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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR SOE MEMBERS

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SOE's New Career Pathway Guide for Engineers has Landed

The SOE has unveiled a brand new resource for engineers aiming to grow their careers.

Crafted by a consortium of industry experts of which spanning a multitude of sectors, the 'Pathways to Progress' guide has been meticulously tailored to cater to all industry professionals, from apprentices to seasoned engineers. Serving as a comprehensive roadmap, the career pathway guide aids in navigating career progression and unlocking fresh opportunities within the engineering sphere.

Through the inclusion of real-life case studies and frequently asked questions, the career pathway guide emerges as a unique, all-encompassing handbook aimed at shedding light on the path to success for engineers. It provides insights into the guide's purpose and significance, highlighting the collaborative efforts of industry experts and stakeholders who contributed to its creation.

Nestled within the guide is an extensive exploration of the diverse career trajectories available to operational engineers. Spanning from entry-level positions to specialised roles, each career stage is meticulously delineated, accentuating the crucial skills and qualifications requisite for progression.

Diving deeper, the guide embarks on a thorough exploration of educational pathways and training programmes pivotal for fostering career growth. It delves into various industry



certifications and professional development opportunities, offering invaluable counsel on embracing continuous learning to sustain relevance and competitiveness within the field.

Incorporated within the guide are inspirational anecdotes and testimonials from engineers hailing from a myriad of sectors and at varying stages of their careers. These narratives weave a tapestry of the vast array of

pathways that the engineering industry offers, serving as a beacon of motivation for aspiring professionals.

"As the Head of Business Operations of the Society of Operations Engineers, I am thrilled to introduce our groundbreaking career pathway guide," remarked Emma Thompson, Head of Business Operations. "This guide represents a collaborative effort to

empower engineers with the tools and resources needed to chart their professional journey."

The Pathways to Progress guide underscores SOE's unwavering commitment to bolstering the professional growth and development of operational engineers. For engineers looking to shift the gear in their career, this guide offers a comprehensive explanation into Professional

Registration by Engineering Council and the Society for the Environment.

Laden with insights and resources, the guide emboldens professionals to traverse their career trajectory with assurance and clarity. As the industry evolves and novel challenges emerge, this guide serves as a steadfast companion, guiding engineers to embrace new opportunities and fulfil their career aspirations with resolute conviction.

The Pathways to Progress guide will be readily accessible on the Society of Operations Engineers website. Aspiring engineers and industry professionals alike will have the opportunity to peruse this invaluable resource at their convenience, empowering them to embark on their career journey with clarity and confidence. Whether seeking guidance on career trajectories, training programmes, or professional development opportunities, the Pathways to Progress guide serves as a comprehensive repository of insights and resources.

Visit the SOE website to explore this transformative tool and unlock new avenues for career advancement in the operational engineering domain.

FACTS & FIGURES

173,000

New engineering and technology jobs across the UK by 2030 according to EngineeringUK

5

Exceptional case studies of real-life members experiences from a range of backgrounds

4

Main sectors with over 30 sub sectors that the career guide touches on

6

Professional Registration titles and their qualifications covered in depth

INDUSTRY
UPDATES
**SOE JOINS FORCES
WITH BCOE AND
CPT TO ENCOURAGE
MORE WOMEN INTO
ENGINEERING**

In a momentous collaboration coinciding with International Women's Day, the Society of Operations Engineers (SOE), the Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE), and the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) have joined forces to tackle the underrepresentation of women in engineering, starting with their partnership on the IRTE Bus & Coach Skills Challenge. Recognising the predominantly male landscape of the bus and coach industry, the initiative aims to foster diversity and inclusion, reflecting the communities it serves. Through mentorship programs, knowledge hubs, and industry representation, the trio seeks to empower aspiring female engineers. This collaborative effort signals a commitment to inclusivity and the promotion of diverse opportunities, ultimately shaping a more equitable future for women in the bus and coach industry.

As the industry is seeking to reduce to gender inequality this is an exciting new partnership and we look forward to future updates.

**RISHI SUNAK
PLEDGES TO CREATE
20,000 MORE
APPRENTICESHIPS**

Rishi Sunak has unveiled plans to boost apprenticeships by creating up to 20,000 new opportunities through a series of reforms. These transformative measures, which are set to take effect imminently, encompass a range of initiatives designed to streamline processes and remove barriers hindering apprenticeship uptake. Among the key reforms is the provision of full funding for training programmes catering to young apprentices, coupled with a concerted effort to alleviate administrative burdens faced by small businesses. Commencing April 1st, the government will assume the entire cost of apprenticeships for individuals aged 21 or under within small firms, with a substantial injection of £60 million earmarked for this purpose. Moreover, significant changes to the apprenticeship levy structure will empower businesses to transfer up to 50% of underutilised funds to other employers, thereby fostering a more conducive environment for apprenticeship placements across industries. Sunak underscored the overarching objective of positioning the UK as a preminent destination for business, thereby unlocking a myriad of opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs nationwide.

