



125 SELECT

125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE • 1900-2025

A history 1900 – 2025



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125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE • 1900-2025

Anniversary partners



The lessons of the past can help shape a brighter future

In order to look forward and plan efficiently, it is often prudent to look back and consider how the voices of the past can inform and influence the direction of the future.

This strategy would seem particularly timely as SELECT shares this comprehensive review of its 125 years in existence.

As well as representing a mammoth task of research, this fascinating look back at our history uncovers a recurring theme – the ambition of the electrical industry to serve its customers and the community as a prerequisite of serving its own interests.

Although much has changed along the way, there is plenty we can learn from the past and we still face many of the same issues raised by our forebears on the following pages – not least a lack of skilled labour and getting paid on time.

Our institution came into being when contractors in Glasgow, facing the encroachment of untrained competition, formed the Electrical Contractors' Association of Scotland in November 1900 – and in doing so, became the world's first body for the electrical sector.

The association quickly flourished, attracting 250 Member companies and expanding across Scotland as separate Branches were established in the following years.

By 1917, it was facing for the first time an issue which is still at the forefront of our activities – the need for the registration of electrical concerns to ensure quality and safety standards.

As you will read, the association's request for regulation was declined by the UK Government in 1917, but undeterred, it returned to

Parliament in 1939 to again plead the issue of compulsory registration for companies. Once more, its appeal was dismissed.

More than 80 years later, after much economic turmoil and societal change, the issue of regulation still shines as brightly as ever, and SELECT will continue to lead the campaign for protection of title as our timeline extends long after the 125th celebrations are over.

I hope you enjoy this glimpse into our long and distinguished past as you discover more about the people who have helped shape the association we cherish today.

This year will be one of celebration for SELECT, but the association's focus will remain where it always has been – on the interests of its Members, their customers and wider society.



Mike Stark,
SELECT President

1900

1900 – In October, electrical contractor R D Cassells calls upon a few of his fellow leading contractors in Glasgow to suggest the formation of an association for those engaged in the electrical trade. Draft schemes of organisation are prepared.

1905

1905 – A further joint meeting is held on 1 February, during which it is decided to form an Edinburgh Branch rather than have a separate association in the east of Scotland. At a subsequent meeting on 10 March, the first Edinburgh office bearers are elected as follows: William Finlay (Chairman), W E Townsend (Vice Chairman), Walter Finlay (Secretary and Treasurer).



1900 – On 15 November, 25 contractors meet in Glasgow and unanimously agree to form an association – the world's first for the electrical industry and the first to serve the 'modern trades'.

1900 – Under the leadership of Thomas Wright, the following working committees are appointed: Rules for Work, Rules for Men, Relationships with Architects, Engineers and Manufacturers, Relationships with Corporations and Insurance Companies, and Industry Registration.

1901

1901 – Office bearers are elected for the fledgling association on 10 January as follows: Thomas Wright (Chairman), William McWhirter (Vice Chairman), James M Davies Jnr (Secretary) and R D Cassells as Treasurer.

1904 – The association amalgamates with its southern counterpart, the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), which had been formed in 1901. The new UK-wide body is divided into six regions – London, Southern, Northern, Western, Scottish and Irish – with each administering its own branches. During the next seven years, Scots Thomas Wright and William Finlay both serve as President of the UK-wide body, which has the motto *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, which means "Gentle in manner, resolute in deed".

1900s Edinburgh



1904

1904 – On the suggestion of some Glasgow Members, a meeting is held in Edinburgh in April to consider the formation of an allied Edinburgh association.

1907

1907 – Following a plan by the local Corporation to carry out electrical contracts, a deputation from Glasgow visits Dundee on 11 June to expound the principles of the association. The Dundee Branch is duly created, with the first firms represented as follows: Messrs Lowden Bros & Co, Maxwell's Ltd, Mackerzie & Co, A Westwood & Sons and G H Nicoll. The Branch's first Secretary is a solicitor, G B Carmichel.



1900s Dundee

KGPA Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo



1900s Aberdeen

KGPA Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

1911

1911 – Members of the Scottish region deem it preferable to separate from the ECA and the association reforms to again become a standalone Scottish body, working “in friendly conjunction” with its southern counterpart. Operations are conducted from the offices of its solicitor in Frederick Street, Edinburgh.

1912

1912 – The first Association Indenture of Apprenticeship certificate is produced and it is agreed that this will be issued on completion of training.

1912 – The association reaches 250 Member companies, each paying an annual subscription of two guineas, equivalent to £200 today. All three Branches adopt the association's Constitution and Rules, and it is resolved to have 250 copies printed for distribution to Members. The first Annual Report shows a surplus of 76 pounds, nine shillings and eight pence – about £11,750 today.

1913

1913 – The Aberdeen Branch is established for contractors in the north of Scotland.

1913 – The association holds its first meeting with the architects' body to try to ensure only association Members are used for electrical work.

1913 – To help give the association a wider profile, a stand is taken at an electrical exhibition run by the Glasgow Corporation Electrical Department. Minutes from meetings held at the time show that Members had a good relationship with the municipal electrical authorities.



IN THE EARLIEST STAGES OF THE INDUSTRY, RIVALRY BETWEEN FIRM AND FIRM, ALTHOUGH VERY KEEN, DID NOT OBSCURE MUTUAL RESPECT. WITH TIME, MANUFACTURING AND IMPORTING FIRMS APPEARED AND COMPETITION AMONG WHOLESALE TRADERS LED TO ALARMING TRESPASS UPON THE DOMAIN. IT BECAME EVIDENT THAT CONTRACTORS SHOULD DRAW TOGETHER AND UNITE.”

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND YEAR BOOK

1913

1913 – Starting at 12.15pm, the Electrical Contractors' Association of Scotland holds its first-ever AGM on 1 July at the Secretary's office in St Vincent Street, Glasgow. The 17 attendees include nine members of the Central Board and five Members, who discuss apprenticeships, negotiations with the Cable Makers' Association and the association's presence at an upcoming electrical exhibition. Alexander Pratt of the Edinburgh Branch is also elected President, with E J B Lowdon from the Dundee Branch made Vice President.

1914 – With the outbreak of the Great War, the association meets with the Admiralty Recruiting Department which is looking for assistance to help make sure the Royal Navy has a "regular supply" of skilled craftsmen. The association agrees "by every means in their power to get as many volunteers as possible" to meet demand. No records exist of how successful this was.



Military History, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

“ONE OF THE CHIEF OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO IMPROVE BY ALL MEANS THE SKILLED KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFFS AND MUCH HAS BEEN DONE IN THIS IMPORTANT DIRECTION TO ELEVATE THE STATUS OF THE CONTRACTOR.”

