



## Meet Tracey Shelley

Chief Executive Officer

BCECA

Image: Alamy

**BCECA members provide engineering design, project management and construction services for the process and energy industries. We've been publishing 'people profiles' since 2020, but this is the first time we have focused on 'one of our own'. Tracey Shelley joined us in 2013. To mark her 10th anniversary in the hot seat, we've asked her to describe her journey so far.**

Tracey is the 10th executive director in BCECA's history. She joined the Association in 2013 and took the lead in repositioning and rebranding BCECA in preparation for its 50th anniversary. The new brand and value proposition were unveiled at a celebration in Westminster in June 2016, attended by senior figures from the UK engineering contracting sector. Tracey is our first female leader and first Chief Executive Officer, having successfully guided the Association to limited company status in 2017.

### Girls don't do engineering?

"There was a time when 'girls don't do engineering' was common thinking. Fortunately, the school I attended in Kent didn't see it like that. I caught the bug as a 12-year-old when I participated in an all-girls team in a national schools' design competition supported by Rolls Royce. Four years later, I joined an apprenticeship scheme with GEC Avionics. It wasn't always easy for women in a male-dominated engineering environment in the late 80s, but this spurred me on at work and in college. As a development engineer, I worked on mechanical design issues involving stress, structural and thermal analysis, contributing to military and civil avionics projects worldwide."

### They do, with the right encouragement and support!

"It was clear that the future of UK engineering was inextricably tied to how the subject is promoted and taught – to boys and girls alike. After eight years in avionics, I changed track and spent the next six years teaching engineering to full and part-time students and apprentices while continuing my education and completing an MBA. I then moved on to leadership roles with the Institute of Energy and the Society of Operations Engineers. A career break followed before I returned to work at the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) to focus on supporting employers with the training of their workforces. It was through ECITB that I became involved with BCECA, and the rest is, as they say, history."

### Now and next

"Much has changed in my decade at BCECA. A scribble on a flipchart in an office opposite the BBC turned into a full-blown rebrand. I steered the Association to a more formal footing as a limited company. We also revamped our membership offer, wrote a charter, a strategy, and a robust business plan. Then COVID-19 hit, and we were forced to rethink ourselves as a virtual organisation. Our plans for a regular conference switched from an in-person to an online event. We're now planning for a third virtual annual conference in October 2023. It focuses on delivering the energy transformation – a key challenge for engineering contractors. [Here's a programme link](#)

As you might expect, supporting a vital sector like engineering contracting is hugely fulfilling. Nonetheless, I make time for my active and busy family, where hockey and the local RAF Air Cadets take up much of my leisure time."

**For more information about career prospects in the engineering contracting sector, contact BCECA at 10th Floor, Camelford House, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP**

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