the first week of January, new lights are then switched on to brighten spirits through what can be quite a dark and depressing month. It's a good idea."

John and his team have been working on the decorations for Dumfries and Galloway Council for the past three years on an annual basis and won the four-year contract in September.

He said: "It's a lot of hard work but definitely worth it when you see everywhere lit up. It transforms the streets and definitely makes it feel like Christmas." ■



↓ Wilson Electrical's handiwork in Lockerbie

← John Wilson

QUICK FACTS

WILSON ELECTRICAL

BRANCH: Dumfries & Galloway

BASED: Dumfries



After studying music at college, Scott Ahern decided to switch careers and become an electrician, with his performance on the tools seeing him crowned 2024 SJIB Apprentice of the Year. We caught up with him to find out more about his journey to the top – and what he’s planning for his next act

Key change pays off for Scott



WORDS
IAIN MASON
Director of Membership, Events
& Communications, SELECT

APPI
OF T





↑ Monica Lennon MSP watches the final

Celebrating new talent

Scott, who's from East Kilbride, was presented with his award and a voucher for £1,000 by SJIB Chair Jock Simpson at an awards ceremony in the Edinburgh Marriott Hotel Holyrood on 9 October.

The competition, held in conjunction with Edmundson Electrical, also saw vouchers presented to finalists Sean Bermingham, 33, from Strathpeffer, who works for SELECT Member firm Ross-shire Engineering Ltd in Inverness, and Jake Stewart, 22, of Dundee, who works for Monifieth-based Kevin Black Electrical Contractors.

All three finalists were also presented with top-of-the-range Megger multi-function testers by Stuart Minty, Regional Key Account Manager at Edmundson Electrical.

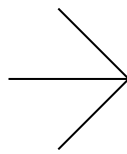
Guest speaker at the event was Monica Lennon, Scottish Labour and Co-operative MSP for Central Scotland, who said: "As Convener of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Construction, I was honoured to speak at this year's awards.

"The SJIB are right to recognise the valuable contribution of outstanding apprentices such as Scott."

Catherine Gillon, Secretary of the SJIB and Director of Employment Affairs at SELECT, said: "Apprentices are the great hope for the sector's future and the SJIB Apprentice of the Year Awards recognise and celebrate the very best of our new talent. Scott triumphed in an extremely close field."

Derek Allen, Scottish Regional Director of Edmundson Electrical, added: "Scott and his fellow finalists have every reason to be proud of their achievements.

"Thanks should also go to the SJIB and SELECT for continuing to promote the ongoing importance of electrical apprenticeships."



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR AWARD SCOTT – HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR NAME WAS ANNOUNCED?

It felt great – a total surprise. I didn't expect to win and was just happy to be in the final three. During the awards ceremony, we were told that we'd all done extremely well to even get to the final, so winning was honestly the cherry on top. Obviously it's something to show for what I've been working towards, so I was extremely proud.

WHO WAS WITH YOU ON THE DAY?

My mum, my dad and girlfriend were there, plus a couple of managers from my employer, DRB, which was nice. My dad was so proud – I think he spoke to practically everyone at the event and within 10 minutes of getting home he was texting all his friends too. He kept sending me screenshots of everyone replying saying congratulations!

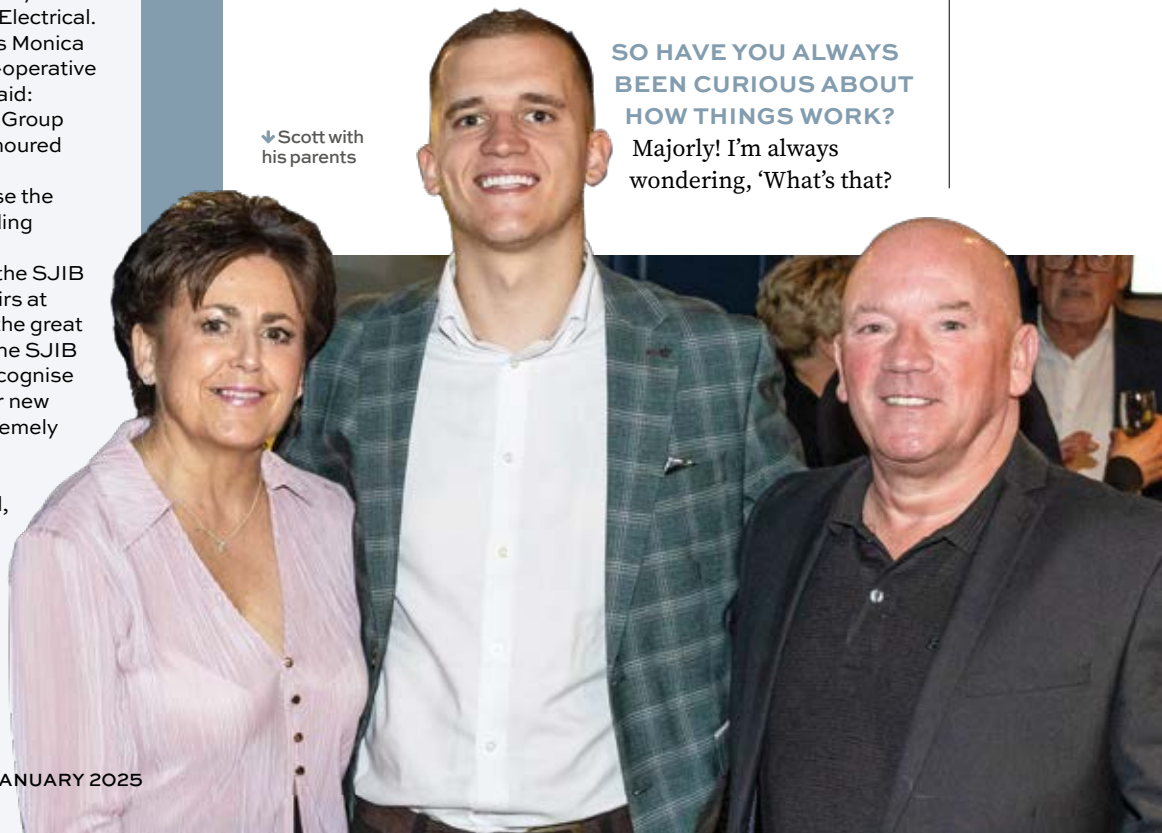
HOW HAVE YOU GOT WHERE YOU ARE NOW? WHAT'S BEEN YOUR JOURNEY?

I stayed at school until I was 18 then spent two years at Riverside Music College at Busby in Glasgow, learning how to get better at playing guitar, singing and performing. The end of term exam was putting on a gig, so it was an amazing experience. After that I worked lots of different jobs, helping out family and friends by doing things like carpet fitting and a bit of joinery. Growing up, I was always told that being an electrician was an excellent trade with good pay and plenty of work, so eventually I just decided, 'I'm going to become a spark'. I thought it might be tricky due to my age but I got really lucky and was able to start my apprenticeship relatively late on – I didn't actually realise it was an option for people who are a bit older.

SO HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT HOW THINGS WORK?

Majorly! I'm always wondering, 'What's that?'

↓ Scott with his parents





↑ Scott receives his award from SJIB Chair Jock Simpson



↑ Scott with SECTT Training Officer Gordon Penman

YOU'RE 27 NOW AND WERE OLDER THAN MOST APPRENTICES – DO YOU THINK THAT HELPED YOU?

I think I **WAS** a bit more mature and prepared for things. Don't get me wrong, I've seen a lot of people that started work at the age of 16 and are now doing

amazing things, but having a bit of experience and a few life skills certainly was a bonus. Helping other people out and working in other areas gave me a different perspective on things and I could see the other person's side of a job – I think it really gave me an advantage when I was speaking to older tradesmen too.

WHAT'S THE SUPPORT BEEN LIKE FROM THE SJIB AND SECTT?

They've helped massively, particularly when I had to move employer. They really opened my eyes to how protected apprentices are and how much support there is to make sure you're OK. Gordon Penman was my SECTT Training Officer and was brilliant, putting me in touch with all the right people. During lockdown, he and I would chat over the phone all the time – he's been a massive part of my journey.

WHAT KIND OF WORK ARE YOU DOING NOW?

DRB primarily works with petrol stations and we recently got bought over by TSG, who specialise in EV chargers. A lot of my work has involved installing EV chargers at petrol stations, which obviously involves a

"HELPING OTHER PEOPLE OUT AND WORKING IN OTHER AREAS GAVE ME A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS AND I COULD SEE THE OTHER PERSON'S SIDE OF A JOB"

Why does it do that?'. I think I bugged my parents throughout childhood and was the same when I was an apprentice; I had tradesmen telling me I needed to take two steps back when they were working because I was always hanging over their shoulders asking questions. But I think it's good to be curious.

AND HOW DID YOU FIND THE TRAINING?

To be honest, I didn't have the ideal start as I wasn't doing a lot of electrical work with my original employer, but after starting second year I moved to DRB and just excelled from there – it was exactly what I needed to get hands-on and show them what I could do. My whole attitude was, 'I'm going to blow these people's minds'.

WHAT WAS THE TOUGHEST PART OF YOUR TRAINING? ANY CHALLENGES IN PARTICULAR?

I really enjoyed college, although it was obviously very challenging, particularly the maths side. It's also a big jump from first to second year in terms of the principles and physics involved – things like Pythagoras and wave forms were tough. I'd never done physics at school so it was all new to me but, again, I was obsessed with trying to understand everything and prove myself, so it all worked out. I didn't think physics had anything to do with being an electrician but when you get down into the detail it's actually a massive part of everything.

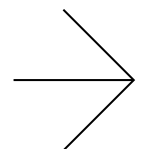
QUICK FACTS

DRB

DRB UK
MAINTENANCE
SERVICES LTD

BRANCH:
Lanarkshire

BASED:
Hamilton
WEBSITE:
www.drb-uk.co.uk





↑ The finalists with Stuart Minty of Edmundson Electrical, Monica Lennon MSP, SJIB Chair Jock Simpson, SELECT President Mike Stark, SJIB Secretary Catherine Gillon and SJIB Director Alan Wilson

lot of intricate detail, and we've recently been doing charge points on M&S car parks and Amazon warehouses, which can last weeks. In terms of travel I've been absolutely everywhere, from Inverness to Kent. I can be working on anything from wee maintenance jobs to massive projects, so can be away for up to seven weeks at a time.

IS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT YOU'RE MOST PROUD OF SO FAR?

I get called sad for how much I love my job because

I really do enjoy everything, but I'm probably most proud of the first job that I ran myself, which was a Shell garage at Thirsk. It was a full knockdown and rebuild, so we were rewiring all the forecourt and shop and working long hours into the night. It was hard but we got it done on time and it all looked amazing. That's my favourite part – turning everything on and just standing back and seeing it all working.

"THAT'S MY FAVOURITE PART – TURNING EVERYTHING ON AND JUST STANDING BACK AND SEEING IT ALL WORKING"

Images: Mark Jackson Photography

Scott's quality of work 'is second to none'

Scott works for SELECT Member firm DRB UK Maintenance Ltd in Hamilton, which provides signage solutions, electrical services and hazardous area inspections to the fuel retail market.

Founded in 1980, the company was acquired by the TSG Group in late 2021 and now offers a UK-wide service to blue-chip oil companies and major dealership groups

Jason Boyle, Project Manager at DRB, said: "Scott is really easy to work with; he's very intelligent, not fazed by anything and likes to face everything head-on.

"He's probably one of the best in our business at thinking on his feet and coming up with solutions – you can always trust him and

certainly don't need to micro-manage him.

"He's also good with dealing with the clients too and is always very approachable.

"Scott came to us as a second-year apprentice and was confident from the outset, asking the right questions about how things worked and wanting to know why things were done a certain way.

"Being a little bit older, he obviously had a lot more life experiences than your typical teenager coming out of school, so that probably helped. He's really improved

at thinking for himself and is now very confident in dealing with other trades, so he can stand his ground and coordinate things on site to ensure they work for him.

"One of his main strengths is undoubtedly problem solving and he's also proficient at testing and inspection. His eye for detail and quality of work is second to none too

"I suppose I just enjoy working with Scott because when you send him to a job you know it'll get done and you can sleep at night – which makes all our lives easier."



'Exceptional passion for learning his trade'

Scott completed his studies at New College Lanarkshire's Motherwell Campus under the watchful eye of SECTT Training Officer Gordon Penman, who was also full of praise for the youngster.

He said: "Scott has consistently demonstrated an exceptional passion for learning his trade, both at college and on the job out on site."

"He is a personable, hardworking individual who was always ahead of the game, often being one of the first to complete his assessments for both me and the college."

"Scott's eagerness to progress and do well to become a qualified electrician was clear from the start. I believe that the combination of excellent training, support and guidance from SECTT, the college and his employer has played a crucial role in his success."

"Paired with Scott's own drive and enthusiasm for the trade, it's no surprise he excelled and I am proud of how well he has done earning this well-deserved award."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

I've got my CompEx qualification and site supervisor training under my belt, so now I'm working towards becoming an Approved Electrician. In the grand scheme of things I'd love to have my own company and a squad of people doing big contracts, because I've worked on huge maintenance and stock contracts since the start of training. I'd like to think that with a few guys behind me I could do my own thing in the industry – that's my main goal. But I know there's loads of stuff I could do. I tried to do my HNC in engineering when I was in my third year but because I was down in England a lot it would have

been next to impossible. So that's maybe something I could look at in the future too. My main goal at the moment is getting my Approved. After that, who knows?

SO ARE YOU MORE INTERESTED IN THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THINGS OR ARE YOU HAPPIEST ON THE TOOLS?

Tools, definitely! I've seen a bit of the backroom side and how our managers deal with clients, which is really interesting and something I'm sure I could learn more about, but for now I really like to be at the heart of the nitty-gritty.

AWAY FROM WORK, WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING? ANY HOBBIES?

It's hard to switch off sometimes but I really enjoy my music. I dabble in the keyboard but singing and the guitar are my two main things. I also like doing metalwork with knives and swords and stuff – it's a bit of an expensive hobby though.



