

**100 YEARS**  
**OF POWERING YOUR**  
**CONNECTIONS**



# A CENTURY OF LASTING CONNECTIONS

Lasting Connections. This simple phrase sums up everything we strive for and create. So it's no surprise that, for a century, MK Electric has set the standard for quality, reliability and safety. It all started in 1919 with our founders, who revolutionised the industry with the groundbreaking Multy Kontakt Socket. That was just the beginning. We went on to create safety sleeves for plug-pins (50 years before regulation required it), design the first modern light switch and invent the first 3-pin child-resistant shutter system.

Born in a factory in Edmonton, London, we became the UK's leading manufacturer of wiring devices.

Our products became smarter, our designs sleeker.

And today, we're powering connections across the world – in schools, homes, offices, hotels and airports.

We're engineers, inventors, pioneers and perfecters. That's why, whatever your needs, you can specify, install and use MK products with confidence.

## Contents



<b><i>A Century of Lasting Connections</i></b>	3
<b>1919</b> Making history	4
<b>1920s</b> A spark of genius	5
<b>1930s</b> Defying the slump	6
<b>1940s</b> The Second World War and beyond	7
<b>1950s</b> Never had it so good	8
<b>1960s</b> The swinging sixties	9
<b>1970s</b> Making connections overseas	10
<b>1980s</b> Shaking up the global marketplace	11
<b>1990s</b> Entering the computer age	12
<b>2000s</b> A converging world	13
<b>2010s</b> Good times ahead	14
<b>2019</b> Birthday greetings from the Queen	15
<b>Powering the Next 100 Years</b>	16

# 1919

## Making history

The summer of 1919 was a hectic time. The first direct flight across the Atlantic, the Treaty of Peace was signed at Versailles and prohibition hit America. But away from the eyes of the world, a little factory in Edmonton would far have greater impact on the lives of ordinary Britons.



### 1919

#### Humble beginnings

7.30am, 10th February. A factory, Edmonton, London. Charles Arnold and Charles Belling finished their morning pot of tea and set themselves to work – marking the start of our 100-year journey of Great British innovation and manufacturing. Their business was called the Heavy Current Electric Accessories Company. It had gas lighting and was equipped with two second-hand lathes and a drilling machine.

### 1919

#### The Multy Kontakt Socket

On 12th April, MK filed the patent for the Multy Kontakt Socket and the British Engineering Standards Association (BESA) declared it as the new standard.



### 1921

#### The product range evolves

The Footpress, MK's first hardwood plug and the switch socket, along with other new products appeared in the first MK catalogue.



### 1920

#### A convenient switch

The Footpress switch made stooping a thing of the past. Virtually indestructible, it was designed to be mounted on an electric fire and kicked on and off.



### 1924

#### Time for a rebrand

The Heavy Current Electric Accessories Company doesn't exactly trip off the tongue. Turns out Arnold felt the same and he renamed the company after its most famous product – The Multy Kontakt Socket. And "M.K." was born!



### 1926

#### The plastic that made history

MK became one of the first manufacturers to use the revolutionary new insulating material, Bakelite – the same plastic that old-fashioned radios were made from.

## A spark of genius

Charles Belling pointed the way forward, realising that fires and electrical equipment would require high quality switches and sockets. Charles Arnold agreed and the pair redesigned the socket to produce something much safer.



### 1928

#### Revolutionising safety

MK launched the first ever shuttered socket. Described as 'Anti-Flash', the socket's automatic insulating caps eliminated the flames which accompanied plug withdrawal.



### 1928

#### Women in the workforce

Women were employed for the first time, and the factory installed central heating.

# 1920s

## 1920s

## Defying the slump

Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, with unemployment reaching 3.5 million, MK's range grew remarkably.

By 1939, it was Britain's top name in plugs and sockets, with a range of over 250 products.



## 1930 Ironclad innovation

MK produced the first ironclad cooker control boxes, replacing the existing wooden boxes.



## 1932 Safety first, in every sense

To prevent accidental contact, MK introduced insulating sleeves on plug pins – a full 50 years before this became a regulation.

## 1939 Preparing for war

Almost overnight, MK started making detonators, electrical firing systems, centrifuge bolts and more – seven days a week. Its products featured in Spitfires, Hurricanes and Lancasters.



## 1935 A butterfly that protects

MK pioneered the 'butterfly' safety shutter, which exposed current-carrying sockets only when a plug's earth pin was inserted.