Welcome Back...

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to the spring issue of SOE News. I'm excited for what this season holds in the world of engineering. Read on!

Before we continue on with what's new in this edition, on behalf of SOE, I would like to give you our humble apologies for the error of the 40 years of service in the previous edition. I have included the correct details for both the 40 years of service and the 50 years of service within this edition of SOE News. At SOE we pride ourselves on our members and recognising their achievements so I appreciate your feedback highlighting this unfortunate error.

In this issue of SOE News we delve into the dynamic landscape of operational engineering, exploring innovative initiatives, industry updates, and welcoming back two beloved events that shape the trajectory of engineering excellence. From industry-defining guides to collaborative partnerships, and from celebratory awards to insightful presentations, the stories featured herein

“SOE News is more than just a recollection of stories, it serves as a dynamic platform for dialogue. As the reader, you step into the role of an active participant, shaping the narrative of engineering”

underscore the resilience, dedication, and ingenuity prevalent within the engineering community.

One of the best aspects of my job is being able to interact with members like you which is exactly why I'm looking forward to meeting some of the industry brightest talents at the IRTE Bus & Coach Skills Challenge this summer. Another event that is coming this year is the return of SOE Awards. Titled Safety & Resilience in Engineering, this beloved awards is back with a fresh look and feel but with the same goal, to celebrate engineers, organisations, innovations and contributions towards building a safer and more resilient future.

Furthermore, we celebrate the achievements of emerging talents at the IRTE Northern Centre's Young Engineer Awards and spotlight the CPD initiatives at the Cornwall and Scottish Ayrshire Centres, showcasing the commitment to continuous learning and knowledge exchange within the engineering community.

SOE News is more than just a recollection of stories, it serves as a dynamic platform for dialogue. As the reader, you step into the role of an active participant, shaping the narrative of engineering. I express my gratitude to all who contributed content and shared their stories. I urge you to engage with the material, offer your insights, and participate in the discussions on our social media platforms or via email. I eagerly anticipate hearing more of your stories in the next few months.

Let's dive into this edition with open minds, a thirst for knowledge, and a shared dedication to forging a brighter, more sustainable future


**NEW SOE
APPOINTMENTS**

EMMA THOMPSON
Head of Business Operations

ISABELLA VALERY
Receptionist & Admin Assistant

RICHARD PACY
CRM Manager

CHELSEA GILKES
PA and Office Administrator

through the transformative power of engineering. As we navigate through the complexities of the engineering landscape, SOE News remains committed to bringing you insightful stories, thought-provoking analyses, and inspiring narratives that illuminate the path towards engineering excellence.

Christopher Knight, Editor
Do you have a story to share via SOE News? Get in touch with me at editor@soe.org.uk


WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We are looking at ways to improve your reading experience. Share your feedback and help us shape the future of SOE News and Transport Engineer. Scan the QR code or use this link to start the survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/News0524>

IPlantE Benevolent Fund Update

Established on January 1st, 1970, by George Mitchell, the Institution of Plant Engineers' (IPlantE) Benevolent Fund has stood as a pillar of support for UK members, former members, and their dependents during times of adversity. Inspired by its founding motto, "If we know we can help," the Fund has remained steadfast in its commitment to providing assistance to those in need. Under the dedicated leadership of Dick Wyatt, who chaired the Fund for an impressive 29 years, it thrived, offering aid and comfort to worthy beneficiaries across the country.

However, as the late 1990s approached, the Fund faced challenges with dwindling branch attendance, leading to the eventual cessation of branch operations by 2010. Despite this setback, the Fund persevered, thanks to the unwavering dedication of some branch almoners who continued to provide



invaluable assistance to those in need.

The landscape of support shifted following the merger of IPlantE with the IRTE in September 2000, resulting in the formation of the SOE. This merger prompted the Charity Commission to impose restrictions on the Fund's beneficiaries, limiting support to former and past IPlantE members pre-2000. However, recognising the evolving needs

of its community, the Fund successfully petitioned the Charity Commission in 2016 to amend its rules, extending support to include IPlantE and BES Professional Sector members and former members.

Despite recent challenges, including the transition to virtual meetings, the Fund remains resilient and optimistic about its future. Embracing technological advancements, it continues to adapt its operations

to ensure the seamless delivery of support services to those in need.

Looking ahead, the Fund is committed to expanding its reach and impact. Plans are underway to enhance support services and outreach initiatives, ensuring that it remains a vital lifeline for BES and IPlantE members facing financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances.

With a rich history spanning over five decades, the IPlantE Benevolent Fund stands as a testament to the power of compassion and solidarity within the engineering community. Its unwavering dedication to supporting members and their families during times of need embodies the spirit of camaraderie and mutual support that defines the engineering profession.

