

IRTE HGV Skills Challenge Awards: celebrating our technicians

The Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE) celebrated the inaugural IRTE HGV Skills Challenge Awards, in partnership with DAF Trucks, to recognise the talent and achievements of the technicians who keep the UK's Heavy Goods Fleets on the road.

The Awards ceremony, held at DAF Head Office in Haddenham on 7 November, was a celebration of all the participants, and especially this year's four winners for their hard work and determination throughout the challenge:

- First Place: Benjamin Newell, Gist Engineering
- Second Place: Nick Town, Gist Engineering
- Third Place: Jordan Lomas, John Lewis & Partners
- Judges' Choice Award: Storm Nell Brooks, Leeds Commercial Vehicle Hire

Strengthening the Skills Pipeline

The IRTE (a sector of the Society of Operations Engineers) launched the IRTE HGV Skills Challenge to benchmark standards, inspire the next generation of engineers and raise awareness of the technician's vital role in road transport.

Held at the DAF Apprentice Academy in October, the challenge put the skills of



12 participants to the test across six practical, real-world workshop tasks.

Participants were tested on demonstrating accuracy, technical capability and professionalism across key tasks including detailed vehicle inspections, diagnosing and assessing electrical issues and tyre condition and safety, measuring brake wear and disc runout, and evaluating key engine components.

Hear From This Year's Winners

First place winner Benjamin Newell said the tasks were challenging but enjoyable, and a chance to refresh his memory on different skills.

"I thought I was sort of middle of the pack on the day, and I didn't think I did as well on some

tasks, so to find that I won first place was quite a shock, I wasn't expecting it to be me," he said.

He encouraged anyone who was considering entering the next challenge to "come and give it a go" in 2026.

"You can only do your best and see what you achieve," he said.

"It was challenging on some tasks, not knowing what you're walking into and some of the equipment and tools I haven't used since I was at college, I had to refresh myself on how to use them, but it was an enjoyable day."

Nick Town said it felt "really good" to have won second place, and be recognised for the effort put into the challenge.

"It was good, it was certainly challenging, and I'd be excited to see what next year brings," he said.

"It was a good variety of skills

for everyone involved.

"I would advise anyone to take part, challenge themselves and see what they can do."

Third place winner Jordan Lomas said it was nice to be recognised for the "hard work" that technicians put in on a daily basis. "A lot of the tasks were relevant to what we do, some of them were new, which is good because it takes you out of your comfort zone."

Setting the Standard for Excellence

DAF Trucks Training and Apprenticeships Manager Matt Coates said the event set a clear benchmark for technical excellence in the industry and highlighted the level of skill required to keep the UK's heavy vehicle sector operating safely and reliably.

"This year's winners showed exactly what that standard looks like, consistent quality, attention to detail, and a level of capability that stands out," he said.

"Their performance reflects the very best of our sector."

"Partnering with the IRTE on the inaugural IRTE HGV Skills Challenge is something I'm genuinely proud of."

"I also want to extend a sincere thank you to our training partner, Skillnet, for facilitating the event challenges and the technical set up."

"Their support and expertise were essential in creating a fair, high-quality assessment environment that allowed the competitors to demonstrate their ability."

"This year's winners showed exactly what that standard looks like, consistent quality, attention to detail, and a level of capability that stands out"

Matt Coates, DAF Trucks Training and Apprenticeships Manager

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Society of Operations Engineers (SOE) is a membership organisation encompassing the Professional Sectors IRTE, IPlantE, BES, Environmental and Operations. SOE represents over 16,000 individuals and companies in the engineering industry and is committed to the ongoing growth and personal development of its members.

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Welcome Back...

Welcome to the autumn edition of *SOE News*. As the new editor, I've spent the past few weeks getting to know the organisation, its members, and the breadth of work happening across all our sectors. It's been a wonderful introduction to just how much industry expertise, collaboration and technical progress sits within SOE.

This issue highlights several recent activities, including updates from the Society, our regional centres, insights from industry events, and a look at developments and partnerships shaping the months ahead.