## 1940 The sky's the limit

The Ministry of Aircraft Production chose former MK apprentice, Reginald Dowsett, to help design an AC switch for warplanes. 50 years later, he would retire as MK's Managing Director.



## 1945 Switches for peacetime

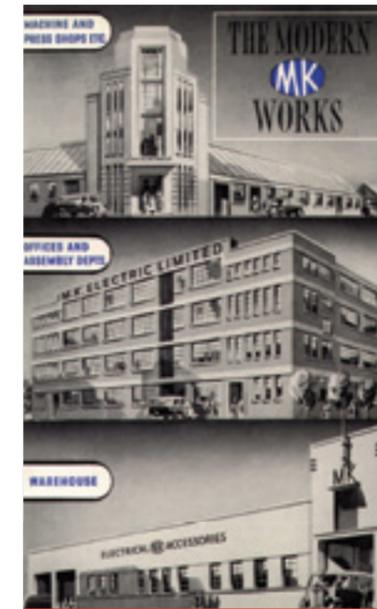
Drawing on Reginald Dowsett's know-how, MK developed the first domestic AC ceiling switch, quickly followed by a wall-mounted version. They were an instant success.



## The Second World War and beyond

When UK production was turned over to the war effort in 1939, MK abruptly stopped making 90% of its electrical accessories.

But once the conflict ended and rebuilding got under way, its former product range was again in demand.



## 1947 Building the future

The Beveridge Report and post-war boom led to building projects that, in turn, drove demand for wiring devices. MK production leapt from hundreds to thousands in a month.



## 1947 Riding the post-war boom

When the standards specifying rectangular pins, BS 1363, was published, MK was first to offer a suite of conforming plugs and sockets. As Britain rebuilt, demand soared.

## Never had it so good

Despite the Cold War starting to cast its shadow, the 1950s was a time of qualified optimism in the UK. Rationing ended, post-war reconstruction boomed and there was a rise in standards of living. MK's growth mirrored the national story.



### 1957 A Jack of one trade

MK's very first employee, Jack Brett, fittingly received the company's first 25 Year Service Award, 36 years after he began work!



### 1959 An electrical milestone

By the end of the 1950s, MK's factory was producing one million 13-amp plugs every month, each one lovingly assembled by hand.



### 1959 Edmonton empire expands

Three factories were acquired – a shoe factory produced the 13-amp plug; the former De Havilland Propeller factory was reserved for heavy press work; and a neighbouring unit concentrated on zinc- and silver- plating. The new Head Office also opened its doors.



### 1952 And then there were nine

With sales booming, MK moved to a larger, more automated factory in Park Road, Edmonton. Charles Arnold's favourite photo shows him standing outside with his original employees.

1950s



### 1955 An instant design classic

When MK launched its new plateswitch, it revolutionised lighting control. This first-ever Monobloc light switch marked a breakthrough in design. Now, with just two components, it was easier to install and cheaper to buy. And virtually every lightswitch today is based on its design.



### 1966 Trading in Saudi

Hawa Trading of Alkobhar turned up in Edmonton and personally asked to become MK's Saudi distributor.



### 1965 A fond farewell

In February, Charles Belling, MK's co-founder, died. His executors decided to sell his share of the business – which prompted the company to go public.



### 1961 Beside the seaside

Success soon demanded more space and workers, so MK moved to Southend, making it one of the area's main employers. It was the biggest workforce relocation that MK had ever witnessed.

1960s

## The swinging sixties

By now, MK had over 4,000 employees, a product range of roughly 1,000 items and substantial factories in various locations – not bad considering it had all grown out of Charles Arnold's and Charles Belling's small investment.



### 1966 Sharing in MK's success

MK Electric Holdings Limited was floated on the stock exchange in 12 million five-shilling shares, valuing the company at £3m. The floatation was heavily over-subscribed.



### 1969 The end of an era

Charles Arnold – by now Life President of MK Electric Ltd – died on 29th October, aged 83. He had proudly helped steer his company for 50 years.

## Making connections overseas

Sparked by the Middle East oil crisis, rampant inflation spread throughout the western world and recession set in. Despite the slump, MK chose to invest in new products, successfully securing market share within Britain and overseas.



### 1971 Logic leads the way

MK's Logic burst onto the scene. Its clean-cut, square-edged lines were an instant hit. It was the first range of wiring devices that moved from ivory to an all-white finish. MK's Logic redefined the market aesthetic.



### 1972 Safety by design

MK redesigned its Safetyplug, with new installation and safety features. It notably included captive components, equal length wiring, fail-safe cord grip and sleeved pins.



