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Plumbing Apprentice from Elgin wins top Scottish title in SNIPEF Competition

Plumbing apprentices from across Scotland took part in the prestigious Scottish Regional SkillPlumb Competition, held at Moray College on 31 May and 1 June 2013. First place was won by James Parry, an apprentice plumber from Moray College, whilst for the second successive year Alex Oswald from Perth College took second place. Will Atherton from Aberdeen College took third prize. James had a clean sweep of prizes as he also won the Yellow Pages cup for best copper work and the Robert Mair quaich for best lead work.

The competition, which is in its 38th year is organised annually by SNIPEF, the Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers’ Federation, attracted apprentice plumbers from 11 Colleges and Training Centres across Scotland, where the Plumbing SVQ Level 3 qualification is taught.

The competition consisted of two workshop exercises, a copper pipework exercise and a lead bossing and forming exercise, followed by a multiple choice exam paper on aspects of plumbing and heating work. Materials used in the exercises were donated by leading industry suppliers Plumb Center and 1st Supplies/Calder Lead and William Wilson.

SNIPEF was represented at the Prizegiving by the organisation’s President, Raymond Leslie, who commented: “SkillPlumb is a great showcase for apprentices to show the very high level of skills they have acquired during their apprenticeship training”.

Prizes were donated by Worcester Bosch and Plumb Center, who were presented by Robert Beagley, Regional Director, Plumb and Parts Center in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Robert said “Once again we are delighted to support the SkillPlumb competition and we offer our very warm congratulations to the winners. Apprentices like these represent the future of our industry and we welcome this opportunity to help celebrate their professionalism.”

James Parry, winner of the Scottish Regional SkillPlumb competition, with (R) SNIPEF President Raymond Leslie and (L) Robert Beagley, Plumb Center Regional Director.
The Sky(line) is the limit for budding artists

3rd year art pupils at Drummond Community High School in Edinburgh were recently given the chance to sketch images of the Edinburgh skyline from the top floor of SNIPEF’s offices at Bellevue House. Since moving to Bellevue House in 2010, SNIPEF has developed a good relationship with the school, which is situated very close to the offices. Ten sketches were chosen to form the basis of prints for display in the offices and the artists of these sketches spent a day at the Printmakers’ Workshop, sponsored by SNIPEF where they learned how to etch their designs on metal and then produce coloured prints. The results of that day- 10 limited edition and signed prints- are now on display at Bellevue House.

SNIPEF President, Fraser Lawrence, welcomed Head teacher Norma Prentice, art teachers Vaila McLaren and Philippa Drummond and 9 of the 10 artists to Bellevue House on 22 May 2013 when the prints were officially handed over to SNIPEF.

SNIPEF Chief Executive, Robert Burgon, commented that “It is good to have strong links with the school and to support our local community. In addition to presenting trophies for Craft, Design and Technology and taking pupils for work experience, this is the second art project which has been done for SNIPEF. The completed artwork has attracted many positive comments and is an excellent display of the talent possessed by these young people. We look forward to supporting our near neighbours at the school in the future.”

The Drummond School Artists.

Introduction of PBAs (Project Bank Accounts) spells good news for Contractors

The Specialist Engineering Contractors’ (SEC) Group Scotland has applauded the recent announcement by the Scottish Government to trial Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) on construction projects.
SEC Group Scotland – which represents the largest element of Scottish construction (by value) – has been campaigning for the introduction of PBAs to overcome endemic payment abuse in the industry.

Eddie Myles, SEC Group’s chairman said: “This is great news for the industry. Small firms in Scotland need greater cash flow security to ensure that they can continue to benefit their local communities by employing people and training their workforces. Insolvencies in Scotland construction are running at an all time high since firms are caught between the twin evils of poor cash flow and lack of access to bank lending. PBAs will help relieve this pressure”.

SEC Group Scotland intends to work with the Scottish Government to help train public sector procurers in the use of PBAs.

