

Niall Mellon Township Foundation

We have been contacted by the Niall Mellon Township Foundation who are planning their biggest project ever, which is to build 7,000 new homes in South Africa for the homeless, the poor, and those most in need.

Obviously a huge number of volunteers from the various trades are needed for the project, and we have been asked to circulate our members to see if they, or any of their staff, are prepared to spend a week in South Africa on this very worthy cause. Anybody interested should call 1890 92 91 70 and ask for a Volunteer Application Form, or the form can be downloaded on www.nmtownshiptrust.com

Membership Renewal

A Membership Renewal Form is included with this Newsletter. Please ensure that all details are filled in when returning with your Cheque, Draft or Postal Order. We would appreciate if payment for Orders could be made separately as Orders and Renewals are handled in different sections of the office and it will slow down both the renewal of membership and the processing of orders if both are included in one cheque.

The Renewal Fee for 2009 is €260.

Cheques should be dated after January 1st 2009.

If there is a change of address or telephone numbers from those already on our database, this should be highlighted on the Renewal Form.

Price Revisions

A new Order Form, effective from January 1st 2009, is included. The cost of some items such as ETCI Certs and Publications has been increased by ETCI but we have only passed on the increase without any additional mark up. Prices of items which were within our control have remained unchanged.

Outstanding Balances

There are quite a number of contractors who have outstanding credit on their Account or who have small debit balances, both arising from incorrect amounts forwarded with Orders. Statements were issued during the year and we would appeal to any contractor who has a credit balance to ensure that this is used in part payment for his next Order and also to contractors to clear any debit balances before the year end. Due to the alteration of the Company from a Voluntary to a Statutory basis, it is not possible to transfer balances from December 08 to January 09.

New Board of Directors

The new Board of Directors has been selected to represent a good cross section of experience in the technical, legal, business and political fields. Technical expertise on the Board is provided by Jimmy Leahy, Walter Forde, and Brian Moran, all of whom have worked as ECSSA Inspectors in the past. Also on the Board are former Supreme Court Judge, Hugh O'Flaherty, former TD and Chair of the Labour Party, Breeda Moynihan Cronin, and Liam O' Connor who is Managing Director of Kerry Die Products, with business interests both in this country and in Sweden.

At the first meeting of the Board the outgoing Chairman John O'Loughlin welcomed the new Directors and expressed the hope that, going forward, they would guide and protect the Company and safeguard that which has been achieved since its foundation in 1997.

Breeda Moynihan Cronin was

unanimously elected as Chair of the Board of ECSSA.

Certification & Verification Courses

We have been informed by the CER that the provision of Verification and Certification Courses is a Permitted Activity rather than a Core Activity of an ESSB, and that as such the cost of providing these Courses cannot be subsidised from income derived from membership fees or sale of certs. This creates a problem in that up to now these Courses have never cleared their costs and have always had to be subsidised from our other activities.

We are amazed that CER should on the one hand make it a condition of signing a Cert that a person doing so has completed such a course within the past three years, while at the same time creating a situation which makes it financially impossible to provide these courses without very significant increase in the cost to the contractor. Until the matter is resolved we have not scheduled any further courses for the new year but it is clear that when the Criteria becomes fully enforced, contractors who have not been to such a course will not be able to sign certs. In one way contractors have only themselves to blame if they find themselves in this position as ECSSA has put on courses for the past number of years in a variety of locations throughout the country and local contractors have for the most part failed to avail of them. We might now be facing a situation where the courses can only be provided at one or two locations in the country and for a much higher fee, and contractors will be left with no choice but to travel to these venues if they wish to continue signing Certs.

We would hope that the situation will have been clarified by the time the Spring Newsletter is issued, and that an established pattern for the courses will have been agreed for future years.

ECSSA news

Christmas 2008

Chairman's Comments

The end of 2008 marks the end of one era in the life of ECSSA, and the beginning of another.

Since its foundation in 1997, ECSSA has operated as a voluntary self Regulatory Body for the electrical contracting industry and has built up a loyal membership of almost 3,000 contractors.

During the past year ECSSA submitted a tender to the CER for appointment as an Electrical Safety Supervisory Body (ESSB) on a statutory basis.

I am delighted that our tender has been successful and ECSSA has been designated as an Electrical Safety Supervisory Body for a seven year period commencing January 1st 2009.

I would like to thank the staff for the enormous work which they committed to the preparation and submission of the tender.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our counterparts in RECI who have also been designated as an ESSB.

It is good to know that the two Bodies who created the present regulatory model for the electrical contracting industry have been recognised and rewarded for their roles in doing so.