↓ Scott with fellow finalists Sean, left, and Jake

AND FINALLY... WHAT WOULD YOUR MESSAGE BE FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE AN ELECTRICIAN BUT THINKS THEY MIGHT HAVE MISSED THE BOAT?

My main message would be that it's **NEVER** too late. I've seen people in their late 20s just starting out and absolutely loving it. Just jump in with both feet, put in as much effort as you can and if you're genuinely engaged you'll really go places. ■

Iain Woodrow

BOWMORE,
ISLE OF ISLAY↑ Islay is a beautiful
place to work and relax

An Oz-some journey of discovery

James Neill is loving life as an electrician on Islay after leaving Australia and moving to Scotland. The weather's a bit different, but he says it's the ideal place for him and his family to flourish

THE Isle of Islay has its own Crocodile Dundee now that Darwin-born electrician James Neill has upped sticks from down under and made the Scottish island his new home.

James arrived last year from Australia and is now employed with SELECT Member firm Iain Woodrow Electrical Contractor, where he's more likely to be working in whisky distilleries rather than on crocodile farms back in the Northern Territories.

Similar to UK apprentices, James worked with an electrical contractor in Darwin to pass his apprenticeship and gained experience in a wide range of domestic, commercial and industrial settings.

The most memorable was Crocodylus Park – the city's major wildlife park, which is home to 40 saltwater crocodiles, including some

big five-metre males weighing more than 500kg.

James said: "Darwin could not be any more different to Scotland. It's a very tropical and humid place to live and we don't even get seasons like you have in the northern hemisphere – for us it's just a wet or dry season, six months on, six months off.

"The coldest night of the year would probably be around 17 degrees centigrade and, of course, we are famous for having crocodiles, snakes, insects and sharks that can all kill you!"

He said that, to most Australians, Darwin and the surrounding area is considered the bush or outback, and just to the west of the city is a place called Dundee where it's thought actor Paul Hogan got the name for his famous Crocodile Dundee character in the 1986 film of the same name.

James added: "Working at Crocodylus Park was fun as we built the hatchling enclosures for the baby crocs and installed the switchboards and cabling for new buildings in the wildlife park, as well as carrying out regular maintenance and testing.

"I then went on to work in the high-rise construction sector for a time, and then moved to the \$80 billion liquid nitrogen gas plant in Darwin Harbour. I later became a marine electrician servicing naval ships, so I've really hopped around a bit everywhere."

James's first introduction to Islay came when he and his wife Johanna were invited to a family wedding on the

island where they stayed in an old farmhouse near Port Ellen that was owned by Johanna's relative and where she'd spent holidays

**"DARWIN
COULD NOT
BE ANY MORE
DIFFERENT
TO SCOTLAND"**

as a child. As the farmhouse was in poor condition, James and Johanna decided to live on the island and renovate the property to make it a family home for them and their baby daughter Matilda.

James said: “The housing market in Australia is quite expensive and this gave us a chance to have an adventure and move to a beautiful Scottish island that would be perfect to bring up a family.

“Lots of people talk about taking the plunge and don’t do it but it’s worked out for us... and just in time as our daughter was born two months after arriving!”

Within two weeks, James had picked up a job with Iain and was adjusting to the UK way of doing things.

Luckily, he’s found the transition from Australian electrical practices to UK procedures fairly straightforward as five years ago, while working in Manchester where Johanna was studying at university, he took the necessary exams which meant he could transfer his qualifications to work as an electrician in the UK.

He said: “It seemed strange to me at first as I thought Australia’s electrical qualifications were equivalent to the UK. I thought the process would be much smoother but it’s just how it is.”



James Neill

DARWIN NT, AUSTRALIA



↑ James, far left, with his colleagues and boss Iain, far right, at our Toolbox Talk in Islay in June

Many things are similar between Australia and the UK, with Australian electricians receiving the full Electrician’s Licence, also known as the A Grade Licence, after four years’ apprenticeship. In Australia, the electrical safety standards are set by the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 3760:2022, also known as the Wiring Rules.

James added: “While there are similarities in safety standards and overall working environments, I had to learn the UK style of doing things, which is slightly different, such as different wiring regulations, circuit designs and certification requirements.

“The biggest changes were learning BS 7671, becoming familiar with ring circuits – as opposed to radial circuits, which are common in Australia – and adapting to the UK’s formal certification processes.”

While the UK uses a three-pin plug with a large rectangular grounding pin and Australia uses a three-flat-pin plug without an extra grounding pin, one of the biggest differences that James noticed in the UK was the

greater use of steel wire armoured (SWA) cable. He said: “In Oz we just use cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE) circular cable plastic cable as we stopped using SWA cable around 30 years ago.

“I also notice that the UK uses a bare, non-insulated earth in twin and earth cables while all our earths are insulated – these are the types of things we don’t do in Australia any more.”

James said he is enjoying the variety of work and the more relaxed pace of life

on Islay. He said: “With Iain, I’m working on a wide range of domestic, commercial and industrial work, so you can go from residential repairs to heavy industrial applications.

“I’ve visited all nine distilleries on the island and already worked in three of them – it doesn’t take long to get to know the place.

“It’s definitely more relaxed and people are happy to stop for a chat, which you wouldn’t get in a big city.

“It’s really the reason we moved here; there’s no sense of rushing about and the whole island has a peaceful atmosphere. There’s no crime, you don’t have to lock your doors and children can play safely outside.

“In the morning I wake up to hear sheep and cows as opposed to ambulances and police sirens when I lived in Melbourne back in Oz. And the commute is 20 minutes compared to one-and-a-half hours in my last job.

“It’s wonderful here and the only thing we miss is family and friends... and, of course, the sunshine!” ■

QUICK FACTS

Iain Woodrow

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

IAIN WOODROW
ELECTRICAL

BRANCH:

Glasgow and West of Scotland

BASED:

Bowmore, Isle of Islay

WEBSITE:

www.iainwoodrowelectrical.co.uk



↓ James has come a long way from the sun and sea of Darwin

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Enjoy the gift of peace of mind this Christmas

Here's a generous festive present just for Members – an exclusive 10% discount from our latest Associate Member, ABAX, to help improve efficiency, optimise your fleet and protect those valuable tools

WITH the average cost of tool and machinery theft in Scotland now estimated at more than £1,000 per incident, protecting your assets is more important than ever.

Our Associate Member ABAX knows that staying efficient is critical to every electrical contractor, which is why it's offering all SELECT Members an exclusive 10% discount on its advanced tracking solutions to boost your business and protect what's precious.

Whether you're managing machinery, tools or a fleet of vehicles, ABAX's tracking systems and Bluetooth-enabled tool tracking help streamline operations, enhance security and save on costs.

Real-time tracking technology gives you full control over your vehicles and machinery from any device, while the Bluetooth-enabled tool tracking ensures that smaller, portable assets are never misplaced.

ABAX's geofencing feature notifies you when equipment leaves its designated area, helping recover stolen items.

So no more time wasted searching for equipment or wondering if tools were left behind on a job

"AS A SELECT MEMBER, YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THESE POWERFUL SOLUTIONS THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIP"



Bluetooth-enabled tool tracking ensures small pieces of equipment aren't misplaced

– instead, you can know where your assets are at all times, reducing downtime and keeping projects running smoothly.

Managing business mileage is another area where ABAX simplifies your operations, helping with vehicle tax compliance and accurate mileage records for HMRC purposes.

Its automated system ensures you maintain precise, compliant mileage logs, reducing the risk of costly tax penalties, streamline your admin and stay compliant with Scottish and UK regulations.

As a Member, you have access to these powerful solutions at a discounted rate thanks to SELECT's latest partnership.

An ABAX spokesperson said: "As a SELECT Member, you have access to these powerful solutions through our partnership.

"Our aim is to help you improve efficiency, secure your assets and reduce your costs – and all while ensuring compliance with Scottish tax and safety standards." ■



SIGN UP NOW

Find out more and sign up for your exclusive 10% discount by scanning the QR code or visit www.abax.com/en-gb/partners/select



Support in sickness and health

Our team receives regular queries about welfare benefits and the cover provided, so here's an overview of some of the most common queries and myths we hear

WORDS
MICHELLE COURTNEY
Benefits Manager,
SELECT



Q. BY HAVING AN SJIB GRADE CARD, AM I COVERED FOR ALL WELFARE BENEFITS PROVIDED BY SELECT?

Operatives have to be employed by a Member company that participates in the SELECT welfare benefits scheme to entitle them to cover for sickness benefit and the various death in service benefits. A Scottish Joint Industry Board (SJIB) Grade Card doesn't automatically give these benefits to an individual.

Q. I HAVE AN SJIB GRADE CARD. DOES THIS MEAN I'M A MEMBER OF THE SJIB?

No. Only a company can apply and become a Member of the SJIB or SELECT – not individuals.

Q. I'M A DIRECTOR AND OWNER OF A SELECT MEMBER COMPANY. DOES MY MEMBERSHIP MEAN I'M NOW COVERED FOR PRIVATE MEDICAL INSURANCE?

Being a SELECT Member doesn't automatically mean you're covered for private medical insurance (PMI), but the good news is that you **CAN** take advantage of our preferential rates if you do want to sign up. The cover is administered by our longstanding partner, ECIS, who will be able to advise on costs and how to join. The ECIS team can be contacted on **0330 221 0241** and you can also find out more at **ecis@ecins.co.uk**

Q. HOW DOES ADDITIONAL SICK PAY WORK ALONG WITH STATUTORY SICK PAY? ARE THEY THE SAME?

The sickness benefit provided through our welfare benefits scheme is payable for 52 weeks, which is longer than statutory sick pay (SSP). Payment starts from week three onwards and the weekly amounts range from £180 to £210 per week depending on grade for weeks three to 24. From weeks 25 to 52 the amounts payable range from £90 to £105.

Q. CAN I DECIDE WHO MY DEATH IN SERVICE PAYMENT IS PAID TO, SHOULD THE WORST HAPPEN?

When you're in employment, your employer should ask you to complete an expression of wish form or their own personal details form, which you can use to detail who the beneficiary should be for your death benefits. This decision will not be made by SELECT, the SJIB or even your employer. If you don't think this has been done, always ensure you check with your employer.

Q. I HAVE A PRE-EXISTING HEALTH CONDITION. CAN I STILL USE MY PMI?

Our PMI isn't underwritten, which means there's no medical

↓ Sickness payments can help if a worker has an accident





from their annual SELECT membership subscription.

Q. I'M A SELECT MEMBER CURRENTLY OFF SICK BUT NOT REGISTERED FOR THE WELFARE BENEFITS SCHEME. CAN I NOW JOIN AND CLAIM THE ADDITIONAL SICK PAY?

Member companies can join the scheme at any time. However, you can't join and claim straight away for being off sick with a current condition. Anyone on the scheme must have at least eight consecutive welfare credits for a claim to be made.

Q. ONE OF MY ELECTRICIANS IS GOING FOR AN OPERATION IN A FEW MONTHS AND WILL BE OFF SICK FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. CAN I JOIN THE WELFARE BENEFITS SCHEME TO ENSURE THEY RECEIVE THE ADDITIONAL SICK PAY?

As the electrician is not currently off sick, you can join the scheme and start making payments. This will ensure that when they do go off sick, they'll have the required amount of welfare credits paid for them to be eligible. ■

📌 ECIS update: Pages 46 & 47

history taken, so anyone with a pre-existing condition can be assured it won't be considered when making a claim.

Q. WHY SHOULD I OFFER MY EMPLOYEES ANY BENEFITS?

Offering any employee benefits can help to attract and retain staff. Employees who know that they have additional sick pay and a provision in place for death in service benefit can enjoy peace of mind, knowing that there is something in place that could make a huge difference if they become unwell. SELECT offers a welfare benefits package that's

in line with the SJIB National Working Rules. Member firms can also choose to seek their own cover.

Q. AS AN EMPLOYER, DO I HAVE TO PAY WELFARE BENEFITS ON BEHALF OF MY EMPLOYEES OR CAN I PASS THE COST ON TO THEM?

Payments are made by the employer, not the employee, and would form part of your employee's employment package. All Members who participate in our welfare benefits scheme do receive a 20% reduction

↑ We can make it easier to provide sickness cover for your employees

Scheme will meet your needs

SELECT offers a welfare credit scheme that is specifically designed to suit the requirements of staff and operatives of all Member companies, from sole traders to larger organisations.

Welfare benefits include life insurance, sickness benefit and cover for accidents on site along with total and permanent disability cover.

The packages are designed to be flexible enough to suit every need, with payments being made monthly or even weekly.

For more information, contact Benefits Manager Michelle Courtney on michelle.courtney@select.org.uk or call her on **0131 445 5577**.

Further information and pricing are also

available in our Welfare Credit Scheme brochure – scan the QR code to download it or go to the 'Publications' section of www.select.org.uk



↑ The brochure is full of useful information

Help is at hand for the cable guy

SELECT's counterpart in Denmark recently took part in a study to examine the impact of robot technology and automation on traditional electrical tasks such as cable pulling – and found it could help overcome labour shortages and improve efficiency without posing a threat to existing workers

WORDS
JACOB LYDOM
Political Consultant,
TEKNIQ



TEKNIQ

On a bustling construction site, two electricians grapple with a stubborn cable, their arms stretched overhead as they manoeuvre it into place.

But today, they're not alone – two robot engineers watch intently, their minds already racing with possibilities. Could a machine assist with this physically demanding task, allowing a single electrician to do the job of two?

This scene unfolded as part of a new initiative that could significantly impact Denmark's electrical contracting industry.

Like the UK, the country faces a growing shortage of skilled electricians, so industry leaders are exploring a novel solution to the problem – automation and robotics. To map out



↑ Pulling cables can be an arduous task for electricians

Image: Blake Ragselsen, HowToRobot

the potential, the electrical, mechanical and industrial contractors' association, TEKNIQ, commissioned an independent study into robotics and automation in partnership with trade union Dansk El-Forbund.

The recently released study by specialist consultancy HowToRobot reveals a promising potential for automation and robotics to address the pressing labour challenges facing the industry.

The study found that implementing existing off-the-shelf automation technologies could address 14% of the expected shortfall of 6,700 electricians that Denmark is projected to face by 2030.