We held the first annual IRTE HGV Skills Challenge in partnership with DAF Trucks, where participants put their skills and knowledge to the test

“The Society has continued building new relationships across its sectors and have welcomed new corporate partners”

FROM THE EDITOR

across six real-world tasks. It was a pleasure to attend the Awards ceremony, recognising the talent and commitment of the technicians and join in with celebrating our challenge winners.

Attending this event was a highlight of my first month in this role, and it reinforced just how important it is that we continue to champion skills, celebrate talent, and support the next generation across all areas of engineering.

The Society has continued building new relationships across its sectors and have welcomed new corporate partners including research specialists The Pirbright Institute. We've also announced several new agreements and collaborations with organisations including

T&RS Engineering and Zurich Engineering.

Local events and webinars have continued to engage members, offering insights into best practice, industry updates, safety, and sustainability, and connecting professionals across the UK.

As we wrap up this year's achievements, planning is already underway for events including the 2026 IRTE PSV and HGV Skills Challenges. We'll soon be sharing announcements, key dates and entry information, so keep an eye on SOE channels for updates. We look forward to seeing even more participation, innovation and sector-wide collaboration in next year's events. I'm looking forward to building a publication that reflects the full scope of our community. If you have ideas, feedback or news to share, I'd be happy to hear from you.

MADDIE MANWARING

Get in touch with me at:
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Mr Coates said DAF Trucks take seriously their responsibility for supporting and championing technical competence.

“Working alongside the IRTE allows us to recognise and celebrate the individuals who continue to raise the bar for our industry,” he said.

Looking Ahead

SOE Chief Executive Emma Thompson said the success of this year's challenge was just the beginning.

“This pilot has shown just how much talent and passion exists within our technician community,” she said.

“I'd like to thank DAF Trucks for their partnership, and all our event sponsors and supporters for helping our inaugural event be such a success.



“With even more partners involved next year, we can help accelerate skills development, raise standards and expand opportunities across the sector.

“We invite organisations who share our vision to come on board and help us make next year's challenge our most ambitious yet.”

The IRTE extends its

gratitude to the sponsors and supporters who made the pilot challenge possible, including DAF Trucks, GYS, Bilstein Group, Teng Tools, Prestige TCT, and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

For more information or to register interest for the 2026 IRTE HGV Skills Challenge, contact:
irteskills@soe.org.uk

ZURICH ENGINEERING AND SOE PARTNERSHIP EMPOWERS OVER 400 STAFF THROUGH PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Successful Zurich Partnership with SOE

The Society of Operations Engineers (SOE) is celebrating a major milestone in its ongoing partnership with Zurich Engineering, with more than 400 employees signing up to become members of SOE, marking a landmark achievement in the organisations' shared mission to champion professional standards across the engineering and operations sectors.

Supporting Professional Growth and Recognition

This collaboration, which has been developed over several years, continues to strengthen the relationship between SOE and Zurich Engineering, two organisations dedicated to improving safety, technical competence, and professional recognition across engineering disciplines.

Together, they are helping to ensure that all engineers within Zurich Engineering are recognised not just for their technical expertise, but also for their commitment to professional excellence and public safety.

Through SOE membership, Zurich Engineering staff gain access to:

- Professional Registration with the Engineering Council, providing formal recognition of competence and commitment to the highest professional standards
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes and technical guidance to support ongoing learning and career progression
- Networking and knowledge sharing with engineers and industry leaders across the operations and transport engineering sectors
- Access to exclusive events and publications that keep members informed of regulatory changes, best practice, and emerging technology



“By investing in their people and supporting them to become professionally recognised, Zurich Engineering is reinforcing its reputation as a responsible employer that values technical integrity and continuous improvement”

Emma Thompson, SOE Chief Executive

Why Professional Registration Matters

Professional Registration is increasingly recognised as essential within the engineering and insurance sectors.

It ensures that technical professionals meet rigorous standards of competence, accountability, and ethical conduct, factors that are vital in maintaining public trust and delivering consistent quality across safety-critical industries.