One of the changes which will be brought about by the transition from voluntary to statutory status is that electrical contractors currently trading cannot be members of the Board of ECSSA. This is perfectly understandable in view of the CER's policy that not only should the Boards of ESSB's be impartial, but that they should also be seen to be.

A new Board of Directors will therefore guide ECSSA from January 2009, while those of us who have been in charge since the foundation of the Company will revert to being regular members of ECSSA in the years ahead.

Having seen the make up of the new Board, and having met the new Directors, I have no doubt but that the Company will be in safe hands going forward.

I want particularly to pay tribute to efforts of my fellow Directors who have given generously of their time over the past eleven years, and who can take justifiable pride in what has been achieved from tiny beginnings back in 1997.

I wish each and every member of ECSSA, the Staff, Inspectors and incoming Directors a Happy Christmas and continued success in the New Year.

John O'Loughlin
Chairman of ECSSA



In this Issue:

- 4th Edition of National Wiring Rules
- Faulty RCDs
- Meter Box for Agri Installation
- Nuisance calls and advertising
- Meet the Team
- Neil Gordon retires
- Niall Mellon Township Foundation
- Membership Renewal
- Price Revisions
- Outstanding Balances
- New Board of Directors
- Certification & Verification Courses

ECSSA OFFICE HOURS:

Monday to Friday:
9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
CLOSED FOR LUNCH 1pm to 2pm

John O' Loughlin
Chairman of ECSSA



HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS:
ECSSA Office will close at 3:30pm on Monday, December 22nd and will re-open at 9am Monday, January 5th.

Notice to Members

1. 4th Edition of National Wiring Rules

The long awaited 4th Edition of the National Wiring Rules has finally been delivered to ETCl and will be available to members from now on.

It is proposed that the 3rd and 4th Editions will operate in parallel until 30th September 2009, after which the 3rd Edition will no longer be valid.

There are a considerable number of format and structural changes in the 4th Edition and there is also a completely new Part 7 which deals with types of installations not previously covered, or inadequately covered.

In particular the Rules on Exhibitions, Shows and Fairs (711), Mobile and Transportable Installations (717), Temporary Installations & Circuses (740), and Under-floor Heating Systems (753), are to be welcomed as these are the source of a lot of queries which contractors currently have. On Festivals and Fairs in particular, it is noticeable that the Risk Managers of most local Authorities now insist on certification for any electrical installation used in conjunction with a Festival, Show or Circus, despite the fact that most of these installations have operated for many years in the same locations without certification. It is useful that at least contractors now have guidelines as to what is needed as most of the Risk Managers who demand Certs have no idea what they wanted certified.

At the moment a launch of the 4th Edition by the Minister for Energy is scheduled for December 9th.

A presentation for delivery at Seminars is currently being put together and ETCl intend to arrange about a dozen seminars countrywide for January and February 2009. The purpose of these seminars will be to highlight to contractors the main areas of difference between the 3rd & 4th Editions of the National Wiring Rules.

Finally, the bad news, which is usually attached to any change in a publication, is that the price of the 4th Edition will be €97.50 including VAT & Postage, a hefty 39% increase on the price of the 3rd Edition!

2. Faulty RCD's

We have had a succession of complaints from contractors in relation to fires and near misses caused by one particular manufacturer's RCDs. It appears that, even in a no load situation, these units are subject to serious overheating on the incoming side and in the most serious incidence, the entire consumer unit melted and set alight the adjoining woodwork, which could have had serious consequences if the house had been occupied at the time, as the owner is confined to wheelchair, and would in all likelihood have been overcome by smoke inhalation before she could get to safety. In all the incidents which have been reported to us we have not found one where the load was anywhere near the current carrying capacity of the RCD, and it appears that the fault must lie in the construction of the unit itself, or in the makeup of the insulating material used. In the case referred to above, a representative from the supplier has taken away the damaged consumer unit for examination by technical experts from the manufacturers.

Any contractors who have come across this problem should immediately get in touch with us, as the natural thing for any customer to do is blame the contractor, and, in the event of a serious fire, the liability of the contractor could be very substantial, even though a design fault in the unit, or a failure in the materials used, would be something totally outside the control of the contractor.