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND YEAR BOOK

1914

1914 – The first annual golf match between the East and West of Scotland teams is held in June. Although the venue is not recorded, the West team is triumphant. A bowling competition is held for the T B Wright Trophy, named in honour of the former Glasgow Chairman and President.



1916

1916 – An approach is made to the President and Members to join the Scottish National Building Trades Federation in an effort to present a joint construction forum to government and local authorities. The association agrees to join, with the proviso that it will do so "only if the plumbers' federation joins". There is no record of which federation this was, or the result.

1917

1917 – The association and ECA approach central government to suggest the introduction of registration of all electrical companies to ensure quality and safety standards. Although sympathetically received, the approaches are not acted upon, with the associations told that "winning the war is the government's main concern".



ECA of Scotland Members gather for the President's Cup golf competition in 1927



Donald Smeaton Munro was President in 1922



The first known picture of the association's Central Board in 1927

1918

1918 – Meetings are preoccupied with the issue of manufacturers discounting light bulbs and cables. Agreements are drawn up between the relevant parties to ensure Members are not disadvantaged in any way.

1919

1919 – Introduction of national wages bargaining with the Electrical Trades Union.

1919 – After a decline in membership, the Glasgow Branch suggests appointing a full-time organiser. Despite being rejected by the other Branches, Glasgow presses ahead and appoints someone in a part-time role.

1920

1920 – Membership of the association rises from 172 to 217 firms due to the Glasgow Branch's initiative. A rethink by other Branches follows, and an organiser is employed full-time to recruit throughout Scotland.

1920 – Introduction of New Rules for Workmen, the predecessor of the National Working Rules.

1924 – A Propaganda Committee is created to ensure the association's voice is heard in the corridors of power and by major decision-makers.

1924

1929

1929 – As the decade draws to a close, the main talking point at meetings is the unwelcome emergence in the trade of the combined plumber/electrician. Also discussed are the prices Members are receiving for accumulator charging and whether companies doing wireless repairs should be allowed into membership. An Associate Member category is mooted as a possible solution to the latter.

“IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN RECOGNISED THAT THE WORK OF A SOUND ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR PROVIDES APPRENTICES OF THE INDUSTRY WITH THE VERY BEST FACILITIES FOR VARIED AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND IMPARTS THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY SO NECESSARY TO AN ENGINEER.”

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS’ ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND YEAR BOOK

1930s – It is agreed that “prospective apprentices” can be employed in the office, store or workshop on leaving school aged 14, but cannot start their five-year apprenticeship until they reach 16. These two years cannot be counted towards their apprenticeship. After their time is up, apprentices have to spend another year as an Improver before achieving Journeyman Electrician status. Learners are also encouraged to attend night classes and a cash bonus is awarded to those who achieve their City & Guilds Craft Certificate.

1930s – The ever-present problem of small attendances at Branch meetings is recorded and several not-so-new suggestions are proposed to try to encourage greater participation.

1930s – At the association’s annual conference, the Chair of the Glasgow Branch, Hugh M Fulton, delivers a paper entitled *Problems of Electrical Contractors*, which argues that it is essential for the membership “to aim for far higher standards of workmanship”.

1930s – A major debate ensues at many association meetings to decide whether to give discounts to collieries for the purchase of electric lamps. Members who see this as a growing market win the day and a 17.5% discount is fully awarded.

1930

1930 – Membership of the association rises to 283 firms across Scotland. Despite the uplift, the global depression causes the annual Year Book to be “bereft of advertising”, with additional production costs borne by the association.

1930s – Launch of the association’s first official magazine, *Scottish Electrical Engineer*.

1930s – Wage negotiations result in Journeyman Electricians being granted 1/6 per hour, equivalent to £7 today. Recommended apprentice wage rates for Members are 2d per hour in the first year, rising to 6d per hour for fifth year learners.

1930s – The social side of the association flourishes, with the Aberdeen Branch running dinner-dances with entertainment throughout the decade at 10/6 a head – around £50 today. Turnberry and Taymouth Castle are the favoured venues for the association’s annual conference, with a dinner-dance on the Friday and whist drive on the Saturday.



Taymouth Castle, George Washington Wilson, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons





The Empire Exhibition in Glasgow in 1938

1938

1938 – The six-month Empire Exhibition at Bellahouston Park in Glasgow is the perfect opportunity for the Propaganda Committee to promote the association, particularly as the body had been approached to supply all the electric lamps for the event.



1940

1940 – The supply of skilled labour causes concern, with a large number of businesses closing after their men join the services. The association agrees that all such cases will be put into a ‘Suspended Member’ file for the duration of hostilities. One Member even writes to Central Board to ask for permission to recruit a female apprentice. The response is not noted.

1939

1939 – In May, another attempt at compulsory registration of electrical contractors is made, with the hope that it will be included in the Electricity Bill being debated in Parliament. Unfortunately the Bill never becomes law due to “lack of parliamentary time”.

1939 – Poaching of apprentices from Scotland by ECA members offering increased rates of pay becomes a major issue, inflamed when the English association refuses to take action against firms.

1939 – At the outbreak of World War II, membership stands at 326 firms, representing 60% of electrical contractors across Scotland. Membership of each Branch is: Aberdeen 26; Dundee 18; Edinburgh 89; Glasgow 193.



Geoff Charles, CCo, via Wikimedia Commons

1941

1941 – A survey reveals that a major part of Members’ work is now the installation of heating and light in air raid shelters for major towns and cities.

1941 – The Ministry of Labour asks Members to take their holidays at harvest time to allow employees to assist farmers in the war effort.

1942 – The Board of Trade agrees to the association's overtures for additional clothing coupons to enable employers to give on-loan protective clothing to employees doing "dirty work".

David Fowler/Shutterstock



1948 – The association agrees to lobby government against the proposed nationalisation of the road transport industry on behalf of the Road Haulage Association. History tells us that on this occasion they are unsuccessful.



1942

1942 – The association offers to act as main contractor for all government contracts in Scotland to ensure a fair allocation of work for Members, as only 25% of membership are receiving contracts. The government declines.

1944 – The official apprenticeship scheme for the electrical contracting industry in Scotland is launched on 1 July, following a joint consultation exercise between the association and the Electrical Trades Union. The agreement covers the apprenticeship period and a schedule of training on-site, with the provision of technical education by day school or evening class. The same agreement also establishes a Joint Apprenticeship Council.



Annual conference at Atholl Palace in 1949

1947

1947 – The ever-recurring subject of small attendances at Branch meetings is once again discussed at Central Board, with Branch Chairs asked to come forward with suggestions.



The first Ayrshire Branch meeting was held at the King's Arms, Irvine, in 1946

1946

1946 – As the post-war recovery begins, Members involved in housing programmes express their frustration at the shortage and allocation of building materials.