And with the development of new, fully automated solutions, up to 70% of the expected shortage could potentially be addressed.

Maria Schougaard Berntsen, Deputy Director at TEKNIQ, said: "There is already a shortage of labour in the industry, and the green transition increases the need for electricians even further.

"This study shows that automation could be a key part of the solution."

Image: AI generated



↑ Marking robots can automatically make drawings on the floor



GROWING SHORTAGE INCREASES NEED

In Denmark, as in Scotland, the skilled labour shortage is being experienced across many industries, but electrical contractors are particularly hard hit.

Some 37% of electrical contracting companies experience “production restrictions” due to a lack of labour – far more than the 24% figure for the general industry according to Statistics Denmark.

Electricians are also among the occupational groups in Denmark that companies have the hardest time recruiting. Just over a third of all advertised electrician positions end up with unsuccessful recruitment, according to the Danish Agency for Labor Market and Recruitment.

“This increased demand puts additional pressure on the current electricians in the industry to work more with the risk of getting worn out faster,” says Lars B. Sørensen, Area Manager at Dansk El-Forbund.

The hope among the companies participating in the project was that they could find ways to free electricians from the heaviest, most monotonous and repetitive tasks, thereby addressing the labour shortage.

This goal was successfully achieved, according to Mikkel Viager, one of the robot engineers from HowToRobot, who observed and analysed more than 50 electrical installation and maintenance tasks as part of the project.

He said: “We uncovered a wide range of

existing, often semi-automatic, aids and solutions that can reduce the time electricians spend on many of their tasks. It was far more significant than we had dared to hope.”

During the project, 13 specific electrical tasks across renovation, maintenance and new construction were identified as suitable for

“WE UNCOVERED A WIDE RANGE OF EXISTING, OFTEN SEMI-AUTOMATIC, AIDS AND SOLUTIONS THAT CAN REDUCE THE TIME ELECTRICIANS SPEND ON MANY OF THEIR TASKS”

Tasks suitable for automation

The study identified 13 electrical tasks across service, renovation and new construction that were particularly suitable for automation. The tasks were selected based on their prevalence in the installation industry, the significant benefits and the feasibility of automation:

- Cable pulling
- Installation of construction power
- Work on ladders and stools
- Measurement and marking
- Stripping of wires
- Hole drilling in walls and ceilings
- Cleaning
- Work with arms above shoulders
- Assembly of complete panels
- Transport of materials and tools
- Installation of power distribution systems
- Channel cutting and grooving
- Building grooves.

automation and optimisation with new or existing technology.

In particular, the study found great potential in automating processes such as cable pulling behind ceilings and walls, hole drilling for electrical installations, measuring and marking and channel cutting for wiring.

“The analysis shows enormous potential,” said Maria. “Automation can help ensure that a company can say yes to orders that they would otherwise have to decline due to staff shortages.

“This debunks the myth that robots are taking jobs from people.”

REDUCING HEAVY AND TEDIOUS TASKS

One thing is to automate to optimise work time, but in the bigger picture, there are other

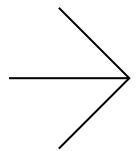
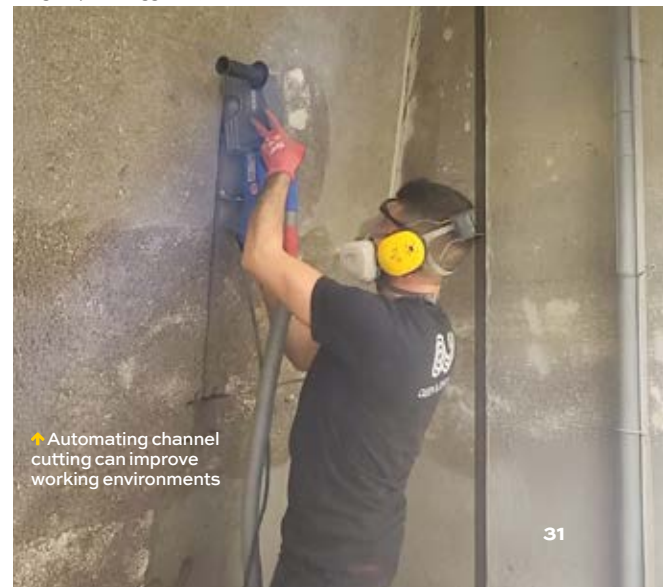


Image: Bjarke Reggelsen, HowToRobot



↑ Automating channel cutting can improve working environments

"WITH A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AND A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE TECHNOLOGIES AND THE SUPPLIER MARKET, YOU LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR SENSIBLE INVESTMENTS THAT HELP BOOST BOTH THE COMPANY'S BOTTOM LINE AND EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION"

considerations motivating electrical contracting companies. "What appeals to me most about automation is that we can spare our employees and reduce wear and tear," said Jesper Timming, Managing Director of Danish electrical contractor Linde-El, one of the companies studied in the project.

"Some of those entering the labour market now will be working until they are over 72 years old. If they are to stay in the industry, we need to take good care of them."

Particularly heavy tasks in difficult working positions, such as working on ladders with hands above shoulder height, can be wearing, especially on the shoulders.

One of the project's goals was to therefore to map out how automation can help reduce the number of wearing tasks and thus improve the working environment.

Across the tasks analysed, the study found an "improved working environment" to be the overall most significant positive effect of automation.

MEASURING, DRILLING AND GROOVING

During the project, several electrical tasks suitable for automation emerged beyond cable pulling, including the measurement and marking of placements for socket-outlets and conduits, etc.

Various solutions already exist today that can reduce the time spent on these tasks and minimise measurement errors.

An automation solution using a 3D scanner would make it possible to



↓ The study looked at how various tasks could be automated, such as cable pulling

Image: AI generated

Off-the-shelf solutions

Off-the-shelf tools were also identified in the study, including:

- Pulling springs with built-in camera for manual cable feeding
- Automatic solutions

for pulling larger cables

- Remote-controlled cable-feeding robots for ceilings
- Self-driving mobile drilling robots
- 3D scanners and plotters for measurement on walls and ceilings
- Mobile robots for printing drawings on floors

- Semi-automatic wire stripping machines
- Robot vacuum cleaners
- Exoskeletons to relieve work above shoulder height
- Grooving machines with automatic feeding and wall fixation
- Robot solution for printing drawings on walls



↑ Mobile drilling robots can aid electricians but may require some adjustments at construction sites

Image: AI generated

scan a room and then plot installations directly from a technical drawing on to walls, floors and ceilings for marking. Additionally, mobile robots exist that can print the drawing directly on the floor.

Another task identified during the project was drilling holes in ceilings and walls for socket-outlets, cable routing and installation.

Drilling is both a dusty and noisy process that often involves poor working positions for electricians. During the project, a range of off-the-shelf tools were found that can ease the work, from simple drills for making square holes for embedded socket-outlets to more advanced mobile drilling robots.

A third electrician task identified in the project was channel cutting for concealed cable routing.

This task is typically noisy, dusty and time-consuming, and a higher degree of automation can therefore improve both the working environment and free up work time for electricians.

Regardless of the task to automate, Mikkel recommends that electrical contractors should aim to find a balance and focus on what provides the most value for money.

"Although almost everything can theoretically be automated, it is rarely a good idea to aim too high," he said. "When you break a task down into smaller

parts and look at the technologies available on the market today, you might find a reasonable solution that can handle a portion of the task, which can still be hugely valuable.”



MAPPING THE OPPORTUNITIES

The project involved robot experts from HowToRobot following electricians at work and analysing their tasks in consultation with company management and the performing electricians.

Although the consultants’ method is best known in the manufacturing industry, it has increasingly found application in other sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and now also the electrical contractors’ industry, where automation is gaining ground.

“With a systematic review of the opportunities and a thorough knowledge of the technologies and the supplier market, you lay the foundation for sensible investments that help boost both the company’s bottom line and employees’ job satisfaction,” says Mikkel.

The method fundamentally involves making automation a systematic process that openly maps both the opportunities, benefits and risks of implementing robot and automation solutions in the work.

As part of the project, each of the participating companies received a short and concise report that gave management an overview of the automation potential in their company.

One of the companies is currently exploring the development of a new mobile automation solution to assist with pulling and pushing cables, and several are exploring how other existing solutions can help

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project was organised and funded by the Danish electrical contractors’ employers’ association, TEKNIQ, and the trade union Dansk El-Forbund. It aimed to map the possibilities for greater involvement of automation and robot technology in the electrical contracting industry, addressing labour shortages and working conditions. Find out more at www.tekniq.dk and howtorobot.com

and employers sit down together and ask what they can do smarter, a fantastic list of ideas and opportunities emerges on how they can make the workplace a better place.”

The last word goes to TEKNIQ’s Maria, who acknowledged the importance of bringing expertise in robotics and automation to the electrical contractors’ industry.

She said: “The project has confirmed that if you do not know the technologies, it can be difficult to see where the potential lies.

“When you look at it from a different professional perspective, it becomes clear that there is a great untapped potential to become more automated and use robot technology in the industry today.” ■



The expert's advice to getting started

Looking to get started with automation? Here are Mikkel’s three tips:

1. Get a wide overview
Avoid locking yourself into a particular technology or

solution too quickly, but focus on what is most needed. It’s also a good idea to consult with your employees and find out if you have some ambassadors who can help drive the project and push it forward.

2. Get out in the field
This can rarely be done from an office alone. Get experienced tech people with knowledge of the market and solutions to

scrutinize the tasks. The aim is to look broadly at all the tasks and find the common denominators – and then be realistic about what can be done and whether the business case holds up.

3. Consult the market
When you have a clear idea of your needs, describe them. Avoid designing the solution in advance, but describe the need and the task you want

to automate and ask relevant suppliers. Sometimes, there will be existing off-the-shelf solutions; other times, it will require developing something new.

Mikkel added: “Typically, 80% of the gain can be harvested for 20% of the cost. If you’re trying to achieve 100% level of automation, the price to reach the last 20% will often be disproportionately high.”

Technical

MORE INFORMATION
For further information on our
technical support and advice,
please call 0131 445 9218 or email
technicalhelp@select.org.uk

WORDS
IAN MASON

Director of
Membership, Events
& Communications,
SELECT



Practical training is all above board

Inspired by SELECT's ongoing activity on neutral current diversion, two electrical lecturers have created a practical fault board for their apprentices – and are now eager to share it with other colleges and the wider industry

APPRENTICES can now get hands-on with neutral current diversion (NCD) thanks to an interactive display board created by two lecturers at West Lothian College. Thomas Barlow and Scott Cavanagh have designed and built a prototype rig which shows how NCD works, enabling learners to see first-hand what they should look for in the field.

The board was developed to complement SELECT's many resources about the issue – and the duo were only too happy to demonstrate how it works when our Director of Technical Services, Bob Cairney, visited the college last month.

Thomas said: "We got the idea when we received the SELECT posters giving guidance on NCD. We thought it was a good idea but we didn't have anything to actually show the apprentices, so we wanted to create something they could physically interact with.

"It didn't take long to put together because we used materials we'd inherited and had lying around – the board itself is a repurposed white board!"

↓ Scott and Thomas are keen to share their prototype

"HAVING A SIMULATED ENVIRONMENT LIKE THIS IS EASIER FOR US TO EXPLAIN THAN JUST USING A SHEET OF PAPER, PLUS GETTING THEIR HANDS ON THE WORK MEANS THE APPRENTICES PICK IT UP A LOT BETTER TOO"

The board is designed as a single-phase TN-C-S system. Under normal fault-free conditions, it operates like a standard installation, providing students with a familiar baseline for testing and understanding system behaviour and can also be used to demonstrate safe isolation.

By activating a fault switch, the board introduces a simulated NCD under load conditions which enables students to observe two scenarios.

First, they can perform standard tests on the installation under fault-free conditions, seeing how the system would typically respond.

Then, upon introducing the fault, apprentices witness the effects and characteristics of NCD contained purely within the display board.

Scott said: "Essentially we've set it up so, under normal operating conditions, we'll be able to test the installation and use the clamp meter with no load to see that there's earth leakage.

"We then put on a load using a kettle and start to see a little spike in the earth leakage value.

So it's something good for learners to see



↑ The board makes it possible to introduce a fault

without any fault present. The green neon light indicates that it's essentially safe for them to be working on it – it's live but there's no fault present. Then we switch it and red indicates that the fault is now present. Once we activate the load via the kettle, that's when we see the NCD showing, usually at around 6.7A although it has been up at 8A."

Thomas added: "We've tried it out with our three 2nd Stage groups and the response from the apprentices so far has been really good.

"Like a lot of things, it's hard for them to visualise exactly what NCD is – especially the severity of it – so using a simulated environment like this is a good way for them to experience the issue and get awareness of how to test for it."

The board – which includes SELECT's NCD flow chart – is part of the college's ethos of encouraging apprentices to use their skills in real-life settings, helped by a purpose-built eco-house on campus which encourages cross-construction skills.

Scott said: "Having a simulated environment like this is easier for us to explain than just using a sheet of paper, plus getting their hands on the work means the apprentices pick it up a lot better too.

"We're upping our practical environments in the college as much as we can to ensure that, as well as theory, learners are getting the best physical experience they can when they're

↑ From left, lecturer Scott Cavanagh, apprentices Logan Dunachie and James Lithgow, lecturer Thomas Barlow and SELECT's Bob Cairney

Anyone wishing to find out more about the NCD board can email Thomas at tbarlow@west-lothian.ac.uk

here. The board allows learners to test NCD in a simulated, controlled environment, which is invaluable for reinforcing theoretical concepts and giving learners practical insights into fault diagnosis and system behaviour under abnormal conditions most won't have encountered.

"The board also possesses the potential for multi-trade training, in which gas engineers, plumbers and others could be trained to detect a fault they could come in to contact with in everyday scenarios."

