



AVICII

AFTER WINNING BEST ELECTRONIC ARTIST AT THE MTV EMA AWARDS, AVICII WAS THEN CROWNED BEST EDM ARTIST AT THE 2013 AMAS BEATING FELLOW NOMINEES CALVIN HARRIS, DAFT PUNK AND ZEDD. SINGLE HEY BROTHER RELEASED VIA PRMD / POSITIVA, WAS THE THIRD SINGLE TO BE TAKEN FROM HIS CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED DEBUT ALBUM, TRUE. TPI TALKED TO THE CREW ON THE ROAD IN EUROPE TO LEARN HOW THE SWEDISH DJ / PRODUCER EMBARKED ON A WORLD TOUR WITH AN IMPRESSIVE PRODUCTION IN TOW...

Robin Scott, Avicii's (Tim Bergling to his mother) Production Manager began working with the young star at the 2013 Ultra Festival in Miami, USA. Not solely a dance / electronic Production Manager, Scott has also production managed tours for the likes of Swedish House Mafia, Snow Patrol, Amy Winehouse, Crowded House, Elbow, Kaiser Chiefs and The Vaccines to name but a few successful touring acts.

Having worked with Avicii for almost a year now, the PM explained the thinking behind his biggest tour to date. "We set out to produce a slick and efficient production that we could put in and easily take out of venues on a daily basis, making sure that the end result gave the audience an experience to really remember," stated Scott. "In order to do this, I needed very reliable tour vendors that I'd worked extensively

with before. As a result, the tour has been a huge success in every way."

As a well-versed traveller, Scott knows that musical genre can dictate audience expectations and can sometimes therefore influence the kind of scheduling and time slots associated with concerts. He elaborated: "We didn't come across any major challenges on this tour, but EDM shows will typically finish later than the more traditional rock 'n' roll shows in Europe so late night load-outs and early morning load-ins to ensure the rig was all up safely and ready for the 6pm door time was perhaps the most pressure we were put under!"

Having overcome any such challenges, Scott is still very impressed with how the tour has gone. He continued: "It was possibly one of the most enjoyable and relaxed tours I've worked on of late, and for that I largely pay thanks

to the team with which I was surrounded. They're good people to travel with and their professionalism made for a great few weeks on the road!"

AUDIO

Having recently completed the first European leg of a world tour, the DJ's first stop on 2014 was four dates in Australia in January before the tour moved on to Europe in February for nine large-scale arena shows, culminating in two sell out nights at the Tele 2 Arena Stockholm, Sweden, a home-coming of sorts.

UK based rental house SSE Audio Group were awarded the contract to provide audio for the European leg of the tour by Curly Jobson of MJM, with SSE Hire Project Manager, Dan Bennett assigned to the task of designing the PA system. Bennett told TPI: "With the show

Opposite: Avicii's visuals were the creation of Video Artist and VJ Harry Bird from This Is Comix. Below: HSL and XL Video provided spectacular visual effects for the tour, with a well-equipped rig that was able to handle all adaptations and impromptu songs in the ever-changing set.



going through some of the largest arenas in Europe, L'Acoustics K1 was the obvious choice of system for the tour. The Avicii tour placed different demands on the PA, from that of a live band. The presence and impact delivered by the L'Acoustics K Series products in both frequency response, and SPL helped create an environment where the audience could really lose themselves in the show, as it was so coherent across the whole arena. It reproduced the dance music amazingly"