For further information you can contact us via Deborah Carroll at the SOE. Please e-mail: Deborah.Carroll@soe.org.uk or telephone: 020 7630 2153

Long Service Awards

This edition marks the anniversary of our members who have achieved 40 years' service in their professional sector. We congratulate those members, who have all shown great commitment and dedication to engineering, and we thank them for their loyal service.

2023 40-year service

Mr Alan John Wise.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Alan Kitching.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Alan Street.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Alexander Eric Fiddes.....	FSOE FIRTE
Mr Allan Wilson.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Andrew George Merriman Bye.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Andrew Thomas Tranter.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Barrie Williams.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Barry Haselden.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Charles Edgar.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Charles Victor Abrahams.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Christopher David Harbott.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Christopher Davidson.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Christopher George Ellis.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Christopher John Clibbery.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Christopher King.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Colin Alfred Jolly.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Colin Andrew Brodigan.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Colin Raymond Canham.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Colin Richard Camp.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr David Colin Flint.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr David Francis Huw Griffiths.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Malcolm Wheeler.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Martin Owen.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Robert Parsons.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Ward Johnson.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Derek Joseph Smith.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Dudley Carter.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Francis Gallacher.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Frank Paul Moore.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Garry Ronald Plummer.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Gary Richard Peters.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Geoffrey Wood.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr George Terence Mighall.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Gerald Roderick Fleming.....	CEnv IEng FSOE FIRTE
Mr Gerald Walter Barham.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Gerard Holmes.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Glen Howard Woodrige.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Gordon Melville Richards.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Graham Littlewood.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Graham Neil Hudson.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Graham Roy Beardsmore.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Harold Reader.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Iain Golder.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Ian Edward Healey.....	IEng MSOE MIPlantE
Mr John Antony William Biggin.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Arthur Joslin.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Edward Taylor.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Victor Dyer.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Joseph Neil Williams.....	MSOE MIRTE
Miss Josephine Anne Dewell.....	MSOE MIPlantE

Mr Kam-Pui Cheung.....	MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Kenneth Pye.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Kevin Donald Cox.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Kwok Kwong Lau.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Malcolm John Holloway.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Maldwyn Evans.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Mark Arthur Willis.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Mark John Longmore.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Mark Lyndon Pattison.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Martyn Thorley.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Medwyn Griffith Jones.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Michael Burnell.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Michael Leslie Mawson.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Michael Mervin Stephens.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Michael Philip Conway.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Michael Robert Priestner.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Michael Smith.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Michael Trevor Pedley.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Michael William Curtis.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Neville James Henry.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Paul Anthony Difford.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Paul Carroll.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Paul Chamberlain.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Peter Clive Chidley.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Peter John Vill.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Peter Julian Hicks.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Philip Nigel Retman.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Richard Paul De Kerbrech.....	MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Robert Raistrick.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Robert Vincent Gell.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Roger Carter.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Roger Hookham.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Ronald Alan Evans.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Ronald Alexander Devlin.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Royston George Sayers.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Stephen Andrew McGuffie.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Stephen Bil.....	MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Stephen Carter.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Stephen Haines.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Stephen John Shaw.....	EngTech MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Stephen John Shirley.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Stephen Leslie Challis.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Stuart Victor May.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Thomas Henry Baumber.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Timothy Edward Eastwood.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Trevor Adrian Neal.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr William Gant.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr William Norton.....	MSOE MIPlantE
Mr William Robert McGregor.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr William Whyte.....	MSOE MIRTE

2023 50-year service

Mr Alan Bryn Jones.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Alan Gowans Imrie.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Alexander Marzan.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr Allan John Haddow.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Anthony Donald Jolliffe.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Barrie Michael Willis.....	EngTech MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Brian John Emmett.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Brian Michael Townsend.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Bryan Gilbert.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Christopher Ernest John Nieman.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Alexander Kelso.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr David Brian Thomas Presley.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Dermot Cecil Neville Bambridge.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Frank Byrne.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Frank Halkyard.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Frederick George William Holmes.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Frederick Roy Merrifield.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr James Strang.....	HonFSOE HonFIPlantE
Mr John Alexander Reed.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John David Wearing.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Edward Anthony Marsh.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Foster.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr John Turner.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Keith Adrian Firth.....	MSOE MIRTE

Mr Keith Michael Ovenden.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Kenneth William Dale.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Melvin Leeming.....	IEng MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Michael Grace.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Paul Brian Michael Lawrence.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Ralph David Maxwell Ingham-Johnson.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Robert David Arscott.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Robert Hurst.....	IEng MSOE MIPlantE
Mr Roger Anthony Young.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Roger Godfrey Tame.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Roger Vivian Vincent.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr Selvaratnam Markandu.....	AMSOE AMIRTE
Mr Simon Pedrazzini.....	IEng AMSOE AMIPlantE
Mr Stephen Isherwood.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Stephen John Sutton.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Stephen William McKee.....	EngTech AMSOE AMIPlantE
Mr Syed Raza Jafari.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr Thomas Tate.....	IEng FSOE FIPlantE
Mr Tony Herbert Wallace.....	EngTech MSOE MIRTE
Mr William Donald McCallum.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE
Mr William Ernest Lakey.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr William John Rhymes.....	MSOE MIRTE
Mr William Kenneth Millar.....	IEng MSOE MIRTE