SOE Chief Executive Emma Thompson said the partnership with Zurich Engineering demonstrates how professional membership and registration can raise standards across entire organisations.

“By investing in their people and supporting them to become professionally recognised, Zurich Engineering is reinforcing its

reputation as a responsible employer that values technical integrity and continuous improvement,” she said.

A Commitment to Raising Industry Standards

SOE has worked closely with Zurich Engineering for several years to promote professional development within its Inspection Services division. Through tailored guidance, structured CPD frameworks, and clear membership pathways, the partnership has helped hundreds of technical staff progress towards professional recognition empowering them to take pride in their expertise and contribute to a stronger, safer industry.

This latest milestone not only supports individual career progression but also strengthens Zurich Engineering's position as a

forward-thinking employer that places professional development at the heart of its culture.

Zurich Engineering Chief Engineer Dominic Dawson said by encouraging registration, Zurich Engineering was helping to shape a safer and more competent engineering workforce.

“Professional registration is more than a personal achievement, it's a statement of quality, trust, commitment and accountability,” he said.

Looking Ahead

SOE and Zurich Engineering remain committed to expanding their collaboration, offering even more pathways for technical professionals to achieve professional recognition and advance their expertise in line with evolving industry needs and standards.

GOOD MONTH

100 NEW MANUFACTURING JOBS FOR SOUTH WEST

A Bristol defence tech firm and UK manufacturer are set to create 100 highly skilled manufacturing jobs across the South-West over the next year.

As reported in Business Live, Rowden Technologies are partnering with Exeter-based Isebard in a "joint effort" to scale sovereign UK manufacturing of advanced sensing systems for national security.

The partnership combines Rowden's system design, integration and in-house manufacturing expertise with Isebard's software-defined production facilities.

Rowden will create around 100 jobs over the next 12 months, with Isebard manufacturing precision-engineered components to support Rowden's growing Magos product line, a family of sensing systems developed for use across government, defence, and national infrastructure.

BAD MONTH

COMPANY FINED £240K AFTER MAN KILLED BY REVERSING HGV

A manufacturing company has been fined after a man was killed by a reversing HGV in Birmingham. David Saint, an engineering manager at Northwood Consumer Limited, was walking across a service road on the site's industrial estate when a reversing HGV struck him in October 2023.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of workplace transport risks, address HGV movements in site rules, eliminate the need for reversing where possible, or provide appropriate aids, signage, and controls when unavoidable. It failed to display clear hazard warnings, manage HGV access to the site, and maintain robust procedures to keep vehicle movements safe and well-regulated.

This October the company pleaded guilty and was fined £240,000.

Strengthening Apprentice Pathways to Professional Recognition

The Society of Operations Engineers (SOE) is pleased to announce T&RS Engineering have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SOE, confirming their apprenticeship program meets the Engineering Council's Incorporated Engineer (IEng) Professional Status.

T&RS Engineering is a leading rail and rolling stock engineering company, experienced in the manufacture, maintenance and overhaul of railway vehicles and equipment.

Partnership Aligns Apprenticeships with IEng Standards

The agreement reached with SOE means that anyone who completes a T&RS Engineering apprenticeship will receive a fast-tracked route to Professional Registration, meeting the qualification's requirements of the UK Spec for IEng.