1946 – As the Branches become active again, it is agreed to give Ayrshire full autonomy from the Glasgow Branch due to its growing membership, with the inaugural meeting held in the King's Arms in Irvine on 1 May. Glasgow Branch members agree to give a substantial sum from their accumulated funds to allow the new Branch to start up on a firm financial footing.

1945

1945 – All electricians returning from the services are advised to take a refresher course in electrical installation before returning to work in the trade. The association advises that it is better placed to provide this than technical colleges.



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Glasgow



Central Board members attend the opening of new premises in Frederick Street, Edinburgh, on 11 February 1949

1949

“ THE ASSOCIATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN ALIVE TO THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIPS AMONG ITS MEMBERS AND COLLEAGUES IN THE INDUSTRY. EXPRESSION OF THIS RANGES FROM SMALL COFFEE MEETINGS TO THE ELABORATE SUMMER CONFERENCES. THE WELCOME PRESENCE OF THE LADIES ON THESE OCCASIONS ADDS GREATLY TO THE GENERAL PLEASURABLE FAMILY ATMOSPHERE OF THE ECA OF S.”

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND YEAR BOOK

1949 – As the association nears the end of the decade, it becomes apparent that it can no longer continue with a part-time secretariat and shared offices. An association paper, *The Need to Reform*, proposes the first administrative changes since 1912, recommending that full-time staff should be found to operate from premises central to the membership. A 75% majority of the 445 Members is required to implement such a change, but in the event, the proposal receives the backing of 87.5% of the membership. The association's secretariat is born, consisting of a full-time General Secretary, a cashier, a bookkeeper/typist, a shorthand typist and an office junior, working from the body's first office at 63 Frederick Street, Edinburgh.

1949 – The association welcomes both the establishment of the National Inspection Council and the adoption of the 11th Edition of the IEE Wiring Regulations as a minimum standard for the work of all Members.



Guests at the association's Golden Jubilee Dinner in Glasgow on 2 November 1950

1950

1950 – To mark its half century, office bearers, Members and industry guests attend the association's grand Jubilee Dinner Whist and Dance at the Grosvenor Restaurant in Glasgow on 2 November.



The Presidential Team celebrates at the 1950 Jubilee Dinner



1950

1950 – Half a century of service to the electrical industry is marked when Lord Lyon King of Arms awards an heraldic crest to the association on 20 February. The crest bears the motto *Weel bodin' for weal*, which roughly translates as 'Working for the common good'.

1950s – A growth in construction work sees a corresponding period of prosperity for the association's membership, although National Service and conflicts in Korea and the Middle East again cause a drain on available workers, with labour sharing once more becoming the norm.

The annual conference in 1950



Annual conference at Gleneagles in 1951



The Central Board pictured in 1950

President Robert A Smith and wife at annual conference in 1953



The conference at Kyles of Bute Hydro, Rothesay, in 1954



1951

1951 – The Dumfries and Galloway Branch is formed as a sub-branch of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch. Full Branch status is conferred in 1957.



The Presidential Team and guests at annual conference in 1955

1959

1959 – With membership rising to 487 companies, the association moves to larger premises in Edinburgh's prestigious New Town after the purchase of a head office in Heriot Row.

Central Board and guests attend the opening of new premises in Heriot Row in 1959





President Isaac Sclar is piped into the association's annual conference in 1959

1963

1963 – The association joins the Association Internationale des entreprises d'équipement Électrique (AIE), which represents electrical contractors from across Europe with the main goals of sharing useful information and best practices.



President Alex Robertson and his wife at conference in 1961



Guests are piped into dinner at the annual conference dinner in 1961

1969



1969 – To help stabilise a period of relative unrest in the electrical industry, the association joins forces with Amicus – now Unite the Union – to create the Scottish Joint Industry Board (SJIB). After establishing today's familiar 'grading' structure, the SJIB goes on to play a key role in the industry, including regulating relations between employers and employees and overseeing employment, skill and proficiency levels, health and safety competence and wages and welfare benefits.



President Harry Mackerron and wife Bunty hosted the annual dinner-dance in 1964



Guests are all smiles at the annual conference in North Berwick in 1965

1970

1970s – A growing emphasis is placed on developing and promoting the association, and a start is made on the provision of management services.





President Jim Scott, right, at the association's annual dinner in 1970



President Ian Blackhall and wife Margaret at the annual dinner in 1972



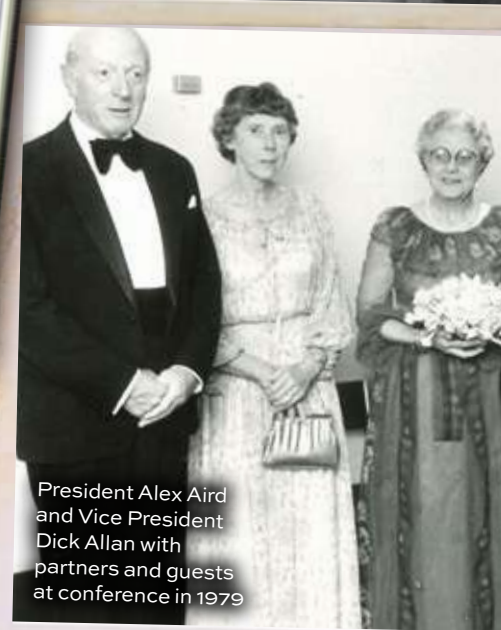
JB Mackenzie, JDD Shaw and Isaac Sclar are made Honorary Members in 1972



Members gather for the AGM in Glasgow in 1975



Members at the 1975 AGM



President Alex Aird and Vice President Dick Allan with partners and guests at conference in 1979

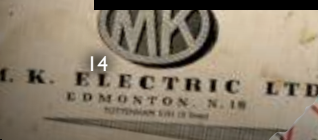
1977

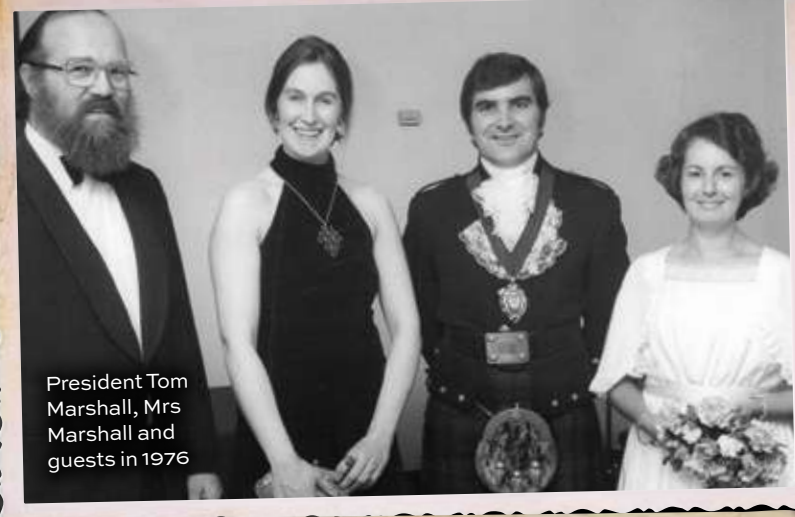
1977 – A new modern image is sought to replace the 27-year-old heraldic crest and a diagonal ‘three-core cable’ device is introduced. *Cable Talk* magazine is launched to support this new identity, replacing the existing news bulletin, which was a simple A5 printout.