INDUSTRY UPDATES

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING LAUNCHES PROJECT ENGINEERS 2030

The Royal Academy of Engineering unveils its flagship policy initiative, Engineers 2030. This project seeks to identify the skills, knowledge, and systems required to tackle 21st-century challenges effectively. With a focus on diversity and innovation, Engineers 2030 aims to address persistent issues such as gender disparity and limited pathways into the field. By reforming education and training, fostering inclusivity, and prioritising sustainability, the initiative endeavours to build a robust foundation for the engineering profession. Supported by resources like the reimagined degree map and sustainability toolkit, Engineers 2030 charts a course towards a future where excellence, inclusivity, and sustainability drive innovation. As we approach 2030, this initiative offers a transformative vision for engineering, guiding us towards a world where engineering and technology shape a thriving future for all.

THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY INTRODUCES 10 CUTTING-EDGE INNOVATIONS

A landmark report released by the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult has unveiled 10 cutting-edge innovations poised to revolutionise tidal Stream Energy, potentially slashing costs by a staggering 80% with adequate backing. Among the technologies highlighted in the Tidal Stream Technology Roadmap report are subsea hubs, anchors for floating devices, and controllers for optimising turbine performance, all of which could propel tidal energy costs below those of nuclear energy.

“With rising costs and the need to adapt to a varied future renewable energy mix, we have identified key drivers in how tidal energy can reduce UK energy system costs by up to £600m a year and play a full part in the net zero revolution.” Simon Cheeseman, wave and tidal energy sector lead at ORE Catapult.

However, to fully realise this vision, the report stresses the importance of policy support and private investment. Sue Barr, Chair of the UK MEC, emphasised the need for strengthened policy frameworks and increased investment to ensure the accelerated deployment of tidal stream technology. The report warns that, without adequate support and investment, the ambitious cost reduction targets outlined in the report may just remain a target that is out of reach, which in turn will impede the sector's progress towards a commercially viable future.

GOOD MONTH

**ABERDEEN UNVEILS HISTORIC FLOATING WIND INNOVATION CENTRE, A GLOBAL FIRST**

A pioneering milestone in renewable energy, the world's first Floating Wind Innovation Centre has been unveiled in Aberdeen. This historic facility represents a significant leap forward in the development and deployment of floating wind technology. Located in the heart of Scotland's energy hub, the centre is poised to spearhead advancements in offshore wind innovation.

By harnessing the power of wind energy on a floating platform, this initiative promises to unlock new possibilities for clean energy generation in deep waters where traditional fixed-bottom turbines are impractical. The centre will serve as a collaborative hub for industry leaders, researchers, and policymakers to drive research, development, and knowledge exchange in the field of floating wind technology.

As the global demand for renewable energy solutions intensifies, the inauguration of this centre marks a pivotal moment in the transition towards a more sustainable future. With Aberdeen leading the charge, the journey towards achieving clean, reliable, and accessible energy for all takes a momentous stride forward.

BAD MONTH

**FIRM PENALISED FOLLOWING TRAGIC DEATH OF "PERFECT" SON IN CRUSHING INCIDENT**

A tragic incident at Sarazen Gardens in Brampton, Hertfordshire, claimed the life of James Rourke, a 22-year-old site engineer. James, who had recently joined Materials Movement Limited, lost his life when struck and run over by an excavator while attaching warning signs to fencing. James' mother, Clare, expressed profound grief, emphasising James' compassionate nature and the impact of his loss on their family. The prosecution, led by HSE enforcement lawyer Jon Mack, underscores the need for stringent safety measures in the workplace. James' family continues to mourn his devastating loss, cherishing his memory and the lasting impact he had on their lives. Materials Movement Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £133,330 and ordered to pay £8,500 in costs at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on 22 March 2024. This tragic incident serves as a stark reminder of the importance of workplace safety and the devastating consequences of negligence.

IRTE Skills Challenge 2024 on Track to be the Biggest Yet!

The 12th edition of the IRTE Bus & Coach Skills Challenge is poised to make waves in the industry once again with this year shaping up to be the most significant event yet. With fresh concepts, enthusiastic sponsors, and unparalleled participation, this year's challenge promises to set new standards in the field of engineering excellence.

With each passing year, teams are pushing the boundaries of what's possible in engineering, showcasing creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving skills. These new ideas promise to inject a fresh sense of excitement and energy into the challenge, inspiring participants to explore new approaches and techniques.

This year, both new and returning sponsors alike, are eager to support and engage with the engineering community. Among the esteemed sponsors lending their support to the IRTE Skills Challenge 2024 are industry leaders such as Alexander Dennis, Freeway, Imperial Engineering, and VARTA, each bringing their unique expertise and resources to the table. Their involvement not only elevates the profile of the event but also underscores the collaborative spirit driving advancements in the engineering sector.