**Scottish Government launches “Greenhomes” Cashback Scheme**

Housing and Welfare Minister Margaret Burgess has recently announced that households can apply for financial assistance from the Scottish Government of up to £1,200 to pay for energy improvement measures such as cavity and loft insulation, double glazing, a new boiler or draft proofing.

Taking simple steps to draught proof can cut £55 per year off the average property’s energy bill, while getting a new, energy efficient boiler could save a three bedroom home owner up to £300 annually.

£14m has been allocated to Green Homes Cashback in 2013/14 to help stimulate early uptake of the Green Deal and provide some assurance to installers and assessors that there is a market for Green Deal assessments and installations. To date, almost 5500 cashback vouchers have been issued. At least a further 11,500 are available which will all require a Green Deal assessment.

The scheme is cash / time limited so cannot be guaranteed beyond this financial year. Vouchers are being allocated on a first come, first served basis. Householders can apply for up to £1200 for a range of energy efficiency measures, recommended by a Green Deal assessment, including insulation measures and boiler replacements. This is broken down as follows: Up to £500 for insulation, up to £400 for a new boiler and up to £300 for other measures such as glazing and LED lighting.

Installers & assessors working together in partnership could make the process smoother for the customer and support each other as demand builds and the market develops.

To be eligible for a voucher then a Green Deal Assessment must be undertaken and the work must be carried out by a Green Deal certificated installer (self installs are only allowed for LED light bulbs, a hot water tank jacket or draught proofing).
These requirements are in place as the Green Homes Cashback Scheme exists to promote awareness and prompt activity under Green Deal. Householders can apply online at: www.greenhomescashback.org.uk or by calling the Home Energy Scotland hotline on 0800 512 012.

**SNIPEF presents prizes for World Plumbing Day posters**

As part of SNIPEF’s support for World Plumbing Day, CEO Robert Burgon recently visited two primary schools to talk to the children about the links between water, plumbing and health. As part of the presentation, pupils were invited to design posters marking World Plumbing Day which is being marked for the fourth time on 11 March 2013.

Prizewinning pupils at the two schools (Abbeyhill Primary School in Edinburgh and Law Primary School in North Berwick) have now received book token prizes and a certificate and have also seen their posters being shared with a much larger audience through the SNIPEF website.

The posters attached illustrate the understanding which these children clearly have about the importance of plumbing in their everyday lives.

Click [here](#) to view the winning posters.

**Good Plumbing is the KEY to Good Health**

World Plumbing Day is celebrated on 11 March each year as a means of promoting the important role played by the plumbing industry throughout the world.

Although we tend to take access to good quality water supply and sanitation systems for granted in the United Kingdom, many parts of the world still face the tragedy of death and disease as a direct consequence of the lack of access to basic plumbing systems. The World Health Organisation has estimated that around 1 billion people worldwide still do not have access to safe water supplies and 2.6 billion (about one third of the world’s total population) do not have access to basic sanitation systems. It is believed that over 3 million children die every year as a result of preventable water-borne diseases.

In the United Kingdom, it is legally possible for anyone to practise as a plumber whether or not they have been trained or hold the qualifications which have been recognised by the industry. Television programmes regularly publicise the activities of so called "rogue traders", many of which are in the plumbing business. Although the numbers may not be on the scale of those in developing world, people have died and others have become seriously ill as a consequence of plumbing work which has not been undertaken competently and professionally.
Organisations like SNIPEF are proud to promote World Plumbing Day. Over many years, SNIPEF has been campaigning to promote the importance of professional plumbing in initiatives such as:

- The management of virtually all plumbing apprenticeship training in Scotland helping apprentices to reach the SVQ Level 3 qualification required to operate as a plumber;
- The creation of the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme which gives customers and clients assurances that work will be carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements, by qualified operatives employed by businesses which have met the strict licensing criteria. This scheme is backed by a unique independent complaints mechanism backed by a no-cost warranty arrangement;
- Involvement in the overarching Construction Licensing Executive (CLE) which approves licensing schemes throughout the construction industry;
- Creation of an Approved Certifier of Construction Scheme which enables firms to self-certify that their work meets the requirements of the Building Regulations; and
- Membership of and involvement in the World Plumbing Council.