1977 – The association launches a nationwide press campaign about domestic rewiring, warning householders that they shouldn't try to do it themselves and should always employ a Member instead.

1977 – The association holds its first regional conference for Members of the Dundee and Aberdeen Branches, with topics discussed in Stonehaven ranging from 16A plugs to direct labour.

1977 – Nearly 70 Members and industry representatives attend the association's first Forum Evening at the Central Hotel in Glasgow on 29 November. Chaired by President Sam Gibson, topics discussed include bonding, retentions and whether billing should be carried out by the quantity surveyor or consulting engineer.





President Tom Marshall, Mrs Marshall and guests in 1976

1979

1979 – Following extensive negotiations, the association introduces a new employers, public and products liability insurance scheme exclusively for Members. The scheme is underwritten by the Federated Insurance Company.

1979 – The association organises a major symposium on energy conservation and management at the Albany Hotel, Glasgow. Speakers include representatives from the National Engineering Laboratory, Department of Energy and the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB).



Hawaiian evening on the Isle of Man at the association's annual conference in 1975

1980

1980s – The association introduces its inspection service to ensure that the work of every Member is subject to regular scrutiny. Membership criteria are also strengthened.

1980 – Boxer Henry Cooper is the cover star of the Christmas edition of *Cable Talk* after appearing at a Hilti product demonstration with Member Bob Taylor.



“ I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT BRANCH ATTENDANCES HAVE IMPROVED IN THE PAST YEAR BUT I HOPE WE CAN STILL DO BETTER. EACH ONE OF YOU CAN HELP BY CONTACTING NON-ATTENDING MEMBERS AND BRINGING THEM ALONG. PLEASE MAKE THE EFFORT – THIS IS YOUR ASSOCIATION AND EXISTS TO SERVE YOUR NEEDS.”

ALEX AIRD, PRESIDENT, 1978

1980 – Lanarkshire is granted full Branch status after being a sub-branch of Glasgow and West of Scotland for many years. Branch Chair Alex Inglis and Vice Chair Harry Burns both now serve on Central Board.

1983

1983 – The association’s push for improved tendering procedures achieves a breakthrough when the Scottish Development Agency rules that main contract tenders which don’t provide the names of proposed sub-contractors will now invalidate the offer.



Dinner-dances were still going strong in the 80s, with guests enjoying the Lanarkshire Branch event in 1988

1986

1986 – Hiroshi Sakaniki, a member of the Japan Electrical Contractors’ Association, spends time with office bearers and Members when he visits the association. He is welcomed by President Douglas Kelly, Vice President Pat Feeney and Members George Turnbull, Jim Munro and Andrew McGhee, and reveals there are 80,000 registered electrical contractors in his homeland.

1985

1985 – The new Marketing Committee launches a national TV and press campaign called ‘Don’t get your wires crossed’, urging householders to use only Member firms for any domestic work.

1985 – A liaison group is formed between the association and the Scottish Association of Consulting Engineers and the Scottish Association of Chief Building Control Officers. The aim is to discuss difficulties caused by inconsistent interpretation of regulations, in particular the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations and IEE Wiring Regulations.

1988

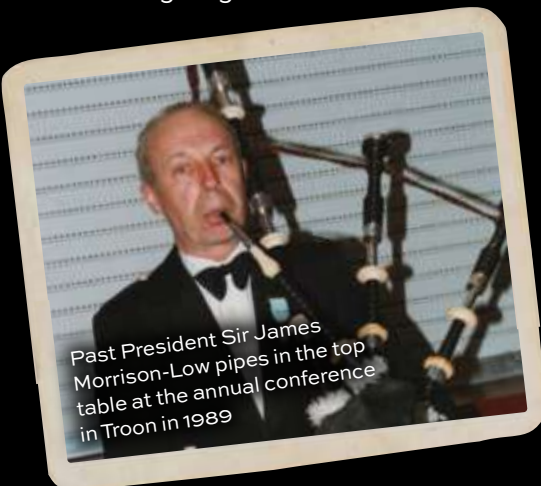
1988 – To promote its services, the association advertises on the side of 20 buses, which travel across Scotland for 11 months bearing the slogan: “Remember! Always use a Member of the Electrical Contractors’ Association of Scotland.”



The association’s bus campaign in 1988

1988 – Former textile factory machinist Heather Gray becomes the industry’s first female electrical apprentice in Scotland, attending Clydebank College and working at Member firm HF Electrical in Glasgow. She tells *Cable Talk*: “Sometimes there’s some crude taunting on-site, but I try to ignore it and if that doesn’t work I just give it back to them.”

1988 – A new contract completion guarantee scheme is launched, which provides cover for a client in the event of a contractor becoming insolvent.



Past President Sir James Morrison-Low pipes in the top table at the annual conference in Troon in 1989

“ THE CENTRAL BOARD EARLIER THIS YEAR REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR A MOVE FROM THE EXISTING OFFICE AT HERIOT ROW. MORE FUNCTIONALLY EFFICIENT ACCOMMODATION WILL BE SOUGHT WHICH MAY OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT CONSIDERABLY MORE IN-HOUSE TRAINING. A SITE TO THE WEST OF EDINBURGH IS PREFERRED AND A SHORTLIST OF THREE EXISTS: RICCARTON, SOUTH GYLE AND SOUTH QUEENSFERRY.”

CABLE TALK, 1988

1989

1989 – The association moves from Heriot Row to Midlothian on 21 July after purchasing Bush House, an A-listed 18th century mansion set in parkland at the foot of the Pentland Hills. The site dates back to 1722, when Robert Moubray of Castlelaw bought it to grow timber. The house was finished in 1745.

Bush House



1989 – Bush House is officially opened on 22 September by Sir John Clerk, HM Lord Lieutenant for Midlothian District. President Pat Feeny and Central Board are joined by guests from across the industry, with former President Sir James Morrison-Low piping a special march appropriately named *Bush House*. Also present is former Secretary and Director Jim Smellie, who was present at the opening of the association's Frederick Street premises in 1949 and Heriot Row in 1959.