In a clear testament to the surging popularity of the event, an impressive cohort of more than 10 bus and coach operators have already signed up for this year's challenge, eclipsing the number of sign-ups recorded at this stage in previous editions. This remarkable turnout underscores the unfaltering enthusiasm surrounding the skills challenge and the industry's desire to nurture and celebrate their talent.

Comprising a dynamic mix of seasoned contenders and fresh faces, these teams are poised to stir the competition with their skill and passion to demonstrate their prowess and compete for the coveted top spot and take

home the winners' trophies.

The participating teams boast variety of experience, representing a spectrum of companies spanning from industry giants like Go Ahead and National Express to regional powerhouses such as Warrington's Own Buses, Transdev Blazefield, and Trentbarton. This diverse lineup not only adds vibrancy to the competition but also reflects the collaborative spirit that defines the challenge, where expertise from various corners of the engineering landscape come to celebrate the industry.

Despite the overwhelming response, there's still time for interested teams to get involved and secure their spot in this

year's competition. With spaces filling up fast, now is the perfect time to register and be part of the action. Whether you're a seasoned competitor or a first-time participant, the IRTE Skills Challenge offers a unique opportunity to test your skills, learn from industry experts, and forge lasting connections with fellow engineers.

As the countdown to the IRTE Skills Challenge 2024 continues, excitement is continuing to build among participants and organisers alike. With new ideas, enthusiastic sponsors, and a record number of teams, this year's event promises to be an unforgettable celebration of engineering excellence.

SOE Becomes a Strategic Partner of Driving for Better Business

In a concerted effort to enhance road safety and mitigate work-related road risks, SOE is proud to announce its new partnership with Driving for Better Business, a government-backed Highways England program. This collaboration underscores a shared commitment to providing employers across various sectors with invaluable resources aimed at reducing road-related hazards, minimising associated costs, and ensuring compliance with existing legislation and guidelines.

At the heart of Driving for Better Business lies a vision for a world where those who drive for work do so safely, efficiently, and sustainably. With this vision guiding its efforts, the program aims to improve awareness of work-related road safety, employers' duty of care, and

employees' responsibilities. By bringing about a radical change in how organisations perceive work-related road risk, Driving for Better Business seeks to elevate levels of compliance among all those who drive or ride for work.

As a strategic partner of Driving for Better Business, SOE joins a distinguished cohort of organisations actively involved in advancing work-related road safety and risk management. These partners, which include national and local government entities, regulators, emergency services, trade associations, and media outlets, contribute to the Driving for Better Business community by sharing expertise, resources, and thought leadership. With aligned values and a dedication to promoting road safety, these partnerships serve as a catalyst for collective action and impactful change.

The collaboration between SOE and Driving for Better Business transcends mere affiliation; it is a dynamic partnership characterised by mutual engagement and collaboration. Through co-creation of content, such as blogs and articles, both entities leverage their respective platforms to disseminate best practices and actionable insights. Additionally, joint participation in events and engagement opportunities enables the sharing of expertise and fosters meaningful dialogue on road safety initiatives.

Central to this partnership is the commitment to amplifying the voices of key stakeholders and thought leaders. Interviews with industry experts facilitate the exchange of knowledge and highlight examples of effective risk management strategies.

Furthermore, supportive statements from senior leaders reinforce the importance of prioritising road safety within organisational frameworks.

This collaboration between SOE and Driving for Better Business highlights a mutual commitment to enhancing road safety and workplace security. Through this collaboration, SOE reaffirms safety to be one of its core values. The synergy between SOE and Driving for Better Business represents a proactive stance in mitigating work-related road hazards. By pooling together a range of expertise and resources, this alliance seeks to instigate substantial transformations and foster a safety-oriented ethos on our roads. Together, we are paving the way for safer travels and a promising future for every road user.

How Neil Engineered his Career

Senior Engineer Neil Read has left an indelible mark on the engineering inspection industry since embarking on his journey in 2005. His career trajectory, spanning over a decade, showcases a remarkable blend of hands-on experience and continuous learning, culminating in his current role as a Senior Engineer at Zurich Engineering.

Neil's journey into engineering began with a natural curiosity for understanding how things worked, manifesting in his penchant for dismantling and reassembling objects from a young age. Harboursing a passion for engineering, Neil opted for an apprenticeship route after leaving school at 16, securing a coveted spot in an Aeronautical apprenticeship program. His formative years were spent at RNAY Fleetlands, immersed in the world of aircraft maintenance and repair, where he honed his skills

SENIOR ENGINEER NEIL READ UNVEILS THE BLUEPRINT OF HIS ENGINEERING CAREER



and acquired a solid foundation in engineering principles.