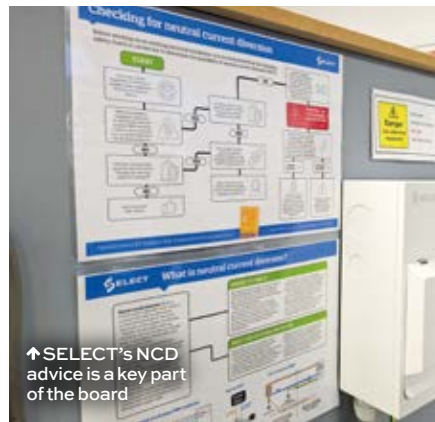
West Lothian has already been approached by another college which is interested in a board of its own, and SELECT Associate Member Scolmore has also offered to help with production to roll out the units across Scotland.

Thomas said: "So far we're the only college in Scotland that's got this, but we'd really like to

replicate it and give everyone the chance to use it.

"It's something a lot of people seem to be reaching out for experience of and could even be used by employers for their own in-house electricians."

He added: "It's not a monetary thing – we'd just like the opportunity to share it with others in the industry, show what it can do and get support for a wider roll out." ■



↑ SELECT's NCD advice is a key part of the board



↑ The clamp meter shows the increased load when a fault is introduced

HOW IT WAS BUILT

- The rig is constructed with a TN-C-S supply, feeding an electricity meter, isolator and the distribution board.
- The board supplies a single-socket circuit which is used to produce a load which can be measured using a clamp meter.
- Safe isolation testing can be carried out under normal operating conditions, with NCD testing taking place under both normal and fault conditions using a clamp meter.

Training

MORE INFORMATION
To enquire about SELECT's range of training courses, please call 0131 445 5577 or email training@select.org.uk

A workforce that's both older and wiser

Scotland's workforce is ageing, yet many businesses feel they're not prepared for the change in demographic. That's why we've partnered with Age Scotland to offer a range of new online workplace training courses for managers

WORDS
JENNY CRYVANS
Training Manager



A **THIRD** of Scotland's workforce is now over 50, with twice as many people aged 65 and over in employment compared with 10 years ago – and this number will continue to rise.

Many employers are struggling to adapt to this changing demographic, with only one in 10 saying they've discussed retirement plans with workers who plan to step down in the next five years.

In addition, ageism is the most widespread form of discrimination in the UK, which is why Age Scotland works with organisations to identify barriers to age inclusion and deliver ways to make intergenerational workplaces work.

The charity has already delivered training to more than 17,000 people from 270 organisations, so here's how it could help your company too.

MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

Did you know that 10% of menopausal women with troublesome symptoms will leave their job? Or that six in 10 menopausal women say their symptoms have had a negative effect on their working life?

With women over 50 the fastest growing segment of the workforce, Age Scotland has designed a three-hour interactive session for line managers.

The session will help participants to develop a deeper understanding of menopause in the workplace, sharing the tools and techniques needed to engage colleagues in menopause-related conversations and become an effective leader of an intergenerational team.

- As a result, delegates will:
- Develop an understanding of menopause, its symptoms and how to recognise them
 - Become more aware of the position in relation to menopause and the law
 - Learn how to start or respond to conversations around the menopause positively
 - Explore ways to encourage open and honest communication that doesn't automatically lead to a discussion of performance
 - Identify a range of reasonable adjustments to support colleagues with menopausal symptoms.

AGE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

According to research, and despite a recruitment crisis across many sectors, only four in 10 employers say they are open to hiring people aged between the ages of 50 and 64.

Working with the University of Edinburgh Business School, Age Scotland has developed the



Age Scotland training can help your business identify barriers to age inclusion



↑ Ageism is the most widespread form of discrimination in the UK

only course of its kind in the UK to raise awareness around age discrimination and age inclusion in the workplace.

Using digital media, the workshop will facilitate group discussions to explore the unique combination of challenges that older workers can face, plus the unique opportunities that intergenerational teams offer organisations.

It will also raise awareness of the valuable role older workers play and look at how to increase retention, improve recruitment and ensure healthy knowledge transfer, as well as a happy and productive working environment.

As a result, delegates will:

- Develop a greater awareness of the potential for ageism in the workplace
- Feel more able to identify potential age-related challenges
- Have increased understanding of the role of a line manager in supporting older workers
- Enjoy greater understanding of how organisational culture can influence an older worker's experience in the workplace
- Feel better equipped to handle challenging conversations around age.

DEMENTIA AWARENESS

More than 90,000 people in Scotland live with dementia – a number expected to double

in the next 25 years. As changes to retirement and state pension rules make working beyond the age of 65 more common, more people in employment will experience early symptoms of dementia.

This session looks at the signs and symptoms, effective communication tips, inclusion of people living with dementia and action planning for dementia inclusive workplaces.

It also covers the legal obligations of employers towards employees living with dementia, assessing your HR provision and supporting employees living with dementia.

As a result, delegates will:

- Understand the signs and symptoms of dementia
- Learn skills to communicate effectively and empathetically with people with dementia
- Foster a positive working culture in which staff with dementia or who are caring for someone with dementia feel supported by their employer
- Develop more dementia-inclusive practices as part of a commitment to support vulnerable customers and colleagues
- Understand how to support employees who may be living with early-stage dementia or are carers.

IMMERSIVE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unconscious bias can negatively affect the day-to-day experience of your colleagues, reduce productivity and affect recruitment and retention.

This CPD accredited workshop covers all protected characteristics in an intersectional way that highlights the individuality that we all bring to work.

Using a series of digital assets, the workshop immerses participants in workplace scenarios where they may experience a reaction due to unconscious bias, giving them a safe environment to recognise and begin to challenge their own unconscious biases.

It will also immerse participants in experiencing the impact that others' biases can have on us.

As a result, delegates will:

- Understand what unconscious bias is
- Discover the implications of unconscious bias in the workplace
- Learn how to better recognise their own biases and manage them effectively
- Learn how to apply unconscious bias awareness to everyday workplace situations. ■

COURSE LINKS



↑ Menopause in the Workplace



↑ Age Inclusive Leadership



↑ Dementia Awareness



↑ Immersive Unconscious Bias



↑ Age Scotland training



All workshops cost £49 + VAT per delegate, are held via Zoom and will last approximately three hours. Scan the QR codes (above) for available dates, costs and a booking form. Further information and a list of additional training workshops are available at agescotland.org.uk

Health & Safety



↑ Workers need to have the right facilities on site

Protecting worker welfare is crucial

WORDS
ANDY HARPER

CMIO SH IMAPS
Head of Technical and
CDM Support, BSG



The Building Safety Group recently reported a welcome drop in welfare breaches on construction sites. So what are you legally bound to provide to ensure the wellbeing of workers?

WE WERE pleased to see a 41% reduction in the number of on-site welfare breaches after comparing 7,000 Building Safety Group (BSG) site inspections in Q2 and Q3 this year.

The drop has been attributed to the positive response from our members, who have been acting on the advice and guidance provided by BSG Safety Advisers about welfare provision.

It also follows updated Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on welfare standards, which outlines what its own inspectors expect and require from site managers during visits. Good provision

of welfare facilities is fundamental in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of construction workers. Contractors, including principal contractors, and clients have a legal duty under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations to ensure the appropriate and adequate welfare facilities are provided at all workplaces.

The provision of toilets, drinking water, a supply of cold and hot/warm water for washing, changing facilities and somewhere warm to eat and rest are basic and legal requirements.

It's important that sites comply with the law to avoid paying fines, as one construction company found out after failing to provide workers with adequate welfare facilities.

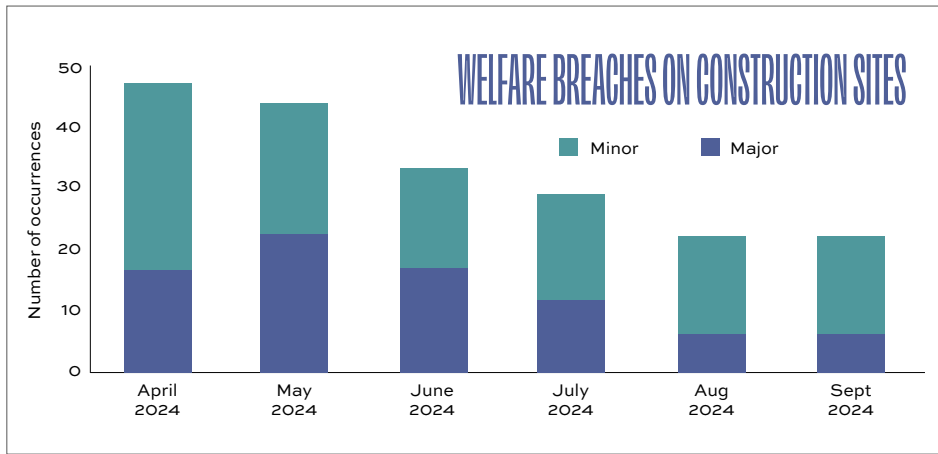
CB Homes Ltd in Cheshire was carrying out work at a site when it was visited by the HSE, which found the company didn't offer adequate facilities for workers to wash their hands. This breach resulted in a court case and a £5,000 fine.

REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY

Workers need to feel that they are valued

What should be provided?

- **Toilets** – sufficient number of toilets for all personnel on site must be provided. BS 6465-1:2006 recommends a ratio of one toilet to seven persons on sites where workers are working a 40-hour week and where portable loos are emptied once a week.
- **Washing facilities** – welfare facilities’ regulations for construction sites include the provision of wash basins and showers. Sinks for hand washing should always be placed near toilets and food handling areas.
- **Hazardous materials** – for dirty work with hazardous materials, showers must be placed at a distance from the main facilities. There are special site welfare requirements for certain activities, e.g. working with lead or asbestos.
- **Drinking water** – this should be available to all workers on a site.
- **Changing rooms and lockers** – these are a requirement on all sites. Secure storage for clothing and personal items must be provided, plus separate changing areas for men and women.
- **Storage** – provisions must be made for the separate storage of dirty or contaminated clothing, and well-ventilated, heated drying rooms should be provided for wet clothes.
- **Rest facilities** – all sites must offer adequate rest facilities which provide shelter from adverse weather, heat and cold. Usually in the form of a canteen, they must provide sufficient seating with backs and table space to accommodate all workers. There should be means for making hot drinks and heating food.
- **Heating and ventilation** – appropriate heating and ventilation is a necessity in most welfare facilities. A number of heating systems can be used, but it’s vital they’re safe for confined areas and that all precautions are taken to avoid fire hazards.



"WORKERS NEED TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE VALUED AND THEIR HEALTH AND WELFARE IS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BY THEIR EMPLOYER"

and their health and welfare is taken into consideration by their employer. The law states that welfare facilities need to be arranged on-site before any work can begin.

These facilities need to be considered during the planning stages and then maintained to a high standard throughout the entire lifespan of the project.

Unfortunately, some construction site owners ignore these requirements and fail to meet the minimum welfare facilities needed on construction sites.

The employees are directly affected in such situations as their productivity and efficiency are reduced when they work in environments with no welfare facilities available at work.

The employers are also affected as the reduced productivity and inefficiency of the employees directly affects the results of the construction work being carried out.

However, we’ve been pleased at the positive response from BSG members, who’ve been following our

recommendations about welfare provision on-site, which has been the main driver for the substantial

reduction in non-compliances over the past three months. In addition, it’s worth noting how many of our contractor members have been using BSG’s inspection reports to help principal contractors identify and address any shortcomings relating to welfare provision.

For more information about how to improve and maintain a high standard of welfare on a site, please log into the BSG Hub for SELECT Members, where you’ll be able to find our MS21 Health, Safety & Welfare Monitoring Report in the ‘Site Management Forms’ section. ■

GOOD ADVICE IS FREE!

SELECT Members automatically qualify for **FREE** advice and practical resources from the BSG worth £750. Signing up is quick and easy – all you need is your membership number. To find out more and get started, scan the QR code.



CATCH UP WITH OUR WEBINAR

Members who missed BSG’s recent webinar on directors’ roles and responsibilities can now watch it again online.

The half-hour session with SELECT on 27 November outlined

the legal duties when it comes to health and safety, including:

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Your health and safety policy and what it should do
- HSE guidance on leading health and safety at work
- Explaining the process of Plan / Do /

Check / Act

- Corporate manslaughter and other prosecutions
- Communication, consultation, cooperation and competence.

There was also a live Q&A at the end of the session, where Members asked specific questions.

Watch our webinar with BSG on directors’ responsibilities by scanning the QR code or going to bit.ly/watch-director



Industry insight

How to avoid big costs at Christmas

If you're throwing a festive party or giving out gifts this Christmas, it's important to be aware of the complicated tax rules that can stretch your budget even further

WORDS
MIKE HEPBURN
Senior Manager –
Employment Taxes,
BDO



BDO

As well as the venue, food and entertainment, another essential ingredient for your Christmas party is avoiding unexpected pitfalls when it comes to tax.

'Business entertaining' generally covers situations involving clients, contacts, suppliers or other individuals who aren't employees of your organisation. In tax legislation, HMRC defines it as follows:

"Business entertainment includes hospitality of any kind, and the expenses incurred in providing entertainment or a gift including any expenses incurred in providing anything incidental to the provision of entertainment or a gift."

Under the extent of this definition, the whole of the cost of an event must be considered, which can include such peripheral items as travel, accommodation and other ancillary costs.

Whether it's a simple dinner, a corporate hospitality event or an expensive foreign trip, the first principle to understand is that your organisation will receive **NO** business tax deduction for any expenditure in the accounts, nor will it be able to recover any VAT, apart from some minor exceptions.

Put simply, the gross cost of your business entertaining will be the true cost which your organisation will bear.

WHAT IS A TAXABLE BENEFIT?

The tax rules relating to employment can be very

complex. Everyone is aware that in addition to wages and salaries, employees are also taxed on any non-cash 'payments' they receive as a result of being an employee, e.g. a company car. These types of payments are called taxable benefits.

In tax law, the definition of a taxable benefit is very broad and includes almost anything an employer provides for, or gives to, an employee. Not surprisingly, business entertaining and staff events attract particular attention from HMRC in this regard.

Most likely, this will be any event when the primary purpose is entertaining staff. This could include staff social functions, such as Christmas parties and even the humble working lunch where employees might not even perceive they're being entertained!