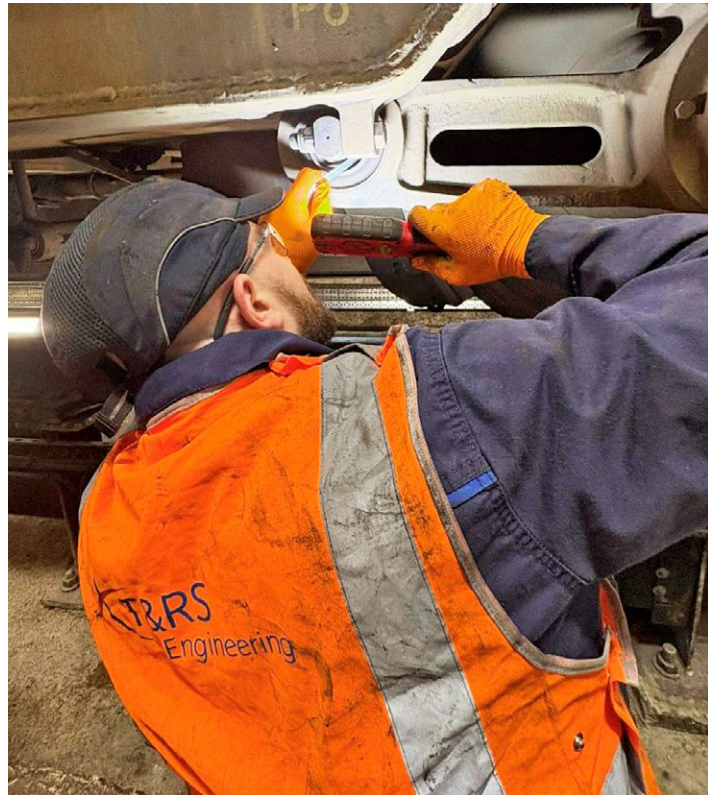
Becoming an Incorporated Engineer provides individuals with internationally recognised Professional Status, enhancing career prospects, credibility, and influence within an organisation.

As a professional body dedicated to supporting engineering standards and professional registration, SOE champions pathways that ensure engineers are recognised for their knowledge, skills, and contribution to industry.

Fast-Track Pathway to Professional Registration

SOE Chief Executive Director Emma Thompson said the agreement supports SOE's wider mission to support structured career development and raise standards across the sector.

"By aligning their apprenticeship scheme to the IEng standard T&RS Engineering are demonstrating real investment in their people," she said.



"This MoU reinforces our commitment to professional standards and supports the long-term development of the engineering workforce.

"We are proud to work with employers like T&RS Engineering to ensure engineers receive recognition for their capabilities."

Strengthening the Industry Skills Pipeline

The agreement also contributes to strengthening the industry skills pipeline at a time when the engineering sector continues to face growing demand for qualified and experienced talent.

T&RS Engineering Managing Director Richard Poulton said by embedding professional registration into the apprenticeship scheme, they were ensuring engineers gain both valuable technical experience and formal recognition for the level of competence they achieve.

"This agreement with SOE reflects T&RS Engineering's ongoing commitment to developing highly skilled engineers and providing clear, accredited career pathways," he said.

"Our apprentices now have a guaranteed route to Incorporated Engineer status, which is a major milestone for anyone starting out in the profession."

Under the agreement SOE will administer and support all membership and professional registration applications, in line with UK-SPEC requirements and subject to peer review by the Membership & Professional Standards Committee.

T&RS Engineering employees applying for registration will need to meet the necessary criteria identified in UK SPEC regarding qualifications, career development, and in-house training.

2025 Salary Survey key insights

The Engineering Salary Survey 2025 has been released, providing key insights into the average salaries, career satisfaction, age and location demographics and more for engineers in the UK.

Conducted by The Engineer, the annual survey has revealed that engineers who are professionally registered earn on average £7,000 more than those who aren't.

Of the participants, 49% were professionally registered, however, only a quarter of respondents believed professional registration could boost their earning potential.

Despite this knowledge gap,

the data makes it clear that professional registration is a valuable career investment.

With professionally registered engineers earning significantly more on average, formal registration represents not just a mark of competence but a strategic step toward long-term progression and increased earning potential.

The average salary for engineers in the UK was revealed to be £62,000, with the highest average salaries found in London and the southeast, at £64,000.

Across various sectors, participants working in rail/civil and structural

engineering were found to have the highest average salaries at £74,000, while last year's highest earning sector, oil and gas, saw average salaries drop to £69,000.

Meanwhile in manufacturing, the most heavily represented sector in the survey, average salaries declined from £58k to £55k.