Reflecting on his career highlights, Neil emphasises the unparalleled variety inherent in his role as an Engineer Surveyor. From traversing diverse locations to engaging with individuals across various industries, Neil finds fulfilment in the dynamic nature of his work. Transitioning to the role of Senior Engineer marked a significant milestone in his career, amplifying his responsibilities and reinforcing the perpetual learning curve inherent in the engineering profession.

Neil's decision to join the Society of Operations Engineers (SOE) was influenced by SOE's commitment to fostering professional development and promoting excellence within the engineering community. As a member of the SOE, Neil benefits from access to valuable resources, including continuous

professional development opportunities and support for professional registration. He credits the SOE for facilitating his journey towards achieving Incorporated Engineer (IEng) status through the technical report route, underscoring SOE's instrumental role in his career advancement.

Offering advice to aspiring engineers, Neil advocates for a balanced approach that recognises the value of both academic qualifications and practical experience. He emphasises the importance of on-the-job training and highlights the significance of professional registration as a testament to one's expertise and dedication to the engineering profession.

Neil Read's illustrious career serves as a testament to the transformative power of dedication, continuous learning, and proactive engagement within the engineering community. As he continues to make strides in his role as a Senior Engineer, Neil remains committed to inspiring and empowering the next generation of engineering professionals.

“Neil's journey into engineering began with a natural curiosity for understanding how things worked, manifesting in his penchant for dismantling and reassembling objects from a young age”

Tom Shelly: A Journey of Engineering Excellence and Environmental Advocacy

In the expansive realm of engineering, individuals often emerge whose contributions transcend the boundaries of their professional titles, leaving an indelible mark on both the industry and society at large. Tom Shelly, a retired engineer, stands as a beacon of innovation, environmental stewardship, and unwavering dedication to advancing the field of engineering.

Despite officially retiring, Tom Shelly finds himself busier than ever, dedicating his efforts to protecting and enhancing the environment. Serving on the local parish council and engaging with various initiatives, including the Kent Association of Local Councils and the Tonbridge and Malling Climate Change Forum, Tom channels his engineering expertise to address pressing environmental challenges. From halting the dumping of contaminated soil on a Site of Special Scientific Interest to spearheading tree planting programs and advocating for renewable energy solutions such as solar panels, Tom exemplifies the intersection of engineering and environmental advocacy.

Reflecting on his journey

into engineering, Tom traces his inspiration back to his father, whose influence ignited a lifelong passion for the field. Pursuing academic endeavours at Cambridge University, where he excelled in metallurgy and materials science, Tom embarked on a diverse career trajectory encompassing research, academia, and industry. From conducting groundbreaking research on arc plasma processes and contributing to innovative projects at Blaw Knox, Tom has continuously embraced the spirit of innovation and exploration that defines engineering.

Throughout his illustrious career, Tom has encountered numerous highlights, from interviewing industry luminaries like Richard Branson, to championing cutting-edge technologies through his role as Technical Editor of the magazine 'Eureka'. His dedication to promoting engineering advancements has left a lasting mark on the industry, inspiring countless individuals to push the boundaries of what is possible in engineering.

Central to Tom's journey has been his engagement with professional institutions like



SOE, which have provided invaluable networking opportunities and facilitated the exchange of knowledge within the engineering community. Through his involvement with SOE, Tom has navigated the ever-evolving engineering landscape with confidence and proficiency, leveraging his expertise to drive positive change within the industry.

For aspiring engineers, Tom offers sage advice: embrace the innate passion for creation and problem-solving inherent in engineering. By pursuing these passions and seizing opportunities for continuous learning and growth, aspiring engineers can embark on fulfilling and impactful careers in engineering, following in the footsteps of trailblazers like Tom Shelly.

Tom invites readers to explore his journey further, drawing inspiration from his experiences and insights as a testament to the transformative power of engineering. Through unwavering dedication and a relentless pursuit of excellence, Tom continues to inspire the next generation of engineers, leaving an enduring legacy in the history of engineering history.

Celebrating Talent in Road Transport

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE IRTE NORTHERN CENTRE'S YOUNG ENGINEER AWARDS

The February AGM for the IRTE Northern Centre marked the prestigious presentation of the Young Engineer of the Year Awards, a scheme initiated by the Hon. Secretary Neil Mitchell in 2018. This initiative offers managers and workshop controllers the chance to nominate young talents from franchised dealerships, fleet operators, and independent workshops.

To nominate someone, a senior person such as a workshop manager completes an entry form that builds a profile of the nominee, including their current role, tenure with the organisation, relevant skills and competencies, industry-related training, and formal qualifications. This information is then reviewed by a judging committee, who may contact the nominator for further details if needed.

This year, the awards were categorised into three sections: Young Bus Engineer of the Year, Young Truck Engineer of



the Year, and Apprentice Road Transport Engineer of the Year. Winners received certificates, Halfords Gift Vouchers, and a commemorative glass plaque, while highly commended participants were also recognised.