WHAT ABOUT THE STAFF PARTY?

The first scenario, and perhaps the most well known, is the annual staff party.

Current legislation permits a tax relief in the form of an exemption of £150, which equates to £125 plus VAT per employee, which can be spread over a number of events in the same tax year provided that each event recurs annually.

The potential pitfall to note here is that HMRC will carefully examine any staff party expenditure to see





"IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP ACCURATE RECORDS OF WHO ACTUALLY ATTENDED EACH EVENT TO CHECK WHETHER THE OVERALL COSTS PER HEAD EXCEED THE LIMIT FOR THE YEAR"

statutory exemption for 'trivial' benefits. A benefit can also be given to an employee without a tax or National Insurance charge arising provided the following conditions are satisfied:

- The cost of providing the benefit does not exceed £50
- The benefit is not cash or a cash voucher, e.g. a Premium Bond
- The employee is not entitled to the benefit as part of any contractual obligation, including under salary sacrifice
- The benefit is not provided in recognition of particular services performed by the employee as part of their employment duties, or in anticipation of such services.

Where the employer is a close company and the benefit is provided to an individual who is a director or other office holder of the company, or a member of their family or household, the exemption is capped at a total cost of £300 in the tax year, i.e. the cost of benefits are £50 or less per benefit and the total cost of all benefits does not exceed £300.

HMRC also stipulates that the employer must incur the cost directly with the supplier. If instead, the cost is borne by an employee and then reimbursed to them by the employer, or even if the employer agrees to pay the employee's bill on their behalf, then according to HMRC this does not qualify.

For example, should one employee personally buy chocolate selection boxes for all their colleagues knowing that their employer is going to make good the cost, in HMRC's eyes the benefit in question is the cash reimbursement to the individual and not the chocolates for all and, being cash, it doesn't qualify. ■

whether all related costs have been included and that the legislation has been complied with.

To qualify for the exemption, events should be open to all staff employed at a particular location.

If a single event is more than £150 per head, the event becomes taxable. When more than £150 per head is spent during the tax year, then if one/some event(s) total under £150 per head they are exempt but additional event(s) would then be taxable in full on the employees attending.

However, your organisation will still get a business tax deduction and you'll be able to recover VAT in full regardless of the cost per employee, provided the purpose of the event is to reward good work or maintain and improve staff morale.

If you've held a series of events during the year to maintain staff morale and are now holding a seasonal event, it's important to keep accurate records of who actually attended each event to check whether the overall costs per head exceed the limit for the year.

AND WHAT IF I'M GIVING GIFTS?

Another pitfall to avoid involves giving employees gifts at Christmas – or at any other time for that matter. Generally gifts are taxable, but there is a

GETTING EXPERT HELP

BDO offers a comprehensive range of employment tax services to support your business, from VAT compliance, health checks and training to resolving disputes with HMRC. The team is committed to providing clear, practical advice that adds real value to your business. Find out more at www.bdo.co.uk



Reducing the risk of staff burn-out

As well as the physical demands on contractors, our industry is under siege from mental and emotional strain, so it's vital to look out for this silent crisis in your workforce



W

HILE the physical dangers of construction work are well-documented, the psychological toll on the sector's workforce remains in the shadows.

Male construction workers are almost four times more likely to die by suicide than the national average, with the human cost of poor mental health also affecting families, friends and colleagues.

The financial impact on businesses is also staggering – a 2019 study by Loughborough University found that the annual cost of stress alone is £178 million.

On a national scale, the cost is even more astronomical, with the annual bill for mental health issues in the UK estimated to be between £74 billion and £99 billion. In addition, mental health conditions account for 12.4% of all sick days – equivalent to 70 million sick days per year.

Poor mental health in construction is nothing new, but it's only in the past decade that the industry has begun to acknowledge its impact and root causes, which include:

- **Increased workloads:** With the current skills shortage and ageing workforce, there's enormous pressure on existing staff to fill gaps, leading to longer hours, lack of sleep and increased stress

levels as workers are stretched to their limits.

- **Time pressures:** In today's fast-paced world, client expectations have skyrocketed, with the constant pressure to meet unrealistic deadlines causing significant stress and anxiety among workers.

- **Dangerous work environment:** Despite a concerted effort to improve health and safety standards in recent years, the mental toll of working in such hazardous environments remains high.

- **Job security:** Client adversity to risk, payment delays and material inflation all contribute

to an environment of financial instability, with workers constantly worried about job security.

- **Time away from family:** Many construction workers face lengthy commutes and extended periods away, leading to isolation,

WORDS
PAUL McDEVITT
Managing Director,
McDevitt & Co



**700
PEOPLE**

in the UK industry take their own lives every year



↑ Promote a culture where workers feel comfortable discussing mental health



87%
have dealt with anxiety

loneliness, and stress. The lack of work-life balance is a significant factor in the mental health crisis in the industry.

- **Macho culture:** The industry has long been associated with a toxic environment that makes it difficult for workers to seek help when they're struggling. The stigma surrounding mental health also prevents many from getting the support they need.
- **Legacy of COVID-19:** The pandemic forced many people to re-evaluate their work-life balance, with many workers reluctant to return to the old ways of working. This shift in expectations has created tension in an industry that's traditionally been resistant to change.

On their own, each of these issues is enough to increase stress and anxiety levels. However, in the construction industry, they are often combined, creating a perfect storm that's pushing workers to their breaking point.

Addressing this mental health crisis in our industry requires a multi-faceted approach, so here are some recommendations for you to consider in your business:

- **Promote a culture of openness:** To help dismantle the macho atmosphere, businesses

should promote a culture where workers feel comfortable discussing their mental health without fear of stigma or retribution. This can be achieved through training programmes, workshops and encouraging people to lead by example.

- **Provide mental health resources:** Companies should invest in relevant resources, including access to counselling services, mental health first aiders and employee assistance programmes. Providing workers with the tools and support they need can help to reduce the impact of mental health issues.

- **Improve work-life balance:** Businesses should offer flexible working arrangements, reduce excessive overtime and encourage workers to take regular breaks. A healthier work-life balance can help to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety that workers are experiencing.

- **Address job security concerns:** Providing workers with greater job security can help to reduce the stress and anxiety associated with financial instability, so think about things such as improving financial stability through better project management and risk mitigation strategies.

70%
have battled depression in the past year

Paul McDevitt is Managing Director of McDevitt & Co, an experienced business consultancy that helps to inspire people, improve productivity and increase profits in the construction industry. Find out more and contact him at www.mcdevitt.co



97%
of construction workers have experienced stress

- **Focus on training and development:** Businesses should invest in training and development programmes to upskill their existing workforce and attract new talent. By reducing the pressure on existing staff, firms can help alleviate some of the stress and anxiety they're experiencing.

- **Encourage regular check-ins:** Frequent chats with employees can help to identify potential mental health issues before they escalate. Managers should be trained to recognise the signs of stress, anxiety and depression and how to offer support to anyone who may be struggling.

The mental health crisis in the UK construction industry is a serious issue that requires immediate attention, with the human and financial costs too great to ignore.

By addressing the root causes and implementing the recommendations outlined above, businesses can help to create a healthier, more supportive environment for their workers.

The time to act is now. The wellbeing of the construction workforce – and the future of the industry – depends on it. ■



↑ Terminating a contract can be done for a variety of reasons

make payment by the final date, the contractor may issue a notice of “specified default”.

- If the employer does not remedy that default within a specified period, Clause 8.9.3 allows the contractor to serve a notice to terminate the contract. In this case, the parties extended the standard 14-day period to 28 days.
- **Clause 8.9.4** provides that if the contractor does not “for any reason” serve the termination notice under Clause 8.9.3, and the employer repeats the specified default, the contractor may then serve a termination notice.

Get the facts on defaults

It’s important that electrical businesses know the legal circumstances under which contracts can be terminated

WORDS
DAVID WILSON
Partner



David Wilson regularly advises on arbitration and adjudication matters, often providing legal advice to adjudicators. As a litigator, he has extensive experience of acting for pursuers and defenders in commercial disputes in the Court of Session.

ON 15 August 2024, in *Providence Building Services Ltd v Hexagon Housing Association Ltd* [2024], the Court of Appeal upheld a contractor’s legal right to terminate a JCT form building contract due to repeated specified defaults by the employer, even though the employer had rectified the initial default within the contractual “cure” period.

In February 2019, Hexagon Housing Association Ltd (the employer) and Providence Building Services Ltd (the contractor) entered into a construction contract for several buildings in Purley.

The contract was a 2016 JCT Design and Build Contract, incorporating specific amendments. Notably, such provisions are also reflected in other JCT forms, including the 2024 editions and the 2016 Scottish SBCC versions. A dispute arose over Providence’s right to terminate the contract in light of repeated late payment by Hexagon. Under the 2016 JCT Design and Build Contract, specific clauses address the issue of late payment:

- **Clause 8.9.1** stipulates that if the employer fails to

Hexagon defaulted on a payment due in December 2022, but rectified it within 28 days, preventing Providence from issuing a termination notice. However, when Hexagon defaulted again in May 2023, Providence terminated the contract. Hexagon contested the termination, arguing that Providence could only terminate if they had previously accrued such a right under Clause 8.9.3.

Initially, the Technology and Construction Court (TCC) ruled in favour of Hexagon. However, the Court of Appeal disagreed, overturning the TCC’s decision. In its interpretation, Clause 8.9.4 allowed for termination, even if the right to issue a notice under Clause 8.9.3 had not previously accrued. Therefore, a repeated default by the employer – such as another failure to make payment – was sufficient to justify termination under Clause 8.9.4, regardless of whether the contractor had previously been entitled to terminate.

The decision indicates that, at a minimum, two non-sequential default events concerning non-payment may entitle a contractor to terminate for default. This poses a potentially challenging position for employers, representing a relatively narrow margin for termination that may not align with their commercial interests. Conversely, this decision creates a clearer pathway for termination by contractors should an employer fail to meet payment deadlines. Sub-contractors may also, when faced with late payments, invoke similar provisions to that of JCT/SBCC to terminate. ■

**LEGAL
HELPLINE**
0141 303 1111



As a Member of SELECT, you have access to the Legal Helpline operated by Morton Fraser MacRoberts. This helpline covers advice and assistance on commercial, contractual and employment matters under Scots law which concern your business.

Take care on contracts

Businesses should look closely at their financial situation and not allow clients to make contract amendments that aren't acceptable

WORDS
LEN BUNTON
FRICS FCI Arb,
HON FRIAS
Contract Expert



THE UK construction industry has been an absolute rollercoaster over the last few months, and I take no pleasure in seeing some of my many warnings coming true.

The biggest casualty has, of course, been ISG Construction Ltd, which went into administration in September owing significant sums to its supply chain.

At the time of writing, I know of at least two sub-contractors who've also gone into administration as a result, with no doubt many more horror stories to come.

So what are the immediate lessons for similar sub-contractors reading this? Well, it's the same as I've been saying for years – stay on top of your payment and cashflow.

I've previously highlighted some essential action to protect your position, including submitting detailed applications on time and engaging with the contractor or client to ensure there are no nasty surprises.

You should also be going through any contracts with a magnifying glass to identify any onerous, high-risk clauses that need to be removed or amended.

I was pleased to see the Construction Industry Council speaking out against amendments to standard contracts recently, particularly given some of the nonsense I've seen of late.

There is clearly a growing attempt to shift all risk onto the supply chain which I don't understand; at some point the sub-contractors will refuse to tender and the main contractor will have to find someone else, losing experienced partners. (By the way, if you're reading this and have come across ridiculous examples of contract amendments, please pass them to SELECT – after you've said no to them, of course.)

Another common issue is contractors and clients imposing increasing design responsibility

onto the supply chain – so again, review your contract carefully to understand **EXACTLY** what your design responsibilities are.

It's also important to ensure that you communicate any obligations to your insurers and let them see any contract amendments coming through. Better safe than sorry!

For example, I recently heard from a client who was

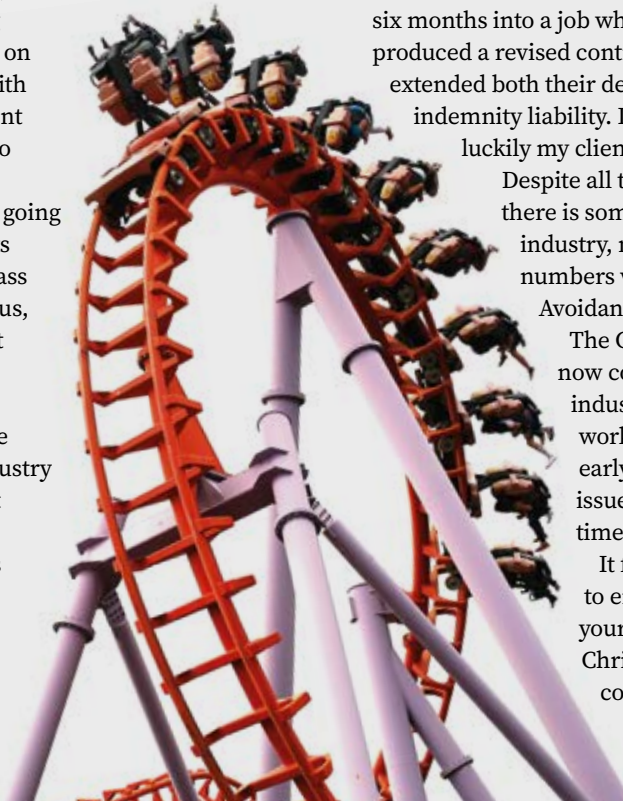
six months into a job when the main contractor produced a revised contract which significantly extended both their design and professional indemnity liability. It was a simple try-on and luckily my client said no.

Despite all this doom and gloom, there is some positive news in the industry, not least the increasing numbers who are signing the Conflict Avoidance Pledge.

The Conflict Avoidance Coalition now comprises more than 80 industry organisations, all working together to encourage early intervention and prevent issues escalating into costly and time-consuming disputes.