President Pat Feeny with Past Presidents and Honorary Members at the opening of Bush House in 1989



The association soon became a regular sponsor and exhibitor at trade shows in the 1990s



Bush House is officially opened by Sir John Clerk

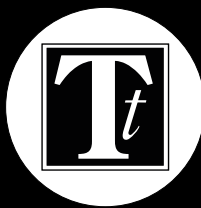
1991

1991 – The UK-wide Electrical Installation Engineering Industry Training Organisation (EIEITO) is formed by the association, in partnership with the ECA in London.

1991 – After 27 years in the Royal Navy and a spell at the International Stock Exchange, Michael Goodwin becomes the association's first Managing Director.

1991 – The first meeting of the association's new Management Committee takes place on 31 July. Created by Central Board after a management consultancy study, it replaces the former General Purposes & Finance Committee, Policy Committee and House Committee. It is comprised of office bearers, association directors and four Members.

1990



1990 – The association sponsors its first Electrical Contracting Trades Show at Ingliston, Edinburgh, in September, with 94 manufacturers and wholesalers attending. The event is such a success, the association agrees to sponsor further shows in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1991.

1990 – With the electrical contracting industry no longer within the scope of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT) is established in April to manage the training of apprentices. Based at Bush House, it has a team of 11 people working in partnership with the SJIB.



Ivor Mashford and Stirling Law add another string to their bow at the conference at Peebles Hydro in 1991



A young Alistair Noble at the first Open Day in 1992



Central Board lines up outside its Bush House HQ in 1995

1992

1992 – The first Open Day is held at Bush House on 27 May. Members and guests enjoy activities including archery, clay pigeon shooting, croquet and hot air balloon rides, with entertainment from a Dixieland jazz band. Among the guests is a young Alistair Noble, who will grow up to help run his father’s firm, John Noble Electrical Contractors.

1993 – The Specialist Engineering Contractors’ Group, Construction Liaison Group and Construction Consultative Group are all established to help influence central government. At the same time, membership criteria are again tightened to reflect best industry practice.

1993 – The association leads the way again when Sir Lachlan MacLean is appointed to Central Board in September – the first independent member of a trade association board.

1993 – The association mourns the passing of two prominent figures in its history: Jim Smellie, who joined the association in 1948 as its first full-time General Secretary and later Director, and his successor Dan Montgomery, who joined the association in 1965.

1993

1993 – In response to Member feedback, the association launches a telephone legal advisory service, offering advice on private and commercial matters. Separate advice lines for tax queries and industrial tribunal representation are also offered.

1993 – After an in-depth study, the association launches its training course to convert approved installation electricians to instrumentation grades. The first 13-week course starts at Jewel & Esk Valley College in Edinburgh on 20 April, with further training planned in Aberdeen and Glasgow.

“PARTICULARLY TALENTED IN NEGOTIATING, JIM STROVE TO CREATE HARMONIOUS RELATIONS IN THE INDUSTRY. TRAINING WAS PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO DAN’S HEART, REFLECTING HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL. BOTH MEN GAVE GREAT VALUE TO THE ASSOCIATION AND THE INDUSTRY. THEY WILL BE SADLY MISSED BUT LONG REMEMBERED.”

CABLE TALK, 1993

Dan Montgomery



Jim Smellie





1995



1995 – The association sets up the Electrical Engineering Training Foundation (EETF) “to provide education or assistance with the provision of vocational, business and personal development training”.

1995 – The association launches a new campaign aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of electricity in the home. As well as householders, the campaign addresses local authorities, building societies and insurance companies on the need for mandatory residential electrical re-inspection.

1993 – An Associate Member Group is launched to forge stronger links between the association and manufacturers and encourage two-way communication.

1993 – The official opening of the new SECTT Assessment Centre in Cambuslang, Glasgow, is performed by Gavin Laird CBE, General Secretary of the AEEU, on 18 November.



The association's Central Board in 1997



The Modern Apprenticeship in Electric Installation Engineering is launched at Bush House in May 1996

1996

1996 – The association begins a review of its identity and market position following the convergence of information technology, telecommunications, electronics and control systems and the emergence of a new ‘electrotechnical’ industry.

1997

1997 – Archie Forbes of Member firm James Scott Ltd becomes the first recipient of the association’s new Award of Merit. A member of the working group formed in 1987 to examine the feasibility of an industry-wide pension scheme, he was also a member of the association’s Finance Sub-Committee and Director of the EETF.

1997 – President Jim McArthur welcomes 150 delegates from across the world to Edinburgh in September as the association hosts the four-day AIE Congress. Highlights include a private tour of Edinburgh Castle and a gala dinner at the Signet Library, with the delegation piped up the Royal Mile.



Archie Forbes, right, receives his Award of Merit from Jim McArthur in 1997

1998

1998 – The Electrical Contractors' Association of Scotland is rebranded as SELECT to reflect the changing work of its Members. At an official ceremony on Edinburgh's Royal Mile on 9 February, the new logo is unveiled by Nigel Griffiths, Minister for Consumer Affairs, watched by the identity change working party: President Jim McArthur, Deputy Vice President Gordon Hutcheon, Head of Business Development David Wright and Past President Ford Carruthers.

“ I CONGRATULATE THE ASSOCIATION ON ITS SERVICE TO THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY OVER THE PAST 98 YEARS. YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE RAISING OF STANDARDS AND PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING REPRESENTS IMPORTANT PROTECTION FOR THE PUBLIC AGAINST POOR-QUALITY WORKMANSHIP AND UNSAFE WORKING PRACTICES. I WISH YOU WELL UNDER THE NEW SELECT BANNER.”

NIGEL GRIFFITHS, MINISTER FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, 1998

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND

The new SELECT logo is unveiled by Minister Nigel Griffiths in 1998

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND

The new SELECT logo is unveiled in 1998

1998 – National training organisation EIEITO is reinvented as National Electrotechnical Training (NET) in April. Representing the association at an official reception in the House of Lords are President Jim McArthur, Vice President Hugh McGown, Past President Douglas Kelly and Managing Director Michael Goodwin.

1998 – Principal Technical Adviser David Miller travels 2,500 miles in September to deliver an inspection and testing training course to Member company Turner GCMS, the facilities manager for the MoD in the Falkland Islands.

Ed Lucas, right, is presented with his Award of Merit by Jim McArthur in 1998

Gordon Hutcheson, Jim McArthur and Hugh McGown at the north of Scotland Sub-Branch dinner-dance in Inverness in March 1999

President David Smith helps SELECT embark on another bus campaign in 1999

2000



Office bearers, Past Presidents and partners at the Centenary Dinner in 2000

2000 – The association is joined by manufacturers, distributors and guests as it holds its Centenary Dinner at the Edinburgh Sheraton Grand Hotel on 24 March. After the top table is piped in by Past President Sir James Morrison-Low, the event is chaired by President Hugh McGown, with Vice President Archie Jay giving the vote of thanks. Guest of honour is Henry McLeish MP MSP, who in his address announces a further allocation of £3 million for the Modern Apprenticeship budget.