Other key insights include:

- The aging demographic of engineers remains a concern, with 53% of respondents over the age 50
- Female engineers accounted for just 8% of respondents
- The gender split by sector showed more women worked in academia (17% of workforce), followed by oil and gas (15%), meanwhile the materials sector had zero female respondents
- The survey revealed female engineers earn on average £4,000 less than their male counterparts



49% of the survey's respondents were Professionally Registered



Only 25% of respondents believe Professional Registration could boost earning potential

SOE Welcomes Pirbright Institute as Corporate Partner

The Society of Operations Engineers (SOE) was pleased to welcome The Pirbright Institute as Corporate Partner in September.

This collaboration strengthens our shared commitment to advancing engineering standards, supporting professional development, and encouraging innovation across vital sectors.

The Pirbright Institute is a world-leading centre of excellence in the research and surveillance of viral diseases of livestock, as well as viruses that spread from animals to humans.

Based in the UK and funded strategically by UK Research and Innovation's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Institute contributes to global food security and animal health through its



pioneering bioscience research.

By joining SOE's Corporate Partnership programme, Pirbright demonstrates the importance of professional recognition, workforce development, and technical excellence in engineering. The partnership will create opportunities to provide support and training for the next generation of high-containment engineers working within the Institute.

The Institute's Head of Estates Management Services Gary Oldham said they were delighted to develop a partnership with SOE.

"Working together, we can align our shared commitment to staff engagement and technical excellence," he said.

"This enables us to provide support and training for the next generation of high-containment engineers at the Pirbright Institute."

SOE's Corporate Partnership scheme supports organisations that wish to invest in their people and demonstrate leadership in engineering standards, safety, and sustainability. Through this collaboration, both SOE and Pirbright will work to strengthen professional pathways, ensure competence, and enhance the visibility of engineering within critical national and global projects.

For more information about The Pirbright Institute, visit
<https://www.pirbright.ac.uk/>



MANUFACTURERS WARN ENERGY COSTS COULD DEVASTATE UK SUPPLY CHAINS

UK manufacturers are calling for government support amid an 'Energy Armageddon', as new non-commodity charges and a Nuclear RAB "stealth tax" add millions to energy bills. The Confederation of British Metalforming (CBM) says rising costs, driven by Balancing Services Use of System changes and the Nuclear RAB 'stealth tax', will push energy prices up by 10-30% in the next six months, threatening the viability of many SMEs across automotive, aerospace, and defence supply chains. CBM leaders argue the government is prioritising only the largest energy-intensive companies, leaving thousands of SMEs without support. Manufacturers warn that Ofgem's regulatory changes and net-zero-related network costs will worsen the strain, with some reporting up to £1m in additional charges.

IET 2025 SKILLS SURVEY

The Institution of Engineering and Technology's 2025 skills stats report has revealed key insights into the digital and sustainability skills across the UK's engineering and technology sector.

New statistics show that while confidence in current engineering and technology capabilities remains strong, employers are increasingly warning that critical digital and sustainability skills shortages threaten to slow the UK's progress on net-zero and major infrastructure delivery.

Key insights include:

- 76% of employers struggle to hire for key roles, with technical and specialist sustainability skills topping the list, indicating a growing skills crisis
- 42% of engineering employers rank innovative thinking as the most vital skill for future growth, ahead of digital and technical expertise (39%)
- 50% cite lack of time as a barrier to upskilling/reskilling, and 46% say employee turnover hinders progress

Busy Season for Cornwall IRTE members

IRTE CORNWALL CENTRE

Cornwall IRTE have had a jam-packed few months, with local events and tours of various engineering sites and other companies throughout the south west.

In October, the team kicked off the Cornwall IRTE Winter Lecture programme with a presentation by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency on current and future MOT requirements, in light of advanced safety technology on HGVs and cars.

The IRTE visited Smallbridge Brothers Engineering at Blackwater in September. An established engineering company, their prime function is the supply and maintenance of John Deere tractors with the associated GPS tracking equipment capable of directing working farm machinery within 2cm.



At the end of September members travelled to Merlin Power in Exeter to meet Technical Sales Manager Lee Harris. Lee and his team demonstrated many forms of inverters and battery saving devices allowing off grid operation for a variety of trades

and marine environment.