It feels like a good positive note to end on, so I wish you and your colleagues a very merry Christmas and a prosperous and conflict-free New Year. ■

"ENSURE YOU COMMUNICATE ANY OBLIGATIONS TO YOUR INSURERS AND LET THEM SEE ANY CONTRACT AMENDMENTS COMING THROUGH. BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY!"



YOUR CHRISTMAS TO-DO LIST FOR 2025

1. Review any tender contracts closely
2. Ensure you have a payment schedule
3. Fully detail all payment applications
4. If payment isn't received, suspend work
5. Comply with any notice provisions
6. Keep records, records and more records
7. Follow the CICV Best Practice Guide
8. Sign the Conflict Avoidance Pledge

A clear and present danger at work



In our latest insight into the health of your business, we take a look at the hidden cost of presenteeism and explain how to keep your workforce productive

WORDS
ROB LOW
Business Development
Executive, EC Insurance
Services Limited



A **BSENTEISM** often grabs attention in discussions about workplace productivity, but for contractors, there's an even subtler and more dangerous issue – presenteeism.

Presenteeism occurs when employees come to work while unwell, giving the impression that work is being done. However, their productivity is significantly reduced, leading to lower-quality output and increased safety risks.

The impact on your business can be profound, with mistakes, delays and safety risks the most common outcomes when

workers are physically present but mentally or physically compromised.

THE REAL COST OF PRESENTEEISM

It's easy to assume that a full on-site workforce means things are running smoothly. However, presenteeism is a quiet problem, creating the illusion of productivity.

According to *The Guardian*, sickness in the UK workplace costs businesses an estimated £100 billion annually, with a significant part of that cost coming from presenteeism.

Data from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) also shows that presenteeism has tripled in the UK over the past decade, with mental health issues such as stress and anxiety some of the most significant contributors.

Ultimately, presenteeism is far more damaging than it first appears, with illness or stress affecting a worker's ability to focus and perform.

HOW PRESENTEEISM AFFECTS TEAM MORALE AND SAFETY

When employees aren't performing at their best, it's not just their work that suffers – the rest of the team also feels the impact.





TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH ECIS

As a leading chartered insurance broker, ECIS has been organising and managing SELECT's exclusive PMI scheme through Bupa for decades. If you're ready to explore how PMI can benefit your employees and their families, contact the ECIS Benefits Team at ecis@ecins.co.uk or call 0330 221 0241. You can also visit ECIS at www.ecins.co.uk for more information.

Colleagues may have to pick up the slack, which increases their workloads and leads to frustration and burnout. Over time, this can lower morale across the entire team.

The construction industry's culture often prioritises toughness over wellbeing, which can lead to some unhealthy work habits.

As Steve Bratt, CEO of SELECT's southern counterpart, the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), explained in a recent ECIS blog: "Workers may continue working while unwell due to the pressure to push through, which is often encouraged by the industry's 'macho' culture."

This mindset not only exacerbates presenteeism but also puts both the individual and the wider team at risk, highlighting the need for a shift towards supporting employee health.

PRIORITISING HEALTH FOR REAL PRODUCTIVITY

Instead of concentrating on employee attendance, businesses should also focus on supporting their workers' health to help them perform at their best.

Private medical insurance (PMI) is a smart solution to help with this.

By giving employees quick and easy access to healthcare, PMI encourages them to seek treatment promptly, rather than pushing through sickness.

With PMI, the illusion of productivity that presenteeism creates can be reduced. Contractors can ensure that their workforce is not just present, but truly effective, contributing to the business at their full capacity.

By preventing the costly mistakes and delays caused by presenteeism, PMI ultimately helps keep projects on schedule and within budget.

HOW THE ECIS PMI SCHEME IS TAILORED TO THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

PMI isn't just a luxury – it's a practical

"COLLEAGUES MAY HAVE TO PICK UP THE SLACK, WHICH INCREASES THEIR WORKLOADS AND LEADS TO FRUSTRATION AND BURNOUT. OVER TIME, THIS CAN LOWER MORALE ACROSS THE ENTIRE TEAM"

solution to the problems caused by presenteeism and absenteeism.

The exclusive SELECT PMI scheme operated through Bupa by ECIS is specifically designed for contractors, providing a number of key benefits:

- **Fast access to healthcare:** Contractors often work under tight deadlines. The SELECT PMI scheme provides rapid treatment access, ensuring minor health issues don't escalate and employees can return to work quickly.
- **Comprehensive mental**

health services: Mental health challenges such as stress and anxiety are common causes of presenteeism. The SELECT PMI scheme offers extensive mental health support, including counselling, helping employees manage their wellbeing before it affects their productivity.

- **Remote and flexible healthcare options:** Workers in the contracting industry often operate in remote or challenging environments. With SELECT PMI, they can access healthcare remotely without leaving their worksite or taking time off.

Presenteeism can quietly drain your business's resources, but you **CAN** tackle it head-on with the right healthcare support.

The established SELECT PMI scheme offers a tailored solution to help you keep your workforce

healthy, productive and safe and can be quickly and easily implemented in any size of business.

Investing in the health and wellbeing of your team isn't just a compassionate decision – it's a strategic move that will improve productivity, protect your workforce and ensure projects stay on track. ■

SECTT Update

Changes will be good for employers

SECTT is making some changes to Apprentice Progress Reviews to give employers clearer information and make communication more effective and transparent.

From 1 January, the update will see the introduction of the following new review types:

- Approved Centre Review, which will track college progress
- Site Review, which will assess site development
- ePortfolio and Site Experience Review, which will combine digital and on-site progress
- Skill Scan, looking at an apprentice's strengths and areas to improve through reflection
- Information nights and FICA Coursework Reviews, both of which will focus on coursework for the final assessment.

Employers are also being asked to play their part by continuing to be involved in reviews, providing feedback and working with SECTT Training Officers to set realistic goals.

Barrie McKay, SECTT Training and Development Manager, said: "Reviews are key to ensuring that apprentices meet academic and on-site training goals and help align college learning with practical experience.

"These changes aim to improve how an apprentice's progress is tracked, making the process better for employers and apprentices alike."

ABOUT SECTT

SECTT manages high-quality training on behalf of the SJIB. To find out more about SECTT and its work, call 0131 445 5659, email admin@sectt.org.uk or visit www.sectt.org.uk



Honouring Scotland's top talent

The 2024 Apprentice of the Year contest was a great opportunity to showcase the ability of the brightest and best young students in our industry

THE brightest young electrical talent once again gathered in the east of Scotland as SECTT announced the winners of its 2024 Apprentice of the Year contest.

Six remarkable individuals were recognised for their outstanding achievements at this year's final on 8 October, which was hosted at the Original Rosslyn Inn near Penicuik.

After much deliberation, the 1st Stage winner was announced as Kyle Morrison, who works for SELECT Member firm Dennis Gordon Electrical Contractor and attends NESCOL Fraserburgh, who was praised for his "exceptional skills and commitment".

The runner-up spot was shared between Thomas Wright, who works for Member firm D&L Macleod and attends WCS Clydebank College, and Barry Ross of Dovend Electrical



↑ Left to right: Barry Ross, Reece Irving, Thomas Wright, Catherine Gillon, Scott Foley, Alick Smith, Kyle Morrison, Jamie Green and Jordan Bathgate.

Irving of Derek Mitchell Group and Dumfries and Galloway College.

The final followed three heats across the West, East, and North regions, with 21 1st Stage and 21 2nd Stage apprentices competing to become overall winner in each category.

The finalists were put through their paces by our judging panel, which was comprised of SJIB Secretary and SELECT Director of Employment Affairs Catherine Gillon, SJIB Trustee Alick Smith and Regional Officer at Unite the Union and Chair of the SECTT Trustees, Scott Foley.

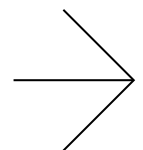
SECTT CEO Fiona Harper said: “From more than 1,600 apprentices across Scotland, these finalists distinguished themselves with their exceptional skills and dedication.

“These apprentices have demonstrated extraordinary

talent, hard work and determination, setting a high standard for everyone.

“We are incredibly proud of each finalist for their achievements and perseverance throughout the competition.

“Once again, congratulations to all our finalists. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for these outstanding apprentices.” ■



“THESE APPRENTICES HAVE DEMONSTRATED EXTRAORDINARY TALENT, HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION, SETTING A HIGH STANDARD”

and Edinburgh College. The 2nd Stage apprentice competition was equally close, with Jordan Bathgate of Member firm EJ Parker Technical Services and Edinburgh College eventually taking the top spot for

his “outstanding technical ability and dedication”. Second place was again a tie, this time between Jamie Green, who works for Member firm Campbell and McHardy Ltd and attends UHI Moray, and Reece

PUPILS ARE RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The first eight heats have taken place for this year’s Construction and Built Environment Challenge (CABEC).

Eighty determined S2 school pupils have completed a variety of construction challenges

designed by and delivered at Edinburgh College, West Lothian College and Heriot-Watt University to decide who goes through to the grand final of the annual competition.

The following schools will now assemble at the O2 Academy in Edinburgh on Thursday 16 January to battle it out for top spot:

- Dunbar High School
- St David’s Roman Catholic High School

- Currie Community High School
- The Royal High School
- Balerno High School
- Bathgate Academy
- Trinity Academy
- Firrhill High School.

Two more heats will take place at Napier University and SRUC Oatridge to decide the final 10.

SECTT Chief Executive Fiona Harper said: “The heats have all been excellent and the challengers have been most impressed with the pupils’ enthusiasm and teamwork.”

A full report on the final of the CABEC contest will follow in the next issue of *cabletalk*.



← Fiona Harper



↑ John-Ross tackles the task

Apprentices shine in UK skills final

Congratulations to four talented trainees who did Scotland’s electrical industry proud with their recent performance in this year’s prestigious SkilleLECTRIC competition

SECTT has saluted the “incredible spirit” of four talented apprentices who flew the flag for Scottish training in the recent SkilleLECTRIC final.

John-Ross Campbell, Kalum Low, Milly Smith and Ewan Thomas represented Scotland in the annual UK event at Oldham College at the end of November.

Milly, who attends Dumfries and Galloway College and works for SELECT Member firm CS McKerlie Electrical Services, was highly commended for her



↓ Milly at work under the watchful eye of a judge

excellent performance, as was Kalum, who attends UHI Moray College and works for MS Electrical and Renewables.

All eight finalists spent three days undertaking a series of practical installation tasks, including EV charging, all set to strict timescales and against rigorous marking criteria. The competition was eventually won by Charlie Moore, 21, from the College of West Anglia.

John-Ross attends UHI North, West and Hebrides and works for SELECT Member firm A Campbell Electrical Services Ltd, while Ewan attends Borders College and works for JGM Services.

Fiona Harper, SECTT CEO, said: “I would like to offer my heartiest congratulations to all four finalists who represented Scotland and SECTT as it took incredible spirit and determination to even reach the final.

“Milly and Kalum in particular can be extremely proud of being highly commended in such a strong field – it was a very tough competition with extremely high standards.”

Barrie McKay, SECTT Training and Development Manager, added: “Scotland once again showed its skills and training pedigree with four out of the eight finalists being from north of the Border.

“Although we were obviously disappointed not to win, all four SECTT apprentices should be extremely proud of what they have achieved and I’m sure they will go on to great things in their careers.”

Held as part of the WorldSkills UK competition framework, SkilleLECTRIC is the annual search for the UK’s best student electrician.

Previous Scottish winners include Danny McBean, who is employed by Member firm Grants of Dufftown Ltd and won gold in 2023, and Craig Fairweather of Member firm McDonald & Munro in Moray, who was crowned champion in 2022 ■

↓ The eight SkilleLECTRIC finalists



MILLY SMITH
College: Dumfries and Galloway College
Employer: CS McKerlie Electrical Services

EWAN THOMAS
College: Borders College
Employer: JGM Services

KALUM LOW
College: UHI Moray College
Employer: MS Electrical and Renewables

JOHN-ROSS CAMPBELL
College: UHI North, West and Hebrides
Employer: A Campbell Electrical Services Ltd

SJIB Bulletin

Fighting the fraudsters

Be on the lookout for suspicious ECS Cards after a worrying rise in fakes

THE SJIB is again asking contractors to be extra-vigilant after a recent rise in reports of fraudulent SJIB ECS Cards in circulation.

More sites are now using smart technology, plus an increasing number of employers, recruitment agencies and clients are contacting us to verify the validity of cards, leading to more reported cases.

All such cases are taken seriously and if fraud is confirmed, the relevant account is placed on hold, preventing the individual from reapplying for a card until the SJIB National Board resolves the matter.

Due to the gravity of these offences, outcomes can include police notification and a suspension from applying for an ECS Card for up to six years.

We know that resolutions can sometimes take some time as the SJIB National Board convenes quarterly to review and address such cases.

And while individuals involved in fraudulent cases may claim that SJIB actions are disrupting their work, it's important to also note that the SJIB only ensures that proper measures are taken – not deciding who can or cannot work.

Each employer, site and/or client sets its own ECS Card requirements for employment eligibility. Ultimately, these situations arise solely from fraudulent actions, which are entirely avoidable.

RENEWING YOUR CARD ON TIME

We're often told by fraudulent card holders that they were unaware their card had expired and needed a replacement urgently.

To help you renew your card on time, the SJIB sends email reminders six months before it's set to



"OUTCOMES CAN INCLUDE POLICE NOTIFICATION AND A SUSPENSION FROM APPLYING FOR AN ECS CARD FOR UP TO SIX YEARS"

expire, giving you plenty of time to complete any necessary training required.

The notification email will go to the email address that we have on our system for you, therefore most likely the one you used for your prior application.

If you think that we may hold an old email address and wish to inform us of a new one, please email generalenquiries@select.org.uk with your name, National Insurance number and current email address.

Once an application and payment is submitted, ECS Card processing can take up to 21 days. However, applications submitted online by applicants who meet all necessary criteria generally process much faster.

Fraud is entirely preventable, and the SJIB encourages anyone with concerns about the legitimacy of an SJIB ECS Card to email us at generalenquiries@select.org.uk or call 0131 445 5577. ■

↑ It's important to make sure that ECS Cards are genuine and not fakes

REMEMBER!