Guest of honour Henry McLeish at the Centenary Dinner with President Hugh McGown and MD Michael Goodwin in 2000

1999

1999 – The reconvening of the Scottish Parliament on 12 May after an absence of almost 300 years offers new opportunities for the association, with SELECT immediately becoming actively engaged with Ministers, MSPs and civil servants on a range of issues.

1999 – The association embarks on another national bus advertising campaign in April in a drive to increase familiarity with the SELECT brand and emphasise the range of work carried out by Members.



Office bearers and Members at the Glasgow & West of Scotland Branch dinner in January 2000



Lanarkshire Branch centenary dinner in 2000

2000 – The association's lobbying and proactive political involvement results in an invitation to join the new cross-party Scottish Parliament for Information, Knowledge and Enlightenment (SPIKE) group, which will champion new and emerging technologies.

2000 – Managing Director Michael Goodwin receives the association's first Investor in People Award as SELECT is recognised for its commitment to staff and Members.

2000 – SELECT receives an award from the Health and Safety Executive in recognition of the development of its new health and safety advice for Members. Later in the year, it wins a European Health and Safety Award for its contribution to the 'Turn Your Back on Back Pain' campaign.

2000

Edinburgh; Edinburgh is now
 electrical purposes at a cheaper
 towns in Britain could hope to at-
 "said Mr Donald
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The old walled garden behind Bush House was overgrown and in disrepair



The Dumfries & Galloway Branch celebrates the association's centenary with a special dinner in 2000

2000 – SELECT instructs architects to develop an area of land behind Bush House for a new 20,000 sq ft headquarters. Formerly a Victorian walled garden that provided the main house with fruit, vegetables and cut flowers, the land is part of the area that was requisitioned by the Army as an ammunitions depot during World War II and is now completely overgrown, with the walls and glasshouses in a state of disrepair.

2000 – The association rounds off a year of centenary celebrations with a Millennium Ball at Glasgow's Hilton Hotel in October. The theme is 'Starry Starry Night', with music provided by Manhattan Skyline and the Hot Club Jazz Trio and the audience entertained by comedian Adrian Walsh.



Guests put their best foot forward at the Edinburgh & South East of Scotland Branch dinner-dance in 2001



Future President Kevin Griffin at the Edinburgh Branch dinner-dance in 2001



Schoolchildren are given a guided tour of the new SELECT HQ in October 2001

2001

2001 – First steel is erected on the new Walled Garden development in March.

2001 – As building on the new SELECT HQ continues, local schools are given a tour of the site in October as part of European Health and Safety Week. The tour includes a warning about the dangers of construction sites.

TELEPHONE, D
 215 WEST CAMP
 GLASGO
 CAL CO.
 WARRONS LTD
 ROAD, TISHLE
 T NILE ST., GL
 ACCESS
 MA

2002

2002 – SELECT holds its first AGM in the association's new HQ in June, including a Members' lunch in the new dining room and a meeting of the Central Board in the Castlelaw Room, named after the Roman fortress which once lay nearby.



President Hugh McGown receives the keys to The Walled Garden in 2002

Princess Royal opens SELECT headquarters



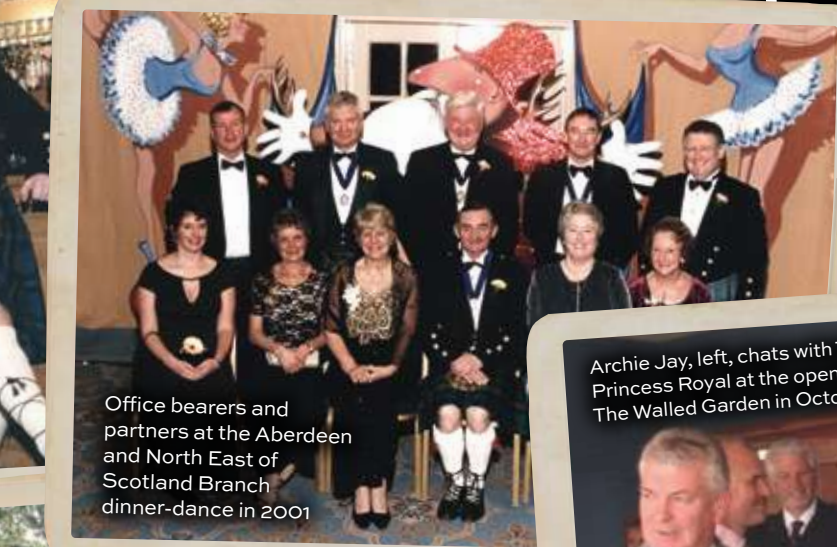
Archie Jay, left, chats with The Princess Royal at the opening of The Walled Garden in October 2002



Malcolm Duncan and Michael Goodwin make a point to The Princess Royal



2002 – The Walled Garden is officially opened by HRH Princess Anne The Princess Royal on Thursday 3 October. After being welcomed by President Archie Jay and MD Michael Goodwin, the Princess is given a guided tour of the new SELECT HQ and spends some time quizzing Technical Advisers Malcolm Duncan and Bob Cairney. After signing a portrait of herself that will hang in the Board Room she observes wryly: "Well, now you're stuck with it."



Office bearers and partners at the Aberdeen and North East of Scotland Branch dinner-dance in 2001



Members of the Dumfries & Galloway Branch take aim during an activities day in Annan in 2001

Staff relax in the sunshine at The Walled Garden's summer picnic in August 2002



The Glasgow & West of Scotland Branch visits Cardonald College in April 2002

2003

2003 – Inverness and North of Scotland

becomes a Branch in its own right after having enough Member firms to separate from the Aberdeen Branch. The move means the association now has the eight Branches that still exist today.



SELECT continues its close links with government during an MSPs' visit in November 2003

2004

2004 – Managing Director Michael Goodwin retires in July after 13 years at the helm of the association. His successor is Head of Services Newell McGuiness.

President Hamish McDonald, right, attends the launch of the SBSA in 2005



2005 – SELECT is appointed as the first scheme provider for Certification of Construction (Electrical Installations to BS 7671) as the new Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA) comes into operation on 1 May. The move means SELECT Member firms can be appointed as Approved Bodies and have staff appointed as Approved Certifiers of Construction.

2005

2005 – Member firm Milligan Electrical in Hurlford, Ayrshire, issues the first Certificate of Construction under the new SELECT scheme on 17 June. The certificate is issued for the installation of a ventilation fan in a domestic building.



“ POTENTIALLY, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY IN THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND'S ELECTRICAL HISTORY. THE FACT THAT SELECT IS CRUCIALLY INVOLVED IN SHAPING OUR NEW BUILDING STANDARDS IS A SOURCE OF GREAT SATISFACTION AND PRIDE FOR OUR ASSOCIATION.”

