

**Published by**  
The Society of Operations Engineers

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**Registered in England**  
Company No 3667147

**Registered Charity**  
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**Publisher**  
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**Transport Engineer**  
is the official journal of IRTE.  
Produced on behalf of IRTE by  
**MA Business**  
Hawley Mill, Hawley Road,  
Dartford, Kent DA2 7TJ  
Tel: 01322 221144  
[www.transportengineer.org.uk](http://www.transportengineer.org.uk)

**Transport Engineer**  
is distributed free of charge to SOE members, dependent on membership sector. For non-members, the annual subscription rate (12 issues) is £79.50 UK and EU, or £81.50 airmail outside EU. For other SOE members, the discounted rate is £32.

**Printed by**  
Pensord Press UK

**ISSN**  
0020-3122

Some of the articles and guidance included in Transport Engineer may make a contribution to your personal CPD requirements.

Views expressed in Transport Engineer are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Society of Operations Engineers or of MA Business.  
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## On top of your game at the IRTE Conference

**W**e live in perplexing times. Not just hybrid, but full-electric heavy trucks are finally moving from concept to reality. Platoons and autonomous vehicles are not far behind.

Alternative fuels are in the ascendant. The list goes on.

Look at Mercedes-Benz: the German giant went public last month with an all-electric 26-tonner (p25). High-profile electric car-maker Tesla is going further, with autonomous electric buses and trucks. Meanwhile, the LNG (liquefied natural gas) refuelling infrastructure is gaining ground. Even Dearman's liquid nitrogen engine is faring well in field trials, with retail behemoth Sainsbury's delighted (p10).

All are driven not only by competition, but also the sheer pace of enabling technology. And by developed countries' unrelenting focus on emissions. The result? Everything, from engines and transmissions (p14) to turbochargers (p12, p29), 'smart' auxiliaries, right down to lubricants (p36), is now subject to significant technical change.

For fleet engineers the obvious challenge is keeping up. No one can afford to miss out on potentially game-changing developments. Equally, however, signing off on evolutionary, but especially radical, equipment demands informed decision making. Particularly if expensive, even embarrassing, operational issues are to be avoided.

So it is opportune that 28 September sees the opening of this year's national IRTE Conference (p5), at Eastwood Hall, under the banner 'Driving operational efficiency, profitability and compliance'. Delegates can expect to hear from luminaries such as LowCVP's technology guru Andy Eastlake, Ricardo's heavy-duty engine lead Andy Noble, and Carlsberg's head of fleet Philip Thompson.

There are also sessions on truck technology cost-benefits, achieving sustainable freight, and transport legislation, with senior traffic commissioner Beverley Bell offering counsel. See you there?

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