Our small team is still extremely busy and receiving a high volume of calls. The best way to get in touch with us is the 'Contact Us' form at www.sjib.org.uk which ensures your query goes directly to the team member responsible.

WE'VE GOT THE X FACTOR

Get the latest SJIB news and updates on X – formerly Twitter – by following [@The_SJIB](https://twitter.com/The_SJIB)



FESTIVE HOLIDAYS

Please note that the SJIB will close on Christmas Eve and reopen on Monday 6 January 2025.

ABOUT THE SJIB

SJIB regulates relations between employers and employees engaged in the Scottish electrotechnical industry. To find out more about SJIB and its work, visit www.sjib.org.uk

ProZone

The best way to prevent dampness

X PELAIR'S Everdri Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) system is designed to combat condensation, dampness, mould and poor indoor air quality, ensuring a dry and healthy home environment all winter.

Everdri is a whole-house ventilation control system for houses with a loft space. Positioned centrally on the landing or hallway, it introduces a continuous flow of fresh air to prevent the build-up of stale, moisture-laden air and creates a healthier, condensation-free atmosphere.

As an added benefit, it redistributes accumulated warmer air from the ceiling, helping to reduce heating costs.



↑ The system keeps homes dry

With energy-efficient components such as a low watt EC motor, Everdri helps to keep running costs to a minimum.

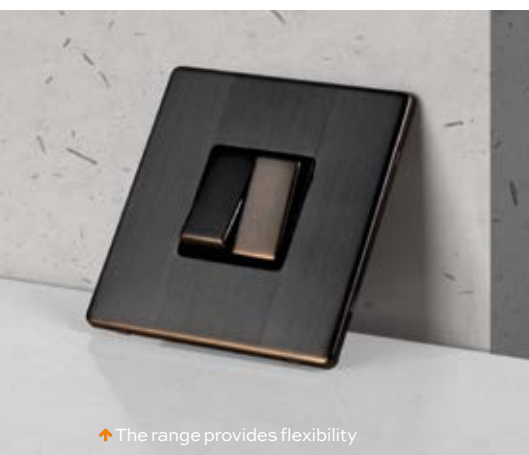
It effectively reduces radon levels by gently introducing fresh, filtered air while expelling contaminants, and includes an easily replaceable, long-lasting G4 filter to capture dust, pollen and other airborne particles.

The XELH model offers extra features such as a pre-heater that tempers the

incoming air, ensuring comfortable temperatures and preventing cold draughts during colder months. It also includes a temperature probe that monitors air conditions, enabling the system to adjust airflow for optimal energy efficiency.

Xpelair Everdri comes with a five-year manufacturer guarantee.

➔ Find out more at bit.ly/EverdriXEL



↑ The range provides flexibility

IT'S TIME TO SWITCH ON A STYLISH NEW LOOK

With demand for decorative wiring accessories increasing, electrical contractors are looking for stylish and refined solutions to complement modern interiors. In response, Click Scolmore has expanded its Definity Complete range, a range renowned for its screwless, push-fit face plates, which now features a new sleek matt bronze finish.

The Definity Complete range gives installers the ultimate flexibility.

As all Click switch plates are modular as standard, this allows for endless combinations to suit multiple installations within both domestic and commercial environments. The new matt bronze finish, available with black inserts, adds a timeless elegance to any interior, making it perfect for

both residential and commercial settings.

The popular range now totals nine finishes including matt bronze, antique brass, brushed steel, stainless steel, polished chrome, white, metal white, matt black and metal black.

➔ The full range can be viewed at www.scolmore.com and the Definity Complete product brochure can be downloaded from the website and the Scolmore Group app

MEET OUR
ASSOCIATE
MEMBERS



CONTACT OUR TEAM TO SHOWCASE YOUR GREAT NEW PRODUCTS HERE

David Hughes: 07767 407 402
davidh@connectcommunications.co.uk

BECOME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER

To inquire about becoming an Associate Member, email
memberservices@select.org.uk

BLOG FOCUSES ON AN INVISIBLE DANGER

Aico has released a new blog about understanding carbon monoxide (CO) and preventing the invisible threat in homes this winter.

The cost-of-living crisis has led more households to delay essential gas services, raising concerns about the risks of CO exposure.

The blog features Shropshire MP Julia Buckley, who lost her friend Irene Wright to a faulty boiler, and who warns that cutting costs on appliance checks could threaten lives.



↑ CO detectors can prevent deadly incidents

Common household CO sources include gas stoves, boilers, fireplaces, generators and cars left running in enclosed spaces. Without a CO alarm, the gas is virtually

undetectable and can be deadly in high concentrations.

The article discusses preventive measures including installing CO detectors in key areas of the home, scheduling annual maintenance for fuel-burning appliances, avoiding indoor use of grills and generators and ensuring chimneys and vents are clear of obstructions.

It also reveals how to protect against CO risks, safeguard households and prevent tragedies.

➔ Read the full blog at bit.ly/AICO_CO



↑ Siemens has created a product designed to make your life easier

ENJOY MORE PROTECTION WITH SIEMENS

Siemens has introduced the market's first 10kA Miniature AFDD/RCBO, available in ratings from 6A to 32A in B and C curves.

The new product means installers now don't need to do short circuit recalculations and there's also no need for additional back-up protection, distribution boards or add-on sections.

Siemens Miniature 10kA AFDD/RCBOs offer the ultimate protection for high-risk dwellings such as houses of multiple occupancy, student accommodation and care homes, which deserve additional protection from the risk of fire.

Other locations which could make use of AFDDs to provide additional protection against the loss of valuable or irreplaceable items include museums, offices, retail, leisure, education and timber framed buildings.

➔ Find out more at www.electrium.co.uk

DEHN's got the answer to SPD testing debate

DEHN's Market Development Manager Robin Earl has written a new blog in which he sets the record straight on the question of testing surge protection devices (SPDs).

The area often seems to cause a great deal of confusion as neither BS 7671 or lightning standard BS EN 62305 mention testing SPDs.

So do SPDs need testing? In Robin's view, it serves very little purpose as it's a binary device – it either works or it doesn't.

According to BS EN 61643, the SPD is meant to display its status, either healthy or defective.

How this is shown can vary, but the SPD needs to be able to show that it has failed.

Perhaps most importantly, DEHN doesn't promote testing because the test is only valid the moment it is conducted; it has very little utility or value beyond that.

Robin said: "All the issues about testing disappear if an SPD with a volt-free remote changeover contact is used, because you get a valuable tool in gauging the state of play."

➔ Read Robin's full article at www.dehn.co.uk/en-gb/dont-go-there



↑ Testing is the subject of a new blog





VIRTUAL CITY IS A BRIGHT IDEA TO HELP CUSTOMERS

Thorn Lighting has launched City of Thorn, the first-of-its-kind interactive 3D city in which customers can explore its portfolio by clicking through various parts of the model.

The city is divided into six areas – education, industry, retail, sports, urban and architectural and road and street – each with multiple interior and exterior lighting applications and key product information and specifications.

First showcased earlier this year at Light + Building 2024, City of Thorn has been developed to make it easy for customers to find the products and information they need. Installers can also use it on site when engaging with a client about a project, allowing them to quickly and easily highlight relevant products.

➔ To find out more, visit www.cityofthorn.com

SANGAMO PUTS YOU IN CONTROL

The Powersaver Dual Flexi 2 from Sangamo is an electronic immersion controller with programmable operation that is suitable for single, twin and dual element immersion heaters. It bridges the gap between the bulky, aged electro-mechanical immersion controllers and the more complicated digital versions. A table of pre-selectable adjustable programs is offered,



➔ The controller saves electricity

covering all the low-rate electricity tariffs, including Economy 7, Economy 10 and Eco 20:20 times.

Turn the installer switch to the programme of choice. Adjustment is possible to

the preset times enabling the programme periods to be reduced or cancelled as required. The review button allows on/off times to be checked and there is automatic GMT/BST changeover.

➔ To find out more, go to www.sync.energy/commercial

There is a half-hour, hour and two-hour boost function with a digital display countdown clock, allowing the user to clearly see boost times. There is also a programmable boost function for further convenience; this is deliberately limited to a maximum of two hours, meaning expensive electricity is not being wasted during peak times.

➔ The Sangamo range of specialist time switches and heating controls is distributed through Scolmore Group company, ESP. Find out more at www.espuk.com



➔ The charger range is a versatile option

The easy way to install EV charging

SYNC Energy's new Pro Charger range is an easy to install, easy to use solution for commercial EV charging.

The range includes twin bollard EV chargers, available with or without integrated lighting, twin wall-mounted chargers, PEN fault protection, touchscreen, RFID, 4G connectivity and an MID meter as standard.

The chargers are ergonomic and PAS 1899:2022 compliant, with upward-angled screens for easy reading and side-illuminated information areas for use in darker environments. The PEN

fault protection eliminates the need for costly earth rods or other PEN fault devices upstream, plus the loop in/loop out input connections accommodate up to 35mm² cables, allowing installers to chain multiple EV chargers from a single supply cable. The new range can be used with other commercial Sync Energy products, including the full range of 7kw and 22kw single and dual outlets, and the Sync Energy Balancer.

The range can be installed in a wide variety of locations, including educational, hospitality and leisure facilities, businesses and council car parks. It also features socketed charging points, making them compatible with all electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Energy system is a sustainable option

V-TAC has launched the HiEnergy All-in-One Solution by Hiconics, a comprehensive energy system built to meet modern energy needs with flexibility and resilience.

This integrated system adapts effortlessly to various energy requirements, making it ideal for small residential properties and large commercial applications.

Offering single-phase or three-phase hybrid inverters, a control box and high-voltage batteries, the system achieves 99.9% MPPT efficiency, optimising solar power usage and minimising waste. The off-grid capability also provides consistent power during outages or in remote locations.

Designed for easy installation, the plug-and-play interface and modular, stackable design make setup simple, while accommodating unbalanced loads in backup mode. This expandable solution includes an efficient battery management system and smart monitoring tools, allowing users to track and control consumption, even offline.



Safety is a priority with aerosol explosion-proof technology and discreet cabling. Long-lasting LFP batteries offer a lifespan of 6,000 cycles at 90% depth of discharge, supporting scalable storage up to 30kWh.

With a user-friendly local monitoring interface, a solid 10-year warranty, and dedicated support, V-TAC's HiEnergy solution is a smart and future-proof investment in sustainable energy.

➔ Find out more at www.vtacexports.com/vtacenergy/en/hiconics



↑ The kits will protect pipes from the cold

DON'T LET THE FROST BITE THIS WINTER

To prevent costly damage and ensure a reliable liquid supply this winter, Flexel offers a range of pipe frost protection (FPF) kits.

Simple to install and built to withstand harsh weather conditions, EcoFlex is designed to safeguard pipes from freezing, even in the

most severe winter conditions.

Intelligent thermostats ensure that the heating cables only activate when necessary, minimising energy consumption and making them suitable for domestic, commercial and outdoor installations.

EcoFlex is comprised of a pre-terminated

fixed resistance heating cable fitted with a pipe thermostat which energises the system when there is a risk of freezing. Once a safe pipe temperature has been reached, the cable is de-energised.

➔ For further information, email craig@flexel.co.uk

LIGHTING THE WAY TO SAVING POWER

With energy efficiency remaining a key priority for the lighting sector, Ovia's latest product development focuses on its range of LED panels, with the launch of new versions featuring lower wattages and higher lumen outputs.

Ovia's premium Inceptor Slate Backlit LED panels, as well as the regular Slate Backlit panels are now available in 22W versions that produce an impressive 140 lumens per Watt output to maximise energy efficiency.

Ovia's Inceptor Slate Backlit is a premium TP(a)-rated LED panel with a low <19 UGR diffuser. The range has been upgraded to reduce the wattage to achieve a higher lumen output while consuming much less power. As well as being power switchable, these new backlit panels feature selectable CCT (4000K, 5000K and 6500K) options as standard and there are three sizes available.

Ovia has also upgraded its standard Slate Backlit panels. These 4000K low glare 600 x 600, 22W panels are available in a TP(a) or TP(b) option.

Both the Inceptor Slate and the standard Slate Backlit LED panels are supplied with LED driver and pre-wired push-fit 3-Pole Ovia Flow connector, and they come with a five-year warranty.

➔ More information on these products can be found on the Ovia website – www.oviauk.com

↓ The panels save energy



↑ The jackets are a robust choice

NEW JACKETS HAVE GOT YOU COVERED

With innovative technical features, Snickers' collection of functional work jackets will keep you comfortable whatever the weather throws at you in the coming months.

Whether you need a lightweight and packable jacket for flexibility on site through chilly days, a waterproof parka to withstand the elements, or a robust insulated style to provide warmth and durability in the most demanding conditions, a Snickers work jacket will suit your needs.

Each piece in the collection is designed with all the essential features to meet the professional standards of any trade with performance fabrics to make your job comfortable and easier.

So whatever Snickers jacket you choose for your work, you can be sure that they all have body-mapping designs for a great fit, long-lasting comfort plus outstanding functionality and durability for sustainability – all day, every day.

➔ Getting more information on the Snickers Workwear clothing range is easy. You can call the helpline on **01484 854788**; check out www.snickersworkwear.co.uk or email sales@hultaforsgroup.co.uk



➔ Training is available to install air conditioning

Air conditioning gives you the edge

HAVE you considered adding air conditioning to your skill set? Training to install air conditioning systems is very accessible for electricians, especially with the straightforward path provided by the F-Gas certification and specific product training from Daikin.

Electricians have a foundational understanding of electrical principles, wiring and system installation, which provides a solid basis for learning the specifics of air conditioning systems.

The process begins with a six-day F-Gas course. It's a comprehensive programme designed to certify professionals in handling fluorinated gases used in air conditioning systems. This certification is essential as it enables the holder to safely handle and install systems containing refrigerants, which are regulated for environmental reasons. The F-Gas course covers topics such as refrigerant handling, environmental

impact and safety protocols, making it a manageable yet thorough training for electricians.

Following F-Gas certification, a one-day product-specific training with Daikin equips electricians with the specific knowledge required to install Daikin units. This targeted training includes practical aspects like system installation and configuration for Daikin's AC systems. The specialised training ensures you can confidently work with Daikin's industry-leading product range.