### 1979 A very royal affair

MK celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with record investment levels, and received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement.



### 1977 Acquiring a market leader

MK completed the £10m acquisition of Ega, the UK market leader in plastic conduit and trunking systems, and took an important first step outside its traditional field of wiring devices.



### 1975 Manning sales overseas

MK appointed its first regional Sales Managers in the Middle East, Far East and Africa, all now key markets for the business.

1970s



### 1980s Winning at home and away

MK bought heavy-duty UK electricals brand, Duraplug, and launched Commando, its industrial plugs and sockets range. Overseas, it opened new plants in Africa, India and the Middle East.



### 1982 Expert help at your fingertips

With customer service increasingly giving companies a competitive edge, MK launched the UK electrical industry's first technical services helpline.



### 1984 Safetyplug hits 100 million

On 4th November 1984, the 100-millionth Safetyplug rolled off MK's advanced Automatic Assembly machine at Rosebery Road.

1980s

## Shaking up the global marketplace

As more economies turned towards free-market capitalism, the 1980s saw social and economic upheavals, driven in part by technological innovation. MK's strategy of investing in extensive automated manufacturing at home and abroad helped achieve its highest-ever sales.



### 1986 Top quality at every site

Another accolade followed when MK earned BS 5750 accreditation for its quality assurance systems at every site – one of the first companies in the UK to achieve this.



### 1986 A royal seal of approval

MK was awarded the Royal Warrant of Appointment by Her Majesty The Queen, confirming the excellent quality of its products.

## Entering the computer age

The 1990s saw huge advances in technology with the advent of the World Wide Web and cable television. During this time, MK invested in a vast new product development programme and launched its first fully integrated computer system.



### 1999 Cutting edge devices

MK launched the Edge™ range – its first flat plate range of wiring devices. Unrivalled in safety and style, its slim design became the perfect design choice for those who prefer clean lines and uncluttered spaces.



### 2003 A new style icon

MK launched its Aspect range of slimline, 'screwless' wiring devices. The screws are in fact discreetly hidden, leaving an elegant, flawless frontplate.

## Honeywell

### 2005 From strength to strength

MK's parent company was acquired by Honeywell International for £1.2 billion. Honeywell's Chairman and CEO, David M Cote, praised the business' 'great heritage'.



### 2005 Nothing but the best

The Cranfield School of Management awarded the Southend site three UK Best Factory Awards, recognising MK for its quality, innovation and 'world-class manufacturing'.

## A converging world

Aided by the internet, globalisation took off in the 2000s. But just as emerging economies like China were catching up with those of developed countries, global recession struck. Shortly before the downturn, Honeywell International acquired MK's parent company.

1990s



### 1993 Masterful Masterseal

MK launched the Masterseal range. Sealed to IP56 standards, it was waterproof, robust and temperature tolerant. Ideal for outdoor use, Masterseal exceeded British safety standards and won every award going. It was leagues ahead of anything else on the market.



### 1995 A new home

The MK head office moved to its purpose-built site in Basildon, Essex. Named after MK's illustrious founder, The Arnold Centre was opened by HRH Princess Anne, The Princess Royal.



### 1996 Safety in numbers

MK released Logic Plus™ and its unique, patented 3-pin child resistant shutter system. It was revolutionary. The range introduced the outstanding installation benefits of upward facing and in-line terminals, along with backed out and captive screws. And established a brand-new aesthetic with its curved and chamfered edges.



### 2008 A taste of the future

Wireless. Batteryless. Self-powered. MK's futuristic echo™ switches and controls won Best Product Innovation award at the M&E Building Services event.

### WHY CHOOSE PRESTIGE 3D?



45%  
Unique patented features:  
• 45% faster to install than competitors  
• 45% faster to install than competitors  
• 45% faster to install than competitors  
Additional benefits:  
• 45% faster to install than competitors  
• 45% faster to install than competitors

### 2006 The power of three

MK launched its feature-rich Prestige 3D range. Designed to be fully compliant with Cat 6, it was independently verified as being 40% faster to install than its competitors.

2000s

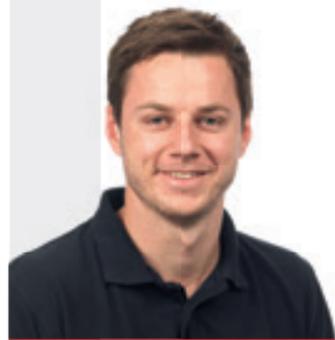
## Good times ahead

As technology takes us to places we couldn't have ever imagined, MK continues to innovate and adapt to changing customer needs – to make enduring connections that lead the way ahead.