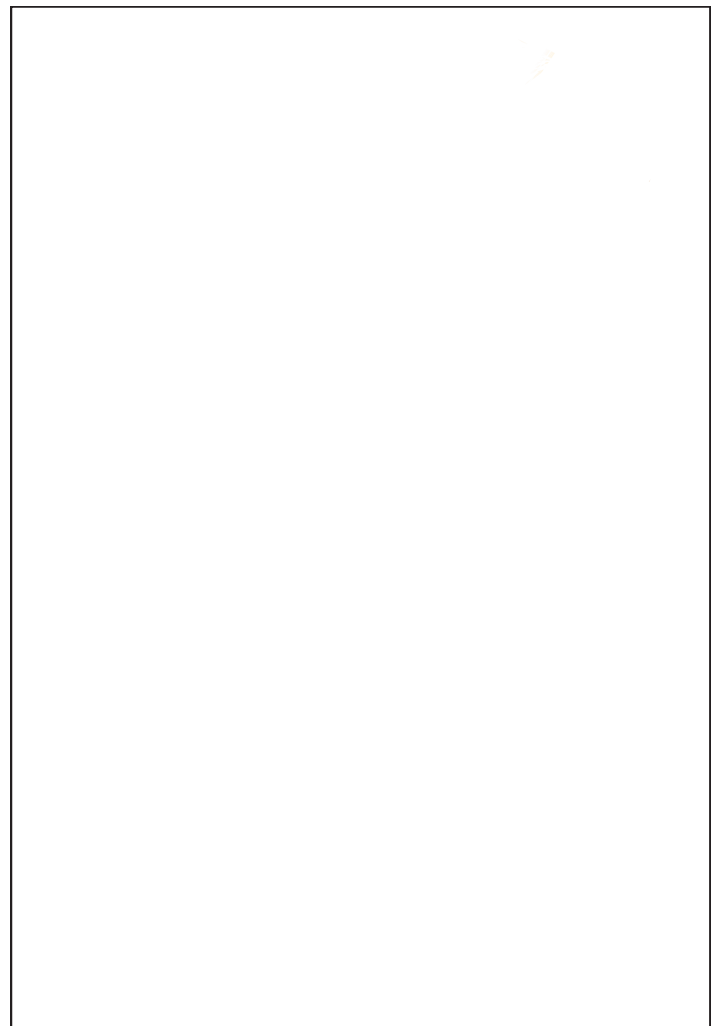
When designing a system of this scale, it is paramount that every seat in the house is treated the same. From people in the middle of the arena floor to those sat in the highest seats at the back. Using L'Acoustics prediction software Soundvision, Bennett was able to design a system that accurately reflected this brief. "It was key that the entire audience could hear direct sound rather than the reflected sound off the building," he added.

The touring system comprised of main left and right hangs of 14 L'Acoustics K1 cabinets with four L'Acoustics KARA underhangs and eight K1-SBs flown directly behind

the main arrays; side hangs added a further 10 K1 cabinets with six KARA underhangs. In venues where tickets sales included seats positioned up stage of the stage edge, rear hangs of 12 Kara per side were also added for ultimate coverage and fan satisfaction. Donny MacDonald was the Tour Rigger, who travelled with the crew to each venue.

Subwoofers are crucial in reproducing the full dynamic range of dance music, and in this instance were arranged in a left, centre, right configuration across the front of the stage. A total of 36 SB28's were ground-stacked, in omni mode to get maximum SPL and provide the low frequency extension to the K1 and K1SB in the air.

FOH Engineer for the tour was Wayne 'Rabbit' Sargeant. Rabbit's relationship with SSE dates back to his days as FOH for Swedish House Mafia, a role which led him to work for Avicii. Said Rabbit: "It was great to work with SSE again. The crew were excellent; incredibly professional at all times. They managed to deliver a consistency with the system in spite of some of the venues being particularly



PRODUCTION PROFILE: Avicii

Below: Avicii is the stage name of Swedish DJ and Producer, Tim Bergling; The SSE Audio crew brought expert engineering skills on the road for the show's audio needs; HSL supplied a lighting rig which included Clay Paky and Martin by Harman fixtures; Fans were drawn into the whole experience with vibrant visual and special effects displays.



difficult from an audio perspective. SSE's kit is always top quality and is excellently maintained, creating great results at every show."

System control was centred around the SSE Drive Station at FOH containing Lake LM44 Processors, an Antelope world clock, a Lectrosonics radio microphone system for wireless measurements and a PC running LA Network Manager and Smaart analysis software.

"One of the cool things about a show like this was the fact that we were able to keep the entire signal path in the digital domain from source," added Bennett. "All of the aural content of the show was derived from Tim Bergling's DJ Set up, so we took the S/PDIF output from the DJM900 and went into an AES input card on the DiGiCo SD rack, via an S/PDIF-AES transformer".

Rabbit has been pioneering this technique on his various dance music clients for some years with off-the-shelf components. He is currently looking into the development of a more robust and versatile S/PDIF-AES solution with Sigma Electronics (SSE's electronic manufacturing department).