HAMISH McDONALD, PRESIDENT, 2005



Scotland's new Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Anne Glover, visits The Walled Garden in August 2006

2008 – SELECT scoops the award for Membership Success at the annual Trade Association Forum Awards in London in July, with the trophy handed over by TV presenter Sandi Toksvig.



Sandi Toksvig hands over the TAF Award in July 2008



SELECT MD Newell McGuinness launches the SBSC scheme with NICEIC CEO Angus Moir in 2008

2008



Newell McGuinness, Brian Boyd and Ricky Wilson tee off at our annual golf tournament in May 2008

2008 – SELECT launches Scottish Building Services Certification in association with NICEIC on 31 March. The move allows electrical contracting and building services firms to register as Approved Bodies, appoint Approved Certifiers and manage the certification process through a new online portal.

2008 – Heriot-Watt University becomes the first academic institution to become a Member of the association.



Scottish Hydro Contracting wins two gongs at the inaugural SELECT Awards in November 2006



Lotus Electrical is among the winners at the first SELECT Awards in November 2006

2007

2007 – SELECT celebrates a significant landmark in March, when Livingston-based Everwarm Services becomes the association's 1,000th Member.

2006 – The association holds the first SELECT Electrotechnical Awards at the Radisson SAS Hotel in Glasgow on 1 November. Among the inaugural winners are Lotus Electrical for Best Small Company and RW Bell, which takes the award for Best Training Initiative.

2006



Everwarm becomes the 1,000th Member of the association in March 2007





SELECT sponsors the RIAS bookshop in 2009



The association hosts a dinner for SNP politicians at The Scotsman in June 2009



2009

2009 – To continue its strong links with the profession, the association agrees to a three-year sponsorship of the specialist bookshop in Edinburgh run by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS).

2009 – Head of Technical Services David Miller wins the UK CBI Trade Association Forum Annual Individual Contribution Award in recognition of his dedication to technical excellence and safety awareness.



Staff and guests at the opening of the renewables centre in July 2010



Head of Technical Services David Miller won an award in 2009

2010 – To help keep pace with the rise in renewables, Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism Jim Mather opens the Scottish Environmental Technologies Training Centre at The Walled Garden in July.

2010

2010 – Official opening of The Walled Garden South Building by Rhona Brankin MSP on Friday 19 March. The new space is home to seven organisations, including SECTT, the Electrical Safety Council and Unite the Union.



Rhona Brankin MSP opens the South Building in March 2010



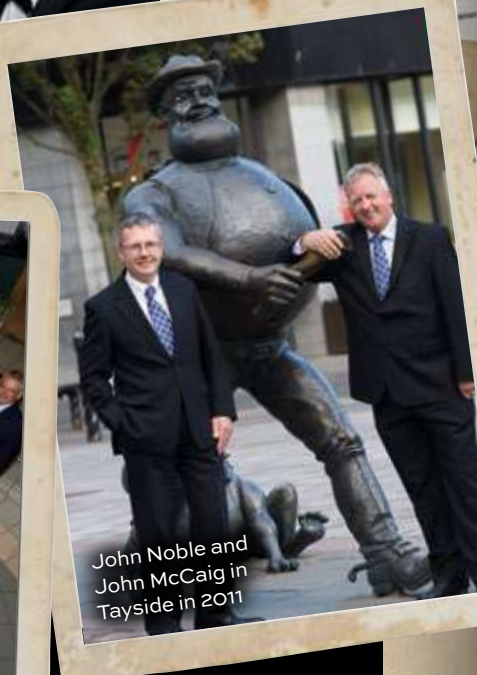
SELECT hosts a dinner for Labour politicians at The Scotsman in Edinburgh in November 2010



Staff at the SELECT Awards in October 2011



The Central Board holds its September 2011 meeting in Tayside



John Noble and John McCaig in Tayside in 2011

2012

2012 – The association holds its 100th AGM at House for an Art Lover in Glasgow on 6 June. MSP John Park also issues a motion in the Scottish Parliament, congratulating SELECT on reaching the landmark.



2012 – The association continues to strengthen its relationship with fellow trades as it becomes one of the 12 founder members of the Scottish Energy Installers Alliance (SEIA). Fellow members include SNIPEF, the Federation of Master Builders, Scottish Renewables and the Glass & Glazing Federation.



2012 – Following requests from Members, the association launches its bespoke electronic certification service, SELECTcerts, in September.



'Shug the Plug' is the star of our new TV ad campaign in 2012

2012 – SELECT launches a new TV advertising campaign in August, promoting professionalism and peace of mind and featuring animated character 'Shug the Plug'.

2012 – SELECT becomes a founder member of the Specialist Engineering Contracting Group (Scotland), with the launch ceremony held at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on 26 June. The group represents the interests of electricians, plumbers, heating and ventilation engineers, lift and escalator specialists and structural steel engineers.



Guests enjoy the Aberdeen Branch dinner-dance in January 2012



Technical Adviser Malcolm Duncan prepares to hit the road for another Member inspection in 2014



2018

2018 – After 29 years with SELECT, and 14 as Managing Director, Newell McGuiness retires from the association. He is succeeded by Head of Membership & Communications, Alan Wilson.

2018 – SELECT joins BESA and SNIPEF to create a new joint body, BSE Skills Ltd, to manage and develop apprenticeships, qualifications and National Occupational Standards for the building services engineering sector.



2014

2014 – SELECT organises a special independence referendum hustings event in Edinburgh in September, with MSPs Iain Gray, Murdo Fraser, Alison Johnstone and Alex Neil and an introduction by Branch Chair Graeme Anderson.



Staff enjoy a glittering night at the SELECT Awards in Glasgow in 2015

2018 – More than 40 SELECT staff and office bearers attend the Scottish Parliament in October to hear a debate on the regulation of electricians, with a special billboard also displayed outside Holyrood to reinforce the message.

It's the battle of the beards at the SELECT Awards in Glasgow in 2015



Staff visit the Scottish Parliament to support a debate on regulation in 2018

69% of home fires in Scotland are caused by electricity.

Despite this, the electrical industry in Scotland remains unregulated.

2020



2019 - SELECT continues to play a leading role with its continental neighbours, being closely involved as the AIE changes its names to EuropeOn as part of a modernisation.



Guests at the SJIB's 50th anniversary bash in 2019

2020 - As the industry is impacted by COVID-19, SELECT plays a key role in the creation of the Construction Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum in March. Chaired by SELECT MD Alan Wilson, the body shares advice and information to help keep Members safe and working.



BESA, SELECT and SNIPEF launch BSE Skills Ltd in 2018

2019 - Leading lights from across the electrical industry gather at Edinburgh Castle in November as the SJIB celebrates its half-century.

2019

2020 - SELECT embraces the digital age when it delivers its first-ever virtual classroom training course, Requirements for Electric Installations, on 22 April.