## 2011 Safely Sealed Sockets and Switches

MK launched Masterseal Plus™ and the best got better. Fully IP66 rated, the sealed unit offered total protection against dust and high-pressure water jets, when in use.



## 2012 Celebrating tomorrow's talent

UK Business Minister Mark Prisk announced MK employee Adam King as a manufacturing rising star in the Make it in Great Britain '30 Under 30'.



## 2013 A winning way to charge

At the Electrical Industry Awards, MK's new USB Charging Module was named Innovative Commercial / Industrial Product of the Year.



## 2014 Multi-millionth milestone

The 100-millionth socket rolled off the line at the Southend factory, marking yet another MK milestone.



## 2014 Switch on your imagination

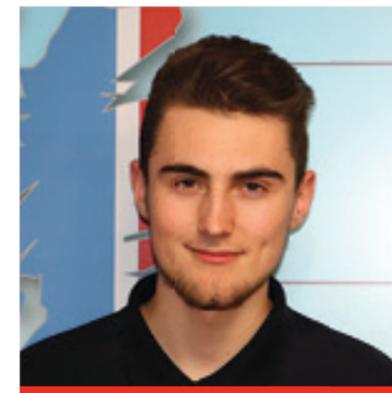
The MK Elements Collection is introduced. A revolutionary range of stylish wiring devices, inspired by materials including wood, leather and stone. It took bespoke design to a whole new level. Customers could now customise the look and feel of their light switches, dimmers and sockets.

2010s



## 2015 Optimum and efficient charging

Staying ahead of today's technology-centric lifestyle, MK introduced integrated USB charging ports into its iconic Logic Plus™ double socket.



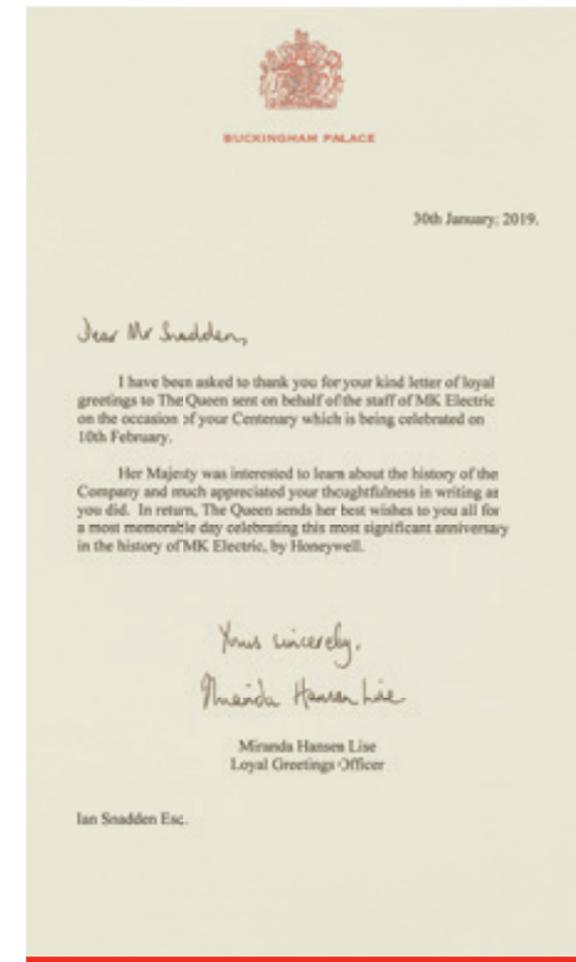
## 2018 Nurturing young innovators

MK process engineer Thomas Hunt won the BEAMA Young Manufacturer of the Year award. Thomas helped reduce key production cycles by a massive 35%.

## 2019

### Birthday greetings from the Queen

On MK's Centenary Her Majesty The Queen sent her best wishes and expressed an interest in the company's history.



# POWERING THE NEXT 100 YEARS

USB integrated sockets with optimised device-charging. Wireless, batteryless and self-powered switches. Electronic switches and dimmers, for the ultimate user experience. Dedicated design services for when only a bespoke solution will do.

With MK's 100-year British manufacturing heritage, our expertise underpins our commitment to quality, reliability and safety.

As we look forward, we'll continue to evolve, reshaping the electrical industry for a smarter, more sustainable future.

Be part of our next 100 years. Visit MK Electric.

[mkelectric.co.uk](http://mkelectric.co.uk)



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