This accessible training path means that in just six days, an electrician can qualify to install air conditioning systems. It's a future-proof way to broaden your service offerings and increase employability.

Via Daikin/HSS, the F-Gas course costs just £875+VAT. Daikin product training is free.

➔ Find out more from the Daikin UK Training Academy Learning Platform at www.daikintraining.co.uk

Advice on testing and safety

TIS has launched an addition to its growing library of CPDs covering the subjects of testing and safety.

In addition to an existing CPD on safe isolation, the company has now finalised its latest edition exploring correct practice for continuity testing. Still to

come are further CPDs looking at insulation, loop and RCD testing, all produced in conjunction with eFIXX.

➔ Scan the QR code right to complete the CPD. Instruments to adequately carry out continuity testing can be found at bit.ly/TIS_CPD



Boiler range is better for businesses

THE Electric Heating Company (EHC) has launched the Voltius high-capacity boiler range, designed for large commercial installations.

The range includes models with outputs of 60kW, 80kW and 100kW, making it suitable for offices, hotels, schools and other large facilities.

The boilers also support net zero goals by providing efficient and sustainable heating solutions. For larger output needs, multiple boilers can be combined on a low loss header.

The Voltius boiler is versatile and capable of being installed in any property with sufficient three-phase electricity. It operates efficiently with conventional wet system radiators or underfloor heating, with an adjustable operating temperature from 30°C to 80°C.



Advanced electronic features include volt-free control connections, in-built fault-finding diagnostics, dual high temperature thermal cut-outs, digital water pressure sensor, NTC temperature sensors and a large LCD display.

David Barrett, CEO of EHC, said: “The Voltius range reflects our commitment to innovation and sustainability, providing reliable and efficient heating solutions for the commercial sector.”

➔ To find out more, go to bit.ly/EHC-Voltius

NEW METER FROM SONEL REALLY MEASURES UP

The new Sonel PQM-750 fixed permanent meter is designed to measure and record electrical characteristics and demonstrate the compliance of power quality to the latest measurement standards. The meter has the ability to verify the preset parameters of a connection agreement with measurements made to IEC61000-4-30 class A accuracy.

The PQM-750 has been designed to be mounted on a DIN rail and has the further possibility to be mounted on a wall or in a cabinet. Measurements can be made on all electrical networks operating at either 50 Hz, 60 Hz or 400 Hz and it includes a built-in web server for programming the meter and reading the live data, viewing the lists of recorded events with displays of both waveforms and RMS measurements.

The measurements the meter is capable of making allows for the monitoring of more than 4,000 different power, energy and harmonic parameters including an enhanced capability to measure up to the 256th harmonic and 256th inter-harmonic of both voltage and current on modern power networks.

With its modular design, the Sonel PQM-750 allows for the addition of new modules to add to the capabilities of the meter. These modules mean the instrument can be expanded with additional physical and software functionality including transient modules, GPS and GSM functionality and DC power supply modules. The meter can also be powered by the use of PoE (Power over Ethernet) through the standard in-built ethernet ports with additional communication connections available through standard MODBUS and PQdif protocols.

➔ Visit powerqualityexpert.com



↑ The Sonel meter

UNICRIMP CABLE CLIPS PROVIDE A SOLUTION THAT YOU CAN TRUST

Unicrimp, part of the Scolmore Group of companies, offers a comprehensive portfolio of cable accessory products which includes an extensive range of cable clips.

Unicrimp's cable clips offer falls within two categories – the Q-Crimp range of durable and hard-wearing plastic cable clips and the Q-Fire range of 18th Edition compliant fire-rated metal cable clips.

The Q-Crimp cable clips are perfect for organising and securing cables to fixed surfaces. Constructed from durable and hard-wearing plastic, they include a cable-holding element that typically requires a

nail or fixing to attach it to the desired surface. Features include low-temperature flexibility, stress crack resistance, long nails for good pull-out value and a self-grip design, making them versatile for any wiring project.

They are available in multiple sizes and colours and are packaged in quantities of 100. Unicrimp's Q-Crimp cable clips are also supplied in two handy tradesman tub options.

Unicrimp's Q-Fire range of fire-rated T&E cable clips are made from zinc-plated carbon steel and come in two sizes – 1-2.5mm and 4-6mm.



↓ The clips are sturdy and versatile

They are available in red, white, grey and galvanised steel and in a choice of uncoated or with a grey PPA LSF coating.

The Q-Crimp and Q-Fire cable clips both feature a hook design that provides a stronger grip on the cable, ensuring a more secure and seamless installation.

➔ Visit www.unicrimp.com to learn more

FIVE MINUTES WITH... KELLY McGRORY

EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS ADMINISTRATOR

HELLO KELLY. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT SELECT?

I joined the association at the end of October, so I've only been here a few weeks. I've enjoyed it so far though – everyone has made me feel very welcome.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR WORK LIFE SO FAR AND HOW YOU ENDED UP AT THE WALLED GARDEN.

I've worked in administrative roles for the last 20 years. I started work as an office junior for a structural engineering firm and after that went on to work for a construction company. My last job, where I worked for just over 10 years, was with a mechanical and electrical engineering consultancy.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL? TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.

My job entails a variety of different things within the Scottish Joint Industry Board (SJIB). My main role is the processing of ECS Grade Cards for the electrotechnical side and having an understanding of the other cards we offer. I also help with the creating and marking side of the ECS health and safety assessments and helping with the many queries we receive on a daily basis.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL DAY BEEN LIKE FOR YOU SO FAR?

I haven't really had a typical day yet! So far it's been about getting up to speed with things, so I've had meetings with the different departments in SELECT so I can understand how the various areas work

together and where my role fits in.

HAVE YOU HAD CHANCE TO MEET SELECT MEMBERS?

I haven't had a chance yet as I'm still very new. Hopefully I will have a chance to meet Members next year.

WHAT HAVE YOU MOST ENJOYED ABOUT YOUR JOB SO FAR?

I've enjoyed meeting everyone in the office and learning the processes which apply to my role. It's been a steep learning curve, but it's been really good doing something different. ■



Quickfire questions:

Cheese or chocolate?

Chocolate 100%

Dog or cat person? I have two cats but love dogs too

First car owned? I don't drive unfortunately – I'm just a passenger princess!

Favourite film? *Home Alone 2*

Favourite TV show?

MasterChef

Favourite holiday spot?

Gran Canaria

Dream date? A nice restaurant for a meal then a pub with some live music

One thing people might not know about you? My dad is a big football fan so my middle name is Dalglish after footballer Kenny Dalglish

Your Branch Officers:

ABERDEEN & NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND

STEWART ANDERSON, Chair
ERIC RAE, Vice-Chair
ALICK J SMITH, 3rd Representative

AYRSHIRE

CHIC DOBBIE, Chair
JIM COOPER, Vice-Chair

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

GORDON PATERSON, Chair
JOHN WILSON, Vice-Chair

EDINBURGH & SOUTH EAST OF SCOTLAND

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PAUL ERASMUSON, Vice-Chair
ALASDAIR NOBLE, 3rd Representative

GLASGOW & WEST OF SCOTLAND

DAVID HARRIS, Chair
SEAN HARKIN, Vice-Chair
ALAN WATT, 3rd Representative

INVERNESS & NORTH OF SCOTLAND

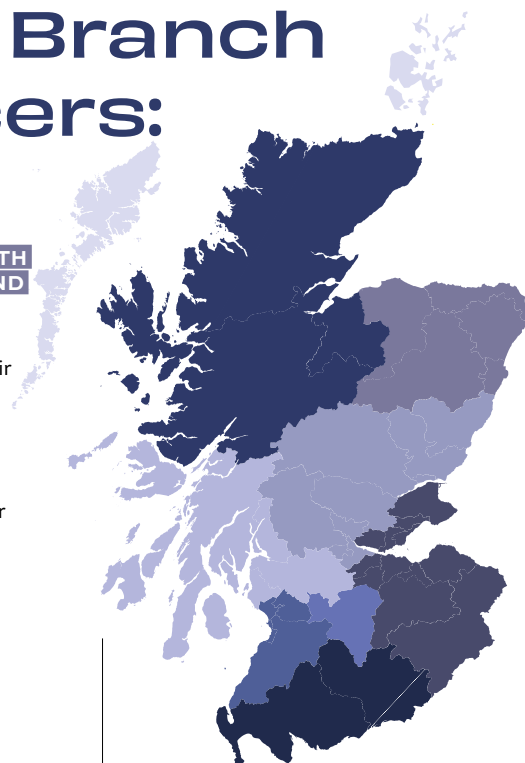
MIKE CAMPBELL, Chair
ALISTAIR GRANT, Vice-Chair

LANARKSHIRE

CRAIG MCGOWAN, Chair
CHRIS LIDDELL, Vice-Chair

TAYSIDE

TONY HARVEY, Chair
KEITH SMITH, Vice-Chair
GRAHAM LYALL, 3rd Representative



SELECT Events 2025:

Catch up with colleagues at Branch Updates, Toolbox Talks and other events.



BRANCH UPDATES

w/c Mon 3 March, with AGM, venues TBC

CENTRAL BOARD

Wed 26 March – online

Thu 5 June – with AGM, DoubleTree by Hilton Edinburgh – Queensferry Crossing

Wed 3 September – online

Thu 4 December – Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh



TOOLBOX TALKS

Wed 7 May – Edinburgh, The Walled Garden

Thur 8 May – Borders, venue TBC

Tue 13 May – Dundee, The Apex Hotel

Wed 14 May – Glasgow, Hampden Park

Wed 21 May – Ayrshire, Fenwick Hotel

Thu 22 May – Dumfries, Easterbrook Hall

Wed 28 May – Inverness, Kingsmills Hotel

Thu 29 May – Aberdeen, Pittodrie Stadium

Tue 10 June – Oban, The Corran Halls

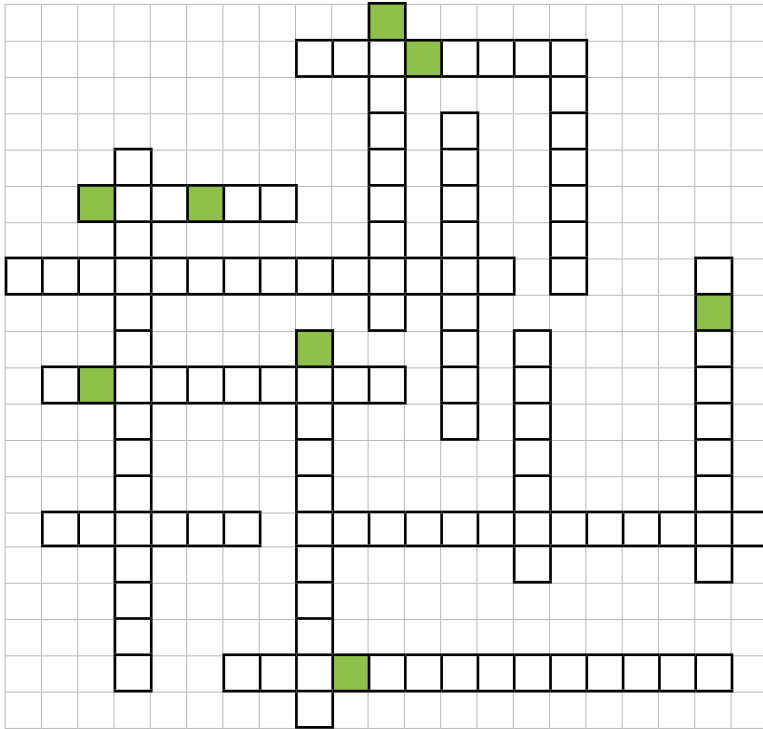
Tue 17 June – Shetland, Shetland Arts Development Agency, Lerwick

Thu 19 June – Orkney, The Pickaquooy Centre

Tue 24 June – Stornoway, Caladh Inn

Competition

Christmas food word fit

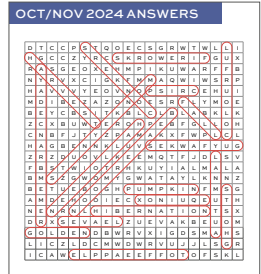


- 6 letters**
TRIFLE
TURKEY
- 7 letters**
YULE LOG
STOLLEN
- 8 letters**
PARSNIPS
- 9 letters**
PANETTONE
FRUITCAKE
MINCE PIES
- 10 letters**
MULLED WINE
- 11 letters**
GINGERBREAD
- 13 letters**
ROAST POTATOES
- 14 letters**
BRUSSELS
SPROUTS
PIGS IN BLANKETS
CRANBERRY SAUCE

Letters in coloured squares make up a word

Here's your chance to win £50 of Amazon vouchers by completing our prize word fit about Christmas food.

Fit the words into the grid then use the letters in the coloured squares to make a new word and email it to memberservices@select.org.uk by 17 January. The winner will be drawn at random. Ts&Cs are online. Congratulations to October/November 2024 winner **Colin Girdwood** from **John Heaney (Electrical) Ltd.**



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select.org.uk
cabletalkmagazine.com
selectawards.co.uk

Membership enquiries:

Please phone our membership team on 0131 445 5577 to apply to become a Member of SELECT or if you would like more information about joining. Alternatively you can email us on memberservices@select.org.uk or submit an online enquiry.

PRESIDENT'S CUP
Mon 28 July –
Dunblane New Golf Club

PROFESSIONALS' DAY
Thu 18 September –
V&A Dundee

BRANCH UPDATES
w/c Mon 6 October,
venues TBC

125TH ANNIVERSARY GRAND BALL
Fri 14 November –
Marriott Hotel, Glasgow

PAST PRESIDENTS' CHRISTMAS LUNCH
Thu 4 December –
Balmoral Hotel,
Edinburgh

HEALTH & SAFETY IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



Being a SELECT Member automatically qualifies you for a wealth of **FREE** advice and practical resources from **The Building Safety Group**



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templates, policies
& documents on the
dedicated Hub app



Access to health
& safety technical
support hotline



100+
videos and toolbox
talks offering a huge
range of guidance



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