On World Plumbing Day, 11 March 2013, please take a moment to think about the critical role played by SNIPEF, its members and others aiming to promote excellence in the plumbing industry and consider what life might be like if we did not enjoy access to the professional plumbing facilities which are widely available to us.

**Scottish Water support World Plumbing Day**

Monday March 11 is recognised around the world as World Plumbing Day. To support the day, Scottish Water has placed a message of support on their [website](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk).

**Good news reported by Plumbing Pension Scheme**

The Plumbing Industry Pension Scheme, like all defined benefit pension schemes, must carry out an actuarial valuation at least every three years. At this valuation an Actuary calculates whether or not the Scheme’s assets will meet its liabilities over the projected years in which these liabilities are payable.

The last valuation of the Plumbing Pensions scheme was carried out in 2009 and at that time the Scheme met its technical provisions and also had a very small surplus. The Directors of the Trustee company met recently to receive the preliminary results of the April 2012 valuation and were delighted to report that not only did the Scheme continue to meet its technical provisions as fully funded, but the position had strengthened since 2009- largely as a result of better than expected investment performance.

While there are still many challenges facing every defined benefit pension scheme, the Plumbing Industry Pension is proud to be able to report such a positive actuarial valuation result.
SNIPEF Past President, Duncan Anderson

SNIPEF is sad to report the recent death of one of its Past Presidents, Duncan Anderson from Edinburgh. Duncan served as SNIPEF President in 1973/74 and also served as Local Association President of the SNIPEF Edinburgh & District Branch. He was also the principal architect of the plumbing industry pension scheme, along with former SNIPEF Director, Todd Soutar.

February 2013

Project Bank Accounts introduced In Northern Ireland Government Construction Contracts

The Northern Ireland Finance Minister - Sammy Wilson - has announced that from January 2013 Project Bank Accounts (PBAs) will be introduced in government construction contracts awarded by Central Procurement directorate on behalf of government departments. PBAs will form part of the conditions for contracts with an estimated value of £1million and over and where there is a significant subcontracting element.

Major first tier subcontractors working on a project will no longer have to wait for main contractors to process their payment; instead they will receive it directly through a bank account specific to the project they are working on. This will see subcontractors working on Government projects receiving payment in five days or less from the date the client deposits funds in the PBA. It will also help to protect their money in the event of the contractor entering administration or receivership as the money is held in an account in trust for the supply chain.

Click here to read more.

SNIPEF launches QR Code
SNIPEF has just launched a new QR (Quick Response Code) which will be used on our future marketing material. The QR code directs visitors to the need a plumber website.

**Plumbing advice from WRAS**

The water industry has investigated a number of incidents where water from toilet cisterns has been siphoned back into customers' plumbing systems. The likely cause of this problem is the way in which the two components found in toilet cisterns (water inlet valve and flushing valve) are installed.

To help consumers and installers we have created a video which illustrates how this can happen and it shows how you can check your own toilet cistern to see if you might have the same problem. Click here to see the video.

**Winter offers for SNIPEF Workwear Scheme**

We are delighted to announce that from February SNIPEF Workwear will be adding a dedicated OFFERS section to its website which will be updated monthly. The idea is simple, if you require larger quantities of a specific item we will pass on the savings to you, ensuring you pay a reduced unit price for your work garments.

On top of that we will be keeping you warm and visible this winter by giving away a cosy beanie hat embroidered with the SNIPEF logo or a hi viz vest with your company name on the reverse – with every order - helping you to stand out from the competition and to be seen on cold, dark mornings.

To see what's on offer from SNIPEF Workwear click here.

**Grants available to save on transport costs**

The Energy Saving Trust in Scotland is encouraging organisations to purchase measures that would help them save money on transport fuel. The campaign is being run on behalf of Transport Scotland an agency of the Scottish Government.