Bennett continued: "We took an AES feed at FOH from the DiGiCo SD10 console and then sent it to the amps via our digital Dante

returns system. The amps were fitted with the AES input card option. This purest approach kept things simple, without any of the potential problems associated with analogue multicores, as well as the more obvious advantages such as vastly improved audio quality. The signal path ran at an impressive 96kHz sampling rate from Digico's SD Rack through to the L'Acoustics LA8's.

The two largest venues on this European leg of the tour were Earls Court in London and the aforementioned Tele 2 Arena in Stockholm, both requiring supplementary PA to maintain the SPL levels and ensure optimum coverage of the arena.

At Earls Court, SSE supplied an additional 40 VDOSC, deployed in the hall as delays to combat the room acoustics and natural reverb, along with additional LA8 amplification. The Tele 2 Arena meanwhile was a step up in size again from Earls Court and so required a larger system still. Bennett mapped out a K1 system to cover the venue using L'Acoustics Soundvision prediction software. The resulting design ended up being an additional five hangs of 12 K1's, with extra K1SB being added to the back three delay hangs. Additionally, 14 further SB28's were brought in too, making the total

count an impressive 50!

For logistical and environmental purposes, the additional kit for Sweden was hired in locally. The L'Acoustics Rental Network provided the confidence that a tour can cross-hire from other members, safe in the knowledge that all aspects of the equipment being hired are the same.

The performance of the K1 system once again impressed Rabbit, who continued: "It's the only system out there that could have achieved the results we wanted in venues of this size. Flying the K1 subwoofers behind the main left and right array hangs delivers so much punch. There was loads of headroom available meaning I could drive the system as hard as I wanted. The desire to deliver club sound in arenas was paramount and the sound we were able to achieve with K1 was colossal."

Rabbit's console of choice at FOH was a DiGiCo SD10, interfacing with a Waves SoundGrid server. "I've only recently switched to DiGiCo," he commented, "I'm really impressed with the superb build, excellent reliability and amazing sound quality of the SD10 console. The direct integration with Waves SoundGrid, where control is from the console surface makes use of plug-ins in the live environment so much easier."

Below: BPM SFX & Production supplied Avicii's pyrotechnic elements, including coloured flame effects.



Mixing a DJ set rather than a live band places different requirements on the FOH engineer too. He furthered: "Rather than balancing multiple inputs, your role is one of live mastering the feed from the DJ mixer. I used the Waves C6 Multiband Compressor and Waves Maxx BCL plugins to achieve the sound I was after. I had a Waves Renaissance Compressor on the sub, Waves C4 and Pultec EQ across the main outputs. I also had a Maxx BCL hardware unit in the rack which came in handy when I wanted to make quick adjustments on the fly."

"We set out to produce a slick and efficient production that we could put in and easily take out of venues on a daily basis, making sure that the end result gave the audience an experience to really remember. In order to do this, I needed very reliable tour vendors..."

Monitor world was a comparatively simple affair, with only one DJ position on stage. SSE supplied another DiGiCo console, this time in the form of an SD11 and a complement of KARA, SB18 and SB28 subwoofers operated by SSE's own Crew Chief, Paul Keeble. The SSE line up was completed by Crew Chief Paul Keeble, System Tech Perttu Korteniemi and audio crew Nick Lythgo, Glen Little and Valentin James.

VIDEO

The tour features a phenomenal live performance action-packed with energy, high-impact visuals and a beautiful real-time fluidity to delight his enthusiastic fan base complete with video production comprising LED, projection and control, all of which was supplied by UK-based XL Video.

The current Avicii show is designed by Simon Barrington and Ian Tomlinson, both renowned for their innovative and stylish work in the EDM genre and the stunning visuals were

produced by Video Artist and VJ Harry Bird from This Is Comix who directed the live shows. The high-octane collage of lighting, video visuals, pyrotechnics, special effects and lasers energised together in real-time with Avicii's invigorating set. XL Video's Project Manager, Paul 'Macca' McCauley, and XL's Crew Chief on the road is Icarus Wilson-Wright.

There are two screen areas onstage; the

upstage one is made up from XL's Pixled F-12 LED product, approximately 60ft wide and 18ft tall, hung in steps on the sides to replicate the diagonal wall of the design. The front of the DJ booth is clad with Barco OLite 510 LED display tiles. The O-lite is used in 'creative' mode, which enables versatile shapes to be constructed and then accurately mapped. In this case, it is built into bespoke frames from XL following the diagonal lines of the set.