On the return journey back to Cornwall, members were granted access to visit the railway workshops at the South Devon Railway in Buckfastleigh.

"This was a great privilege and without the backing of our professional organisation

the SOE and IRTE it is doubtful such a visit would have been permitted," Cornwall IRTE honorary secretary Howard Stevens said.

"This was another valuable insight into the engineering required to maintain historic steam locomotives and rolling stock."

August saw a trip to the Colwith Distillery and Potato Supplies site, for a tour of the distillery. The distillery produces vodka, gin and other liqueurs using their locally grown potatoes which are also distributed to producers and hospitality outlets in the region.

Back in July the team visited Feritech, who manufacture underwater grabs and recovery equipment which is distributed worldwide.

All Cornwall IRTE events are circulated with the support of the SOE Events Team and members from other areas are welcome whenever in the area.

The Science of Collision Investigation

In November, the IRTE North Eastern Centre hosted their final lecture of 2025, **The Science of Collision Investigation. Members and guests were provided with a detailed and authoritative overview of the scientific processes that underpin today's collision analysis.**

The presentation explored how cutting-edge scientific techniques are being applied within the Darlington and Durham operational area to understand and resolve incidents on the roads. From the latest forensic methods to innovative investigative approaches, attendees saw a rare glimpse into how modern policing tackles complex challenges in today's transport environment.

The lecture was presented by Durham Constabularies Roads and Armed Policing Casualty Reduction Coordinator Peter Tate and his colleague Dan Clough, from the Forensic

IRTE NORTH EASTERN CENTRE

Science department.

The presentation included photographs and video demonstrating the complex and highly charged types of incidents both the Roads Policing and Forensic Science department work on in the area.

Peter explained that the Forensic Science unit were asked to assist the police preliminary when an incident was serious, usually involving fatalities.

Dan referred to two examples as case studies for the techniques

which were deployed, one involving a pedestrian in contact with a car and the second example a Passenger Carrying Vehicle incident which had also unfortunately resulted in the loss of life.

They said evidence was collected by witness statements and a range of complex equipment including laser scanners, CCTV and drone aerial footage to understand what happened before and during the incident, to assist the investigators, and ultimately the legal process.

The investigations considered various aspects including things like the available natural and artificial lighting, the impact on the view of the those involved, and if things were verified or contradicted by witnesses.

The weather conditions, road conditions and street furniture

together with the involved vehicles were critical to the investigations.

The presentation discussed the progression in accuracy of equipment like laser scanners and arial drones, and how such equipment assisted those involved in the investigation, and also how such equipment could reduce the time and impact of road closures during the investigation without the loss of robust evidence.

Peter covered the various historic and current statistics for this type of incident in the North East, which though still of concern were more favourable than in other areas of the UK.

Centre Chairman Derek Atkinson concluded the evening by presenting Peter and Dan with an engraved award to mark their informative presentation, with former police officer and committee member Ray Jones offering on behalf of the Centre a vote of thanks.



Skills, Sustainability and Innovation Take Centre Stage at OWL NI 2026

IRTE NORTH IRELAND CENTRE

Optimised Waste and Logistics, in partnership with the IRTE Ireland North Centre, returned to Titanic Belfast for another successful OWL NI conference and exhibition in October. A collaboration with IRTE representatives Jeff Shaw and Michael Hutchinson, and the OWL Partnership, the event brought together suppliers from waste, transport and logistics to showcase integrated technologies and highlight the value of industry collaboration.

The event took place in the iconic surroundings of Titanic Belfast, where a range of vehicle manufacturers and suppliers demonstrated their innovative technologies, while Jeff and Michael promoted the benefits of IRTE membership.

SOE Chief Executive Emma Thompson was pleased to deliver this year's keynote speech, outlining SOE's strategy to close the engineering skills gap through innovation, collaboration and technical leadership.

She highlighted successful partnerships with DAF Trucks and BIFFA, and celebrated initiatives like the IRTE HGV Skills Challenge for raising standards and supporting technician development.

Emma emphasised SOE's role

in compliance support through technical guidance, CPD, and the Maintenance Provision Rating Scheme (MPRS).