2019 - The association launches a new Wall of Support, where organisations and individuals can voice their backing for regulation of the electrical industry.

2020 - Donald W Orr is elected President of SELECT at the association's first virtual AGM, held online in September due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



EMPOWERING THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY SINCE 1900

2021



2021 – The association launches SELECT TV in April, a free Members-only resource giving a wealth of advice and information on a range of topics.



“SELECT WENT THE EXTRA MILE TO PROVIDE THE PERSONAL TOUCH, PRACTICAL SUPPORT VIA ONE-TO-ONE CONTACT, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO ITS MEMBERS.”

ASSOCIATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2022 – The association is recognised for helping Members through the pandemic when it scoops the award for Best Membership Support Since COVID-19 at the prestigious Association Excellence Awards in London in October.

2022

2022 – SELECT plays a key role in the inaugural Green Home Festival in August, which delivers a week of advice on low-carbon living as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.



Iain Mason, Yvonne Wilson and Bob Cairney at the inaugural Green Home Festival in 2022

2022 – SELECT launches a new Associate Member scheme for manufacturers and service providers, with Aico, Luceco and Megger among some of the industry’s biggest names coming on board as founder members.



2023

2023 – After the success of its virtual classroom, SELECT introduces its first e-learning course in February, with self-study delegates completing the online Requirements for Electrical Installations course with no tutor.



Aico's Tony Boyle kicks off the Alarm Ambassadors campaign in 2022 with Member Chris Liddell and President Donald W Orr

2022 – After new fire legislation comes into effect in February, Members volunteer to take part in our Alarm Ambassadors campaign, sponsored by Aico, which sees contractors fit free heat, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms for vulnerable householders across Scotland.





The SELECT team receive its Association Excellence Award in 2022

2023 – Consumer and contractor safety continue to be top of the agenda as SELECT leads the way with a range of advice about neutral current diversion (NCD) in October.



2023 – New training courses in electrical energy storage systems and solar PV installation are launched in Aberdeen in March.



Members get to grips with PV on the new training course in March 2023

2023 – The association continues its commitment to renewables training with the launch of a new course in electric vehicle charge point installation in November.



New EV course is launched in 2023 with a pilot session in Ayrshire



Martin Bailey, right, receives the Award of Merit from President Mike Stark in December 2024



Central Board at their meeting in December 2024

2024

2024 – After feedback from Members, the Training team launches the SQA Customised Award in Design, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems, with a pilot course in Ayrshire in October.



New fire alarm course is launched by Billy McRobert and Stuart McKelvie in 2024

2025 – The SELECT team celebrates its 125th anniversary with a year-long calendar of events for Members, Associates and industry colleagues.



Presidents

1900-2025

1900-1904

Thomas Wright

1912-1913

William McWhirter

1913-1914

Alexander Pratt

1914-1916

E J B Lowdon

1916-1919

Thomas B Wright

1919-1920

George Lyall

1920-1922

Alexander Lindsay

1922-1923

Donald Smeaton Munro

1923-1924

A B Robertson

1924-1926

R A Ure

1926-1927

William Mackintosh

1927-1928

James Allan

1928-1930

J Johnston Foggo

1930-1931

D H Morris

1931-1932

Henry Meighan

1932-1933

John L Anderson

1933-1934

David Bennett

1934-1935

R E Douglas

1935-1936

H G Mackerron

1936-1938

Hugh M Fulton

1938-1939

Robert Kilpatrick

1939-1941

H M Spiers

1941-1942

H A Tait

1942-1943

R A Ure

1943-1945

J B Mackenzie

1945-1946

William Y Macadam

1946-1948

William Allan Smith

1948-1949

James D D Shaw

1949-1951

Richard Smith

1951-1952

J Lindsay Drummond

1952-1954

Robert A Smith

1954-1956

R D McCraith

1956-1957

David G Lindsay

1957-1959

Isaac Sclar

1959-1961

J Y Dick

1961-1963

Alex Robertson

1963-1965

H G Mackerron

1965-1967

J R Munro

1967-1969

F G Bennett

1969-1971

J I Scott

1971-1973

Ian D Blackhall

1973-1975

A R Mayberry

1975-1977

T E Marshall

1977-1978

S M D Gibson

1978-1980

Alex Aird

1980-1982

R F Allan

1982-1984

Sir James Morrison-Low Bt

1984-1986

Bob Taylor

1986-1988

Douglas Kelly

1988-1991

Pat Feeney

1991-1993

Ford Carruthers

1993-1995

John R Mackenzie

1995-1997

Ricky Wilson

1997-1999

Jim McArthur

1999-2001

Hugh S McGown

2001-2003

Archie C Jay

2003-2005

Hamish E McDonald

2005-2007

David W H Smith

2007-2009

Douglas W Geddes

2009-2011

Alick J Smith

2011-2014

John Noble

2014

John McKissock

2015-2017

Eric Rae

2017-2020

Kevin Griffin

2020-2022

Donald W Orr

2022-2024

Alistair Grant

2024-

Mike Stark

Jim McArthur
(1997-99)



Alick J Smith
(2009-11)





Honorary Members

1948

J M Davies
Walter Finlay
William Mackintosh

1961

R A Ure

1972

J B Mackenzie
James D D Shaw
Isaac Sclar
George C Stenson

1976

Frank G Bennett
J Campbell Davies
James Smellie

1986

Ewan M Mackenzie
Alex Aird
Harry Mackerron
J I Scott

1988

Ian D Blackhall
A R Mayberry
J R Munro
George H Turnbull

1991

R F Allan
Sir James
Morrison-Low Bt

1993

Samuel M D
Gibson

1995

Jim Houston
Daniel D W
Montgomery

1997

Pat Feeney
David J McCallum

1998

Ford Carruthers
Douglas Kelly
Bob Taylor

2001

John R Mackenzie

2004

Michael D Goodwin

2006

Hugh S McGown

2008

Ricky Wilson
Hamish E
McDonald

2013

Douglas W Geddes

2018

Archie C Jay
Jim McArthur
D Newell
McGuinness

2023

David W H Smith

Award of Merit

1997

Archie Forbes
Jack Davidson

1998

Ed Lucas

2001

Fred Horsburgh
John S Conner

2009

James Milton

2024

Martin Bailey

Research

Iain Mason, SELECT

Images

Alan Paul, SELECT

Design

Ryan Swinney, Connect

With thanks to The Edinburgh
Electrical Society



Founded in 1900, SELECT is Scotland's largest construction trade association.

It has around 1,240 member businesses who collectively have an annual turnover of around £1 billion and employ over 15,000 people and 3,500 apprentices.

SELECT also delivers training courses to more than 3,500 electricians each year and is committed to regulation of the industry for a safer Scotland.

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