Both types of screen are robust and ideal for touring, and the F-12 is built into XL's lightweight touring frames, which make it quick and easy to rig. The show's playback video content is run completely live - not a patch of Timecode in sight - by Harry Bird using a Resolume Arena system, with another Resolume set up used for footage, images and graphics for the support DJs.

Two 20ft by 11ft portrait side projection screens are fed by rear-projecting Barco 26K FLM machines. Most of the time these screens mimic the playback content showing on the main screens with some occasional snapshots of IMAG for which XL supplied a three-camera package. This comprised a Sony HXC-100 operated camera at FOH with a long lens and a Bradley Engineering Ball Cam 2 located behind Avicii to take care of the reverse crowd shots on the riser, and finally the camera mix - by XL's Ray Gwilliams using a Panasonic MX100 switcher, which is a highly effective way of involving the audience in the pumping energy of the show.

Below: SSE Audio chose an impressive L-Acoustics rig for the European leg of the tour, which comprised K1, KARA and VDOSC components.

The video is right at the core of the show visuals which also embrace lighting, lasers and special effects - all elements are called live as it happens as there's no set list and Avicii plays a fully unique set each night, although certain anthemic tracks are usually included in the performance. It's an exciting way to work and one that suits Bird's style of show direction and VJ'ing. He also used to DJ himself, which brings an additional level of understanding, rhythm and dance musicality to the technical production mix.

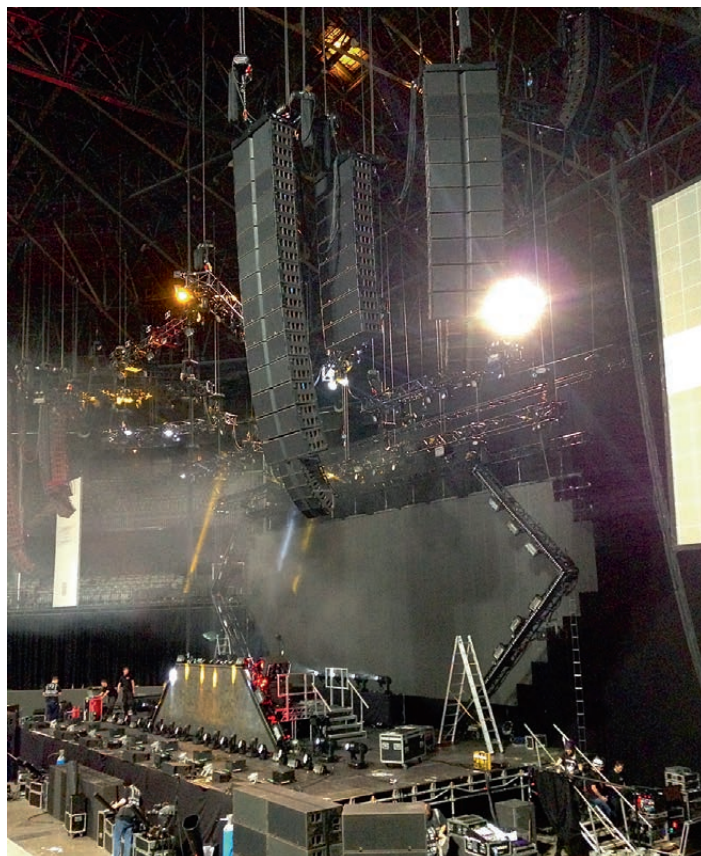
When it came to creating the video he worked closely with Avicii and produced footage to match the different sounds. Translated roughly, his newer work features more organic 'live' sounds and is accompanied with a fuller and more filmic look to the video material; while for the more traditional dance tracks, the video leans towards super-tron with psychedelic neon colours and shapes.

The set is a dynamic mash of the two distinctive styles, so the contrast in the visuals simultaneously compliments and harmonises with the music and that's what brings in the distinctive visual elegance.

LIGHTING

HSL supplied lighting equipment and crew to the tour, once again working with Tour Director Curly Jobson and Production Manager Robin Scott following their successful collaboration for the Swedish House Mafia. Said HSL Project Manager, Mike Oates: "We were very pleased to be involved in this tour with another leading EDM artist with an awesome stage show and high production values right at its core".