She identified electrification, digital compliance tools and AI-driven predictive maintenance as the key forces shaping future fleet operations, reaffirming SOE's commitment to helping engineers lead the transition.

"We offer professional registration, chartership pathways, and access to industry-leading resources to help our members stay ahead in this rapidly evolving sector," she said.

"Let's continue to collaborate to build a skilled, recognised, and resilient engineering workforce."

In a session on fleet decarbonisation, Cenex's Andrew Benfield stressed that low-carbon fleet planning is now a strategic priority. He set out a structured approach for operators, including clear EV strategies, leadership buy-in, data-driven assessment and trialling technologies.

Bridgestone EMEA's Andrew Bushe explored evolving tyre technologies aligned with CO₂ and sustainability standards. Key innovations included the new Duravis line with improved mileage and efficiency, RFID-enabled tyres for lifecycle tracking, and Bandag retreading's significant emissions



and raw material reductions.

Xirgo Technologies' Pete Tasker detailed how integrated telematics can cut fuel use, improve safety, assist in liability cases and support workforce well-being. Carbonfit's Ben Craig reinforced that Scope 3 emissions are now a strategic opportunity, advocating rapid, data-led

decarbonisation that has already delivered cost and emissions benefits for major clients.

Event organiser Ann-Marie Knecht praised the collaboration between OWL NI and IRTE, noting Emma Thompson's impactful keynote and the event's continued role in raising industry standards.

Exploring Vehicle Safety Innovations

IRTE SCOTTISH Ayrshire CENTRE

In November, Scottish Ayrshire IRTE members attended an insightful lecture presented by Banlaw Systems' Neil Higgins on innovative new vehicle safety systems.

The lecture looked at the development of safety cameras from the early days of bulky

systems with shades of grey and poor reliability, to modern wireless systems with clear pictures and 360° views. Neil gave an overview of the latest technologies including human detection, which is currently being used on plant and airport vehicles. These systems alert

drivers/operators and can forward incident reports to supervisors.

Members were then shown a demonstration of a system fitted to a demonstrator van. Banlaw's Craig Scott displayed how effective the system was in human detection and how it can be set to suit a wide variety of jobs on site, working in confined spaces and working with

hazardous materials/liquids.

Back in the lecture, Neil gave details on configuration and costings, before giving insight into future changes in legislation to include these systems as a requirement for working in London, before ending with a Q&A for members.

Visit the SOE website to view upcoming events and register attendance.

IRTE NORTH EASTERN CENTRE

A Night of Achievement: Recognising Industry Talent

This November, the IRTE North Eastern Centre hosted the 2025 Gala Dinner, Dance and Awards, to celebrate professional achievements in the industry.

Held at the Delta Marriott Hotel, the event brought together IRTE members, and guests including industry partners and supporters.

Centre Chairman Derek Atkinson extended a special welcome to those from the local and national business community, who year after year offered support to the Centre.

Their support is both in the form of time and commitment, and financial support, including providing many of the raffle gifts which supported the Centre's Charitable Award 2025.

The prestigious Student of the Year award went to Jordan Larking from Stagecoach North East, who had successfully completed a modern apprenticeship and achieved distinction within Stagecoach by achieving the Group Apprentice of the Year.

Craig Summer was awarded the Centre's Highly Commended distinction for his commitment and technical achievements,



which was accepted by Healthline Commercial Managing Director Gavin Cape on his behalf.

Econ Engineering Ltd Area Sales Manager David Carswell

received the Award for Lecture of the Year.

Congratulations to all winners and nominees, and thank you again to the Centre's partners and supporters.

VALE DAVID RIMMER

David was an IRTE member for many years initially with the North West Centre and later the Northern



Centre. He was an active committee member of the Northern Centre for many years and undertaking the post of treasurer and Chairman of the centre on more than one occasion.

For many years he was a member of the IRTE Professional Sector and had also held the position of President of the IRTE.