Organisations can access an interest free loan of up to 50K and a payback period of up to 6 years. Interested parties should call 0800 512 012 before 22nd February in order to submit an application early March. Alternatively, more information can be accessed through the EST website.

Since the scheme launched in 2011/12, organisations have been using the loan to purchase a range of items, such as:

- **Video and teleconference facilities** – to help cut down on travel between offices as well as maximising employees working hours.
- **Cycle facilities, including bicycles, storage racks and lockers** - encouraging
employees to lead a more active lifestyle will create a healthier workforce and less employee absence due to ill health which in turn means savings for your business.

- **Electric and Plugged in Hybrid vehicles** - by replacing some of your company cars or vans with electric or plugged-in hybrid alternatives you could save your organisation money on fuel costs.

- **Vehicle efficiency devices which do not void the manufacturer’s warranty** - using devices such as top speed limiters can save you fuel. Results can vary depending on the vehicle but a common theme is that reduced speed means less fuel used.

- **Fleet management software** - software systems can cover a wide range of fleet management tasks such as fuel monitoring and can be useful for both large and small fleets. They can also feedback to the fleet manager on incidents of speeding, idling or harsh driving styles – all which can help you reduce your fuel costs.

**SNIPEF Glasgow & West of Scotland Branch donates to CHAS**

The Glasgow & West of Scotland Branch of SNIPEF has made a recent donation of over £4000 following a fundraising drive at their annual Dinner which was held on 11 January. The sum was donated to CHAS (Children’s Hospice Association Scotland). Since the Branch started supporting CHAS in 2006, it has donated over £30,000.

Grace Wilson, the CHAS Fundraiser for the West of Scotland said "£30,000 is an outstanding amount and your support is gratefully appreciated".

For more information on the work of CHAS click [here](#).

**New Chair for CLE**

![Archie Ferguson, the new CLE Chairman](Image)

The Construction Licensing Executive (CLE) is delighted to announce the appointment of Archie Ferguson as its new chair. Archie has recently completed four and a half years as
chair of Construction Scotland, the Industry Leadership Group. He brings with him a wealth of experience having held non executive and chair positions within various organisations and been a member of several Scottish Government groups.

Archie has stated his objectives for the CLE; “The public need to be confident in engaging contractors, trades and professionals knowing that quality work will be guaranteed at a fair price. By making CLE better known, extending its membership, building on Scottish government support and engaging with key agencies it will be in a strong position to support and inform those involved and represent quality within the construction industry.”

**Sprue Safety Products support SNIPEF call for a tougher approach to protect more people against ‘The Silent Killer’**

The Scottish Government’s proposals to follow Northern Ireland’s lead in making it mandatory to fit carbon monoxide (CO) alarms where a new or replacement combustion appliance is installed - such as a boiler or solid fuel stove, is another major step forward in the battle to eliminate the potentially devastating consequences of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Welcoming this progress, Nick Rutter, managing director of SNIPEF Associate members **Sprue Safety Products**, said: “Alongside the new regulations in Northern Ireland, the decision by the Scottish Government to investigate and propose measures to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning indicates there is at last a growing recognition of the importance of CO safety.

Statistics from the Department of Health show that 50 people die each year from CO poisoning and another 4,000 are treated in hospital for cases of low level poisoning. Many assume they’re not at risk because they don’t have a boiler, but a range of combustable fossil fuels – including wood – can all produce CO.

“A tougher, unified approach would certainly protect many more against this deadly but avoidable threat,” added Nick. “We support SNIPEF’s call for the Scottish Government to go further in making the installation of CO alarms mandatory for both heating and cooking appliances. Introducing tougher legislation will save more lives, reduce hospital admissions, ease pressure on already stretched A&E departments and avoid additional healthcare costs.”

**Scottish Government announce new policy on construction sites**

The Scottish Government is introducing a new policy whereby all companies engaged in new public sector construction contracts must ensure that on-site staff are registered with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) or equivalent.

Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “Scotland’s public sector spends over £2 billion per annum on construction related contracts. Adopting schemes like CSCS can make a
significant difference to efficient working and health and safety on construction sites and this is particularly important given the significant challenges the construction industry faces in the current economic climate”. “I would urge other parts of the public sector to adopt the same policy”.

SNIPEF CEO Robert Burgon said: “We welcome this announcement by the Scottish Government. For over 40 years we have operated a skills data base and registration card scheme for operatives who work in the plumbing and heating industry. Our scheme, which is run by the Plumbing Joint Industry Board, already incorporates the CSCS health and safety qualification”.

Robert added: “We hope that this announcement by the Deputy First Minister will help in ensuring that only competent and safe workers are used on site”.

Entries open for the 2013 BPEC Charity Life Awards

Training and certification organisation BPEC has launched its search for next year’s winners of the BPEC Charity Life Awards.

The awards are open to individuals or groups who work in the UK plumbing industry and are aimed at rewarding projects, inventions or charity work that use plumbing skills to enhance life. They could also be awarded for raising the profile and image of plumbing or helping to change perspective.

The inaugural BPEC Charity Life Awards were presented in 2012. Almost £30,000 was given out to four deserving projects. Now BPEC is looking for entries to next year’s awards, which are made in memory of BPEC’s founding chairman Raymond J Brooks.

“There are so many ways in which plumbing skills can enhance life.” said BPEC chairman Frank Glover.

“We are searching for deserving causes that are making a real difference, whether that’s in the UK or anywhere else in the world. We want to hear from plumbers who are involved with charity work, plumbers who have developed a new system or service, and plumbers who are raising the image of plumbing as an industry and career.”

The closing date for the 2013 BPEC Charity awards is 30 June 2013. Submission forms can be downloaded by clicking here.

New Holiday and Sick Pay Scheme launched

SNIPEF has just launched a new Holiday with Sick pay scheme for plumbing and heating businesses. The new scheme has been streamlined to take into account the specific holiday pay needs for individual members. A new stand alone sick pay scheme is also available.
For more information contact the SNIPEF Finance department on 0131 556 0600.

**SNIPEF support compulsory fitting of Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Scotland**

In their response to the Scottish Government's consultation on proposed changes to the Building Regulations, SNIPEF has supported the introduction of Carbon Monoxide detectors both in cases of heating and cooking appliance installations.

SNIPEF CEO, Robert Burgon said: "Following the introduction, via changes in Building Regulations, of carbon monoxide detectors into Northern Ireland, we welcome the opportunity of making similar changes in Scotland. We would however like the Scottish Government to go further and make the installation of such detectors mandatory for both heating and cooking appliances".

The result of the consultation is expected in early 2013.

**Green Homes Cashback Scheme**

The Scottish Government is offering owner occupiers, private and social tenants and private sector landlords up to £500 towards energy efficiency measures that are recommended in either an existing Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or Green Deal assessment.

In addition to this £500, the customer will also be entitled to claim up to £100 towards the cost of an EPC or Green Deal assessment being completed before and/or after installation. Only one voucher can be applied for per property. You should note that it doesn't cover a boiler replacement. This work is supported via the Boiler Scrappage Scheme. Please note however that if you are replacing an electric heating system with a Band A condensing gas boiler then you can apply to this cash back scheme. In addition, the work does not cover the installation of renewable technologies.

Full details of the scheme including the qualifying criteria which is being managed by Energy Saving Trust can be found on the website and all potential applicants will need to contact the advice centre on 0800 512 012 to be issued a voucher.

**Renewables Loan Scheme**

**Save up to £610* a year with green heating systems**

With winter just around the corner many homeowners may be considering switching to a more affordable source of heating, such as a heat pump or wood-fuelled boiler. Not only is it kinder to the environment it can also make a difference to their energy costs potentially saving them up to £610* each year, depending on the type of system.