2. Meter Box for Agri Installations

A number of contractors do not yet appear to be aware of the fact that the specification for the meter box in Agri installations has changed. In the past ESB have accepted an IP55 Box with a fixed clear front through which the meter reader could read the meter and record the readings. This type box was what appeared on the latest edition of the ESB

Interface Code of Practice, but almost immediately following the circulation of that booklet, there was a change in ESB requirement. A new type of meter is now being used by ESB. This is a multi function unit which has to be scrolled through in order to obtain the relevant readings. To do so, meter readers need access to the actual meter and for this reason the clear fixed front cabinet is no longer suitable and has to be replaced by a similar sized cabinet with a vertically hinged door capable of being locked and unlocked with the standard triangular key used in normal outdoor meters. The minimum degree of protection for such cabinets must be IP55. If a contractor is in doubt as to what is required, he should check the latest code at

www.esb.ie/esbnetworks/ncp.

2. Nuisance Calls and Advertising

While we have said this on many occasions before, we want to repeat that ECSSA does not authorise any advertisers to contact it's members with a view to supporting any particular publication. We have been told by contractors that people making these calls to them have indicated that their names have been obtained from ECSSA and that we are recommending to our members to support the publication. In many cases these operations are little more than scams and, far from receiving the names from ECSSA, the operators of these scams merely log on to the ECSSA website and download contractors details, if ever ECSSA wishes it's contractors to support a particular publication, it will contact each contractor and explain to them the reasons why we would like such support to be given, but it always has to be borne in mind that it is entirely up to each individual to decide how much, if any, he wishes to spend on advertising. The simple message is the next time some caller tells you that he has got your number from ECSSA, just tell him that he has not, and that you have no further interest in continuing a conversation with somebody who started off by telling you a lie.

Meet the Team

Grainne Doyle Clerical Assistant

When Grainne joined ECSSA in July 2001, she was responsible for most of the administrative work of what was then as much smaller organisation. She created a new directory of members, oversaw the creation of the company's first website, and was also responsible for the production of the first ECSSA Newsletters. She also did most of the background work in preparing the company for ISO certification. Prior to coming to Killarney, Dublin native Grainne had travelled most of the world and had worked in a variety of locations from London to the West Indies. She was

Suzanne O'Donoghue Clerical Assistant

Suzanne is the only Killarney native working for ECSSA. Educated in Presentation Convent, Killarney, her first employment was with a local fashion outlet, Leading Labels, where she started in sales, but soon progressed to Assistant Manager. During her time in sales she completed night courses in computers and small business accounts, and then decided that she would go back to college and do a degree in Business Studies and Information Systems Management.

While in college she found part-time work, initially with

also heavily involved in voluntary work with the Simon Community in Dublin, and on a volunteer project with the poor of Jamaica.

Grainne is perhaps the person with whom most contractors have initial contact when they call ECSSA as, along with Suzanne, she handles most of the incoming calls, as well as being responsible for the verification of Completion Certs and their onward transmission to ESB.

Grainne lives in Killarney with her husband Tony, a Youth Reach Teacher, and their two children Moya and Fionn. Her interests included hill-walking, swimming and diving.

the HSE and afterwards with ECSSA.

When her studies were completed she joined ECSSA on a full time basis and while her primary duties are involved with sales and the certification process, she has also familiarised herself with every other aspect of the business and can easily take over in the event of absence or holidays.

Her hobbies include fashion, reading, and caring for her horse Oscar which she owns with her boyfriend Kieran, who is an electrician.



Breaking News

Apprenticeship Initiative

The government will shortly announce a scheme to subsidise the cost of having apprentices, who have been made redundant, facilitated in completing their apprenticeship.

At the ETCl Annual Dinner Junior Minister Billy Kelleher TD announced that the Government had earmarked €4 million to ensure that apprentices, who find themselves in this unfortunate position, will be enabled to obtain their FÁS certification. ECSSA welcomes the initiative and commends all concerned.

Neil Gordon retires

Neil Gordon, who was our first Inspector in the Donegal Region and who has served the Company well, retires at the end of 2008. Prior to joining ECSSA, Neil had spent almost 40 years with ESB in the Letterkenny area and enjoyed great popularity among the electrical contractors in his area.

At a function in the Aghadoe Heights Hotel on Friday, December 5th, Chairman John O'Loughlin made a presentation to Neil in appreciation of his years of service to ECSSA. He also welcomed the incoming Inspector for the area, Charlie Carr, who is also a Donegal man, but who has lived in Sligo for many years where he is employed by ESB. Charlie retires from ESB at the end of 2008, and will join ECSSA from January 1st 2009.

We are delighted to welcome Charlie to our ranks, and we are also happy that Neil Gordon has agreed to work with Charlie in the early months of next year and also to remain available on a part-time basis to deal with inspections in the Inishowen Peninsula, which is quite a long distance from Sligo, but is relatively close to Neil's home in Letterkenny.