After standing down from the centre committee a few years ago, David then returned to the Northern Centre at the AGM in 2018 as a guest speaker, giving a very well received presentation to members and guests on the subject of Engineering Endeavours, a recollection of some of the road transport engineering projects and issues that he been involved with during his many years in the industry as a technician, fleet engineer and specialist consultant.

In retirement, David was actively involved in the rally scene of vintage commercial vehicles and was also an official of the Long-Haul Club lorry enthusiasts club who hold presentations and road runs in Lancashire and Cumbria.

On behalf of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE), we send our condolences to David's family at this sad time.

Summer Visit to SS Great Britain

IRTE BRUNEL AND WILTSHIRE CENTRES

Members of the IRTE/ SOE Brunel and Wiltshire Centres enjoyed a summer visit to Bristol's SS Great Britain, celebrating one of Britain's greatest engineering achievements.

Guided tours highlighted Isambard Kingdom Brunel's genius, including the ship's pioneering single propeller powered by inclined two-cylinder engines.

The vessel's role in transglobal travel and its enduring legacy as Victorian engineering excellence were brought vividly to life. Equally valued was the fellowship among members, with lively discussion and shared insights strengthening bonds across centres. The day honoured both engineering history and the camaraderie that defines the IRTE/SOE community, learning together, celebrating heritage, and carrying forward innovation.



SOE Announces 2026 Elections for Professional Sector Councils

At the SOE, our volunteers are essential to driving our mission forward. Our volunteers' network spans a wide range of roles, from running our Professional Sector Councils (PSCs) and delivering nationwide CPD events, to championing SOE's mission across education, employers, and the wider society, as well as providing strategic direction as members of the Board.

We are gearing up for our 2026 elections, a vital process that allows you to shape the strategic direction and professional guidance the Society offers across diverse engineering sectors. These elections will fill key positions on the Professional Sector Councils, which are fundamental to SOE's mission to uphold standards, promote industry expertise, and support members' professional growth. The outcome of these elections significantly influences the Society's operations and priorities, helping it stay relevant in an ever-evolving industry landscape.

Nomination papers and forms will be available on our website from February 2026.



IRTE (Institute of Road Transport Engineers):

Two vacancies for individuals with experience in transport fields, including waste management, bus and coach services, and vehicle bodywork.

IPlantE/BES (Merged Council):

Eight elected positions for professionals with backgrounds in plant engineering or engineering surveying, areas

crucial for infrastructure and industrial safety. Both post-nominals (SOE IPlantE and SOE BES) remain valid.

Environmental and Operations (trial merger):

Eight elected positions for members with experience in environmental and operational sectors, reflecting SOE's commitment to sustainable and safe operational practices.

Criteria for applicants

To apply for a role on any of the Professional Sector Councils, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a full member of SOE (MSOE or above).
- Ensure that 2026 membership fees are paid in full by April 2026.

For any questions, please contact
elections@soe.org.uk

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Championing talent, diversity and collaboration across our industry

As we close the final quarter of the year, I'm proud to reflect on the strides we've made in shaping the future of engineering and transport. One of my highlights was delivering two keynote presentations for Optimised Waste Logistics (OWL) on bridging the skills gap, a topic that remains critical for our industry's resilience and growth. These sessions sparked valuable conversations on how we can collectively address shortages and create sustainable career pathways.

From this I have an important

call to action: employers, we need your commitment to apprenticeships! Investing in young talent is not just about filling vacancies, it's about safeguarding the future of our profession. Apprentices bring fresh perspectives and energy, and your support ensures we continue to build a skilled workforce for tomorrow.

September marked a historic moment for SOE as we welcomed Caroline Harries as our new President at the AGM, the first female to hold this position in our

25-year history. Caroline's leadership will undoubtedly inspire the next generation and reinforce our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Beyond these milestones, I've had the privilege of attending key industry events, engaging with members and partners to champion innovation, sustainability, and professional standards. Each interaction reinforces the strength of our community and the shared vision that drives us forward.



Wishing all our members and partners a joyful festive season and a successful year ahead.

Emma Thompson

EMMA THOMPSON
SOE Chief Executive