Green heating needn’t break the bank
With a range of financial support available, now is a great time for homeowners to consider a new heating system. We know that upfront finance can sometimes be a barrier, but through the Energy Saving Trust there’s various support to help homeowners make the move…

- **Interest free loans of up to £10,000** from the Scottish Government, with a payback of 8 years
- Grants of up to £1,250 from the UK Government through the Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme.

This could mean that upfront costs are either mostly or totally covered, for example, if someone buys an air source heat pump for £9,000 they could claim an £850 grant towards the cost of the system plus an £8,150 interest free loan. In addition to this, homeowners may be able to earn cash from their heating system through the UK Government’s domestic Renewable Heat Incentive scheme, even if they install now, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria. This scheme should be available from summer 2013.

*based on replacing electric heating with a ground source heat pump in a 3 bed semi-detached home.*

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### Plumbing Business For Sale

A long established (second generation) family business based in central Aberdeen is available for sale. The business carries out a range of plumbing and heating works for domestic and small commercial customers. The owners are open to negotiation on Property, vehicles, stock and equipment, depending on conditions. To register interest, please email here.

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### Northern Ireland takes the lead in eliminating ‘The Silent Killer’

Northern Ireland is the first country in the UK to take an important step forward in protecting its residents and tenants against the potentially fatal dangers of carbon monoxide (CO).

Changes to Northern Ireland’s Building Regulations which came into force from October 31st, make it a legal requirement to fit carbon monoxide alarms in all dwellings where a new or replacement combustion appliance – such as a boiler or solid fuel stove - is to be installed. The Department of Finance and Personnel has issued new documents for the purpose of providing practical guidance with respect to the technical requirements of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (the Building Regulations).

Click here to view the new regulations.
For Plumbline in Scotland now read Plumbase

Plumbase is rebranding its Plumbline stores across Scotland to ‘Plumbase’ during a national rollout of its new brand identity. A total of 19 Plumbline stores will be rebranded as part of the business initiative.

The rebrand began at Plumbline East Kilbride and will finish upon completion of Plumbline Perth, in November. Each store will be remerchandised and will receive new exterior and interior signage. Each store offers same and next day delivery services, along with in-store collection.

“The rebranding of Plumbline is a vital step in the move to create a cohesive new look and feel across the entire Plumbase business,” added Andy Gribble, Plumbase Managing Director. “In a difficult economic climate we believe that this investment is vital to providing an excellent offering and service to our customers throughout the UK.”

As part of Plumbase’s new identity it has developed four specialist brands within the Plumbase Group to improve its customer offering: Plumbase supports across plumbing and heating equipment and solutions; Bathbase provides bathrooms, showers and accessories; Ecobase specialises in energy saving and renewable solutions, and Sparesbase supplies heating and boiler spares, solar spares and controls.

For more information click here.

Energy Saving Trust - Scheme to provide funding for Gas Infill Projects and Gas Grid Extension Projects

The Scottish Government has set up a scheme, which is being administered by the Energy Saving trust in Scotland, to provide loan funding for gas infill projects and gas grid extension projects.

In areas on, or very close to, the existing gas grid, connection to the gas grid is in most cases is a cost-effective way of reducing energy bills and tackling fuel poverty.

Loan funding is available to support:

- Gas infill projects – this means projects to connect groups of owner-occupied houses within the existing gas grid but not currently connected to it; and
- Gas grid extension projects – this means projects to connect groups of houses located sufficiently close to the existing grid to be connected at a reasonable cost, taking account of the various sources of funding support available.

Additionally, loan funding can be used to fund district heating connection charges where a new gas-fired district heating system has been installed within the last year.
The Scottish Government is making available £1 million for Financial Year 2012/13 and a further £4 million for Financial Year 2013/14. As well as householders applying for the loan, gas installers can also act as a project manager (“aggregator”) for one or more projects which aim to connect groups of properties to the gas grid and/or to extend the gas grid. Projects must connect a minimum of 10 properties and “aggregators” can apply for funding between £25,000 and £1m.

For more information visit http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Take-action/Grants-and-Discounts-Database/Gas-Infill-Loans-Scheme