The overhead lighting was rigged on two 20ft front trusses and a 65ft back truss, which also acted as a cable bridge. Upstage (each side) was a chevron shaped truss flown on inverted motors, and in the space between these



Below: Pyrotechnics Operator, Charlie Alves directed a live pyro show every night, utilising waterfalls and airburst effects.



structural elements were six finger trusses flown in a gentle arc shape.

Positioned on each of the six fingers were three Martin by Harman MAC Aura LED washes and three Clay Paky Sharpys washes, together with Martin Atomic strobes and a Martin 2-Lite Molephay on the audience end of each one.

The front truss was rigged with three Martin Atomic strobes and four 2-Lite molephays, while the back truss carried six Clay Paky Sharpys, six Martin MAC Aura LED washes and three Martin Atomic strobes. Each of the sub hung chevron trusses were rigged with a further six Martin Atomic strobes and outlined with Chroma-Q Color Block DB4 flexible LED battens. A total of 195 Color Block DB4's were travelling on the tour. They ran all up and down the two chevrons and along the diamond shape fronted DJ booth, adding a vibrant sense of architectural super club style lighting.

Flown upstage on the back screen was Avicii's logo, constructed from another 70 Color Block DB4's, that shone through the screen towards the end of the set. On the floor were eight Martin MAC Vipers tucked in behind the DJ booth and eight 2-Lite molephays along the back of it, which were utilised for punctuated accents. In a straight line along the front of the booth were six more Martin Atomic strobes, 12 Martin MAC Auras and eight Clay Paky Sharpys which were used for blasting out and scanning the crowds.

Right across the very front edge of the stage, 12 PixelPAR's were carefully positioned to light the CO2 jets which added an extra and new

dimension to the effect, and finally, to low-light Avicii himself were two Chroma-Q Color Force12 LED bricks up in the DJ booth.

HSL supplied trussing and motors for all the lighting, video and sound, and flew the 60ft upstage Pixled F-12 LED screen from XL video. Lighting was operated on the tour by Chris van Bokhorst, using an MA Lighting grandMA2 full size. With video content being a key element, lighting was sculpted to follow in terms of matching and complimenting the colours, shapes and texturing appearing onscreen. There was an intense synergy between all four visual departments, plus the added anticipation of

SPECIAL EFFECTS

BPM SFX & Production provided the tour with a huge range of special effects including a massive pyrotechnic display and pyrotechnic waterfalls, RGB lasers and custom blue beams. BPM also provided a wide array of coloured flame effects, confetti and streamers.

Furthermore, BPM incorporated audience truss effects with pyrotechnic airbursts, a shower of confetti and double bubble balloons to encapsulate the crowd and ensure the audience was engaged in the set from start to finish! The pyrotechnics were directed live each night by Charlie Alves.

"We were very pleased to be involved in this tour with another leading EDM artist who has an awesome stage show and high production values, right at its core..."

the set varying every night meant no-one knew ahead of time exactly what he would play!

HSL's crew Chief Nigel 'Skippy' Monk was joined on the crew by Mark Scrimshaw on dimmers, James 'Jam' Such and Steve Bliss. Skippy commented, "It's always a pleasure to take a rig out of HSL. Everything is impeccably prepped and in tip-top condition and Mike makes sure that we have all the back up and support we need at any time."

STAGING

Avicii's stage set was hired from LS-Live in West Yorkshire, UK. Avicii wanted an on-stage production that would have maximum impact in the arena environments played on the tour.

Production Manager Robin Scott is a long-standing client of LS-Live's and he turned to the Wakefield company once again to supply a DJ booth stage set. Built entirely of standard rental products, the platform was easy to erect

Below: Popcorn supplied Avicii's first ever tour catering service!

on site as it was based on the toplock Prolyte LiteDeck stage decking components, raised over 2ft off the ground, together with a step unit, safety handrails, and two further raised LiteDeck to make a shelf for his DJ equipment. The look was finished off with black wool serge drape to cover the downstage edge.

Said LS-Live's Jess Woodward: "LiteDeck is a robust, yet lightweight, stage decking system that we use consistently in our touring structures because it proves itself as the best solution time and time again for both ease of use, build times and strength."