The post-AGM speaker, Peter Leonard, shared insights into the Northwest Blood Bikes, a charity providing free, voluntary motorcycle transport services for urgent medical items. He discussed the organisation's structure, volunteer qualifications, and the use of BMW motorcycles for their operations.

In a touching tribute, the Excellence in Engineering Award was named after Chris Grime, recognising his 25 years of dedicated service to the IRTE Northern Centre. Chris presented the award to Jacob Pettit and received a commemorative certificate from George Jepson, a long-standing attendee and former lecturer at Preston's Tuson College.

THE 2024 WINNERS

- YOUNG BUS ENGINEER OF THE YEAR**
Winner: Marco Jackson of Stagecoach Engineering
Highly Commended: Darren Hussain of Stagecoach Engineering (pictured left)
- YOUNG HGV ENGINEER OF THE YEAR**
Winner: Jacob Pettit of JDS Truck
- APPRENTICE ROAD TRANSPORT ENGINEER OF THE YEAR**
Winner: Josh Roberts of Preston Scania
Highly Commended: Bradley Mort of Stagecoach Engineering
 Zak Birkett of JDS Trucks
 Daniel Barnish of Lancashire DAF

These awards not only celebrate emerging talents but also acknowledge the significant contributions of individuals like Chris Grime, reinforcing the spirit of excellence within the IRTE Northern Centre.

Dynamic Presentations and Engaging Field Trips

IRTE CORNWALL CENTRE KICKSTARTS CPD SEASON

Cornwall Centre IRTE kicked off their first CPD season in 2024 with a captivating presentation by Lee Harris, Technical Sales Manager for Merlin Power. Based in Exeter, Merlin Power specialises in pioneering power solutions for off-grid vehicles.

Harris delved into the intricate realm of pure lead acid AGM and Lithium-ion batteries, shedding light on alternators, regulators, and split charging processes crucial for providing off-grid power to working vehicles and equipment. For those who attended this presentation was a gateway into a new frontier of engineering, igniting

enthusiasm for adopting tailored power solutions, particularly for motorhomes and mobile mechanic operations. Mr. Harris graciously extended an offer to collaborate with other centres seeking similar expertise.

In February, the centre departed from its usual indoor lecture series to embark on a field trip to Driveline GB, headquartered in St. Austell. Managing Director Richard Jacobs warmly welcomed the group, offering insights into the company's evolution since its inception in 1994. Jacobs elucidated the challenges posed by integrating electric vehicles into their fleet, highlighting Driveline's commitment to

adaptability and innovation. Members were treated to a comprehensive tour of Driveline's facilities, including their state-of-the-art spray booth and employee fitness gym, providing a firsthand glimpse into the company's multifaceted operations.

The winter series of lectures culminated with a well-attended presentation on the illustrious history of HTP Motors and Cornish Engineer Richard Trevithick. Attendees were captivated by the recounting of HTP Motors' legacy, founded by Hosken, Trevithick, and Polkinghore, with Richard Trilithic descendant of the famous engineer, among its founders. The presentation evoked nostalgia as attendees reminisced about HTP's pivotal role, from wartime Spitfire repairs to dealership partnerships with prestigious brands like Rolls Royce and Austin. The evening fostered the sense of camaraderie, which is the lifeblood of the regions, as members reflected on the technological advancements of today, juxtaposed with the mechanical simplicity of the past, underscoring the enduring spirit of innovation within the industry.



SOE FULL MEMBERS ELIGIBLE FOR RENVTECH



Registered Environmental Technician Status

Society of Operations Engineers full members are now eligible to apply for Registered Environmental Technician status, REnvTech.

REnvTech is recognised as the premier professional title for environmental technicians across various sectors including industry, education, and the public sector which underscores a commitment to sustainable practices and adherence to a stringent Code of Professional Conduct. This registration title signifies a sound understanding of environmental principles and competence in implementing best practices.

To qualify for REnvTech status, applicants must

demonstrate a solid understanding of environmental principles equivalent to a level 3 qualification, backed by a minimum of two years' full-time, relevant work-based experience. Successful candidates will be tasked with supporting management processes, executing practical project tasks, and championing ongoing best practices in their respective fields.

REnvTech registrants are the backbone of sustainability efforts, actively engaged in workshops, fieldwork, research, and problem-solving initiatives. Their dedication ensures the smooth functioning of vital projects, driving us closer to a more sustainable future.

Was That Avoidable? A Call to Action for Road Safety by Neil Mitchell

The Scottish Ayrshire Centre started its 2024 CPD lecture series with a thought-provoking presentation by Neil Mitchell, IRTE Professional Sector Council Member. Held at the Park Hotel in Kilmarnock, the talk delved into commercial and public service vehicle defects encountered during roadside inspections and annual MOT checks.

As a seasoned industry veteran with a career spanning back to 1981, Neil started his journey as an apprentice heavy goods vehicle technician and then started to work with the Vehicle Inspectorate (VI), now known as the DVSA. With such an expansive career, Neil has witnessed firsthand the evolution of the industry and the ever-present challenge of vehicle safety.

Using a compelling blend of photography and video, Neil's PowerPoint presentation painted a stark image of the dangers lurking beneath the surface of seemingly ordinary vehicles. Insecure wheels, defective tyres, malfunctioning

IRTE SCOTTISH AYRSHIRE CENTRE



brakes, faulty lights – the sheer volume and severity of these issues underscored the critical importance of proper maintenance and inspection.

The audience, consisting of IRTE members and guests, resonated deeply with Neil's message. The IRTE's longstanding efforts in promoting best practices

for road wheel removal, such as the correct use of Wheel Chocks, and re-fitment were acknowledged. Yet, the prevalence of wheel-related incidents served as a reminder that vigilance remains of utmost importance.

Moving beyond wheels, Neil shed light on a multitude of defects afflicting various

vehicle components, from mirrors and tachographs to bodywork, steering, and suspension systems. The alarming sight of safety warnings that are often ignored or misunderstood highlighted the crucial role of driver training and awareness in ensuring road safety.

Neil thoroughly explained the DVSA's protocol for handling prohibitable defects, ranging from driver education to fixed penalty notices. He further delved into the investigative procedures triggered by recurring defects, potentially leading to operator scrutiny by the Traffic Commissioner.

As the presentation progressed, a common question emerged: what's the most frequent offender? Neil highlighted "You never know what to expect next. However, he pinpointed load security as a growing concern, with inadequate securing methods and lack of familiarity with equipment posing significant risks.

The final segment tackled

the MOT inspections and the variety of defects encountered. This once again sparked discussion, particularly regarding the licensing of vehicle repairers and technicians. The underlying message: entrusting poorly maintained vehicles to unqualified personnel can have dire consequences for both operators and the public.

Following the presentation, a Q&A session allowed attendees to delve deeper into specific concerns. Centre Chairman Joe Younger expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Mitchell for delivering such a comprehensive and informative lecture. Even as refreshments were served, Mitchell remained engaged, readily engaging in further discussions with members and guests.

"Was That Avoidable?" proved to be more than just a presentation; it was a powerful call to action. By shedding light on the often-overlooked world of vehicle defects, Neil Mitchell ignited a conversation that has the potential to transform the industry and prioritise safety on our roads. The Ayrshire Centre's inaugural CPD lecture of 2024 served as a potent reminder that vigilance, education, and qualified professionals are critical ingredients in the recipe for a safer transportation landscape.

"Moving beyond wheels, Neil shed light on a multitude of defects afflicting various vehicle components, from mirrors and tachographs to bodywork, steering, and suspension systems"

The SOE's Safety & Resilience in Engineering Awards is Open for Entries

Engineers are at the forefront of forging solutions that keep our economy moving, our roads safe, our resources sustainable, and our planet green. Operations engineering is at the heart of it all – without it, safety fails. Without it, we are vulnerable.

This year's SOE Safety & Resilience in Engineering Awards will bring two themes to its spotlight – safety and resilience. With a focus on safeguarding our businesses and communities against unpredictable elements, while building resilience to shape a safer ecosystem for future generations, the 2024 awards aim to honour and celebrate the contributions of engineers, teams, visionaries, and organisations who have pioneered groundbreaking technologies and innovative solutions to propel our industries forward.

FULL LIST OF AWARD CATEGORIES

SPECIAL AWARD

- Helix Award

INDIVIDUALS

- Environmental Engineer of the Year
- Road Transport Engineer of the Year
- Plant Engineer of the Year
- Engineer Surveyor of the Year
- SOE Volunteer of the Year
- Future Leader
- Safety Specialist of the Year

COMPANIES

- Engineering Company of the Year
- Safety Innovation of the Year
- People Development Champion

REGIONS

- SOE Region of the Year



Why should you apply?

The awards is a brilliant opportunity to showcase your best of the best. It provides you with esteemed recognition for your exceptional work and achievements by one of the leading professional engineering institutions. Your accomplishments will receive extensive coverage through press releases and social media channels across SOE's publications, ensuring wide-

reaching visibility including a prominent feature in the renowned Transport Engineer and Operations Engineer magazines. Furthermore, your contributions will be meticulously documented through interviews and content creation, amplifying your profile within the industry and securing a lasting legacy within SOE's archives for future reference.

Additionally, as a nominee, you will have the exclusive

opportunity to contribute to various other SOE initiatives, granting access to speaking engagements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) webinars and videos, which will be prominently promoted across the broader membership base. This comprehensive suite of benefits not only elevates your professional standing but also solidifies your integral role within the engineering community.

By entering the awards, you earn an unparalleled opportunity to showcase your excellence and become an esteemed member of the growing SOE community. All shortlisted nominations will be invited to a gala dinner in Autumn for an afternoon of celebration and networking accompanied by a three-course meal and drinks.

Entries are now open. Find out more by visiting the SOE website www.soe.org.uk