CATERING

TPI Award winning catering company, Popcorn Catering worked on Avicii's tour, and it was regarded by Popcorn's Stephanie Head as: "A wonderful tour to work on." This was the first time that Avicii and his management had had catering on tour. Continued Head: "It was good for us to introduce them to the world of tour catering and to make their first tour with catering supplied as pleasurable and exciting as possible.

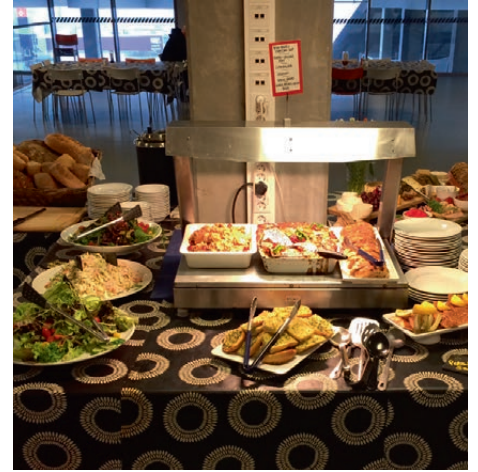
"One item I did spot in the supermarket in Stockholm which I hadn't seen before and which made me laugh, was the Abba jars of pickled fish. So Swedish! Lunch would typically

consist of a selection of smoked fish platters, fresh meat platters, lots of fresh healthy salads - we made sure that the majority of our dishes were very healthy, with a small selection of the naughty treats that everyone loves. We would then have a selection of hot food, including meat, fish and vegetarian options," she added.

In Avicii's hometown, the evening menu comprised tomato lentil and herb soup, caesar salad including fresh anchovies, prawns and chicken. Main course options included Swedish meatballs with mashed potatoes, rich tomato sauce or peppercorn sauce, with pickles and pecorino, confit of halibut with stir fried Asian green vegetables, wild rice, coronation dressing and chilli jam, hot and sour chicken broth with Asian green vegetables, noodles and a bean sprout and peanut salad, potato rostii with roasted shallots, wild mushrooms and sautéed spinach.

For dessert, Avicii and his top class crew could sample the delights of home made tiramisu, self saucing lemon and lime pudding and fresh fruit salad.

Continued Head: "If we have any crew or band members with allergies or food intolerances, we always make sure there is enough of a choice on the menu, and that we are able to look after their needs and make



sure that they'll have no worries or concerns regarding their catering experience.

TRANSPORT

Beat The Street supplied a total of four buses to Avicii's tour which comprised one Star bus with a double bed in a separate Star room for the artist and three crew buses for the production team. Joerg Phillip of Beat the Street commented: "The tour went really great, it was handled by very professional, nice people."

Fly By Nite provided seven trucks for Avicii's

PRODUCTION PROFILE: Avicii

Below: Consoles chosen for the tour included a DiGiCo SD10 at FOH, SD11 in monitor world, and an MA Lighting grandMA2; even the tour kit couldn't escape the massive pyrotechnic displays, as the fans and desks alike were adorned by confetti cannons!



tour, all pulling mega flat floor trailers, as always providing a professional team of drivers. Said Fly by Nite's Operations Manager, Paul Walker: "For this tour, several of the drivers were hand-picked by Production Manager, Robin Scott having worked with him on several other projects previously. The tour took in six countries before the two homecoming show's in Stockholm. Following that, the trucks returned back to the UK to unload at each of the supplier's warehouses."

The tour's security was headed up by Dave White of Headline Security.

RECORD BREAKING EDM

As the European dates drew to a close, Avicii's track, Wake Me Up became Spotify's most played track ever with 850,000 hits per day and over 200 million downloads in total. According to Spotify's data, the track is most popular in Avicii's hometown of Stockholm, London, New York, Madrid, Barcelona and Los Angeles.

"I'm so excited to be the first artist to reach 200 million streams on Spotify," Avicii was quoted saying in Billboard magazine. "I've had an amazing year, so a massive thanks to all of my fans!"

The tour will continue in North America throughout March before returning to Europe this summer.

TPI

Photos: sam@samneillphoto.com
Louise Stickland
<http://avicii.com>
www.sseaudiogroup.com
www.hslgroup.com, www.xlvideo.tv
<http://bpm-sfx.com>, www.ls-live.com
www.popcorn catering.com
www.beatthetstreet.net
www.flybynite.co.uk