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Issue 033 December 2013 www.themover.co.uk

TheMover



The Mover

The independent
global moving

THE MOVER CONFERENCE

Report part one: words of wisdom from
the world's oldest profession. Page 26





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TheMover

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LEADER

Great advice
from the old
and the new

Steve Jordan, Editor



One of the joys of my job is meeting people whom I respect and being able to ask them impertinent questions. This month I have shared with you an interview I did with Michael Gerson, now one of the elder statesmen of our industry. Some of you will know Michael well; some not at all. Either way I urge you to read his story.

Michael's company became known worldwide as a mark of quality in the industry. It didn't happen by accident. When I walked into his office for the chat I was determined to find out how he did it. I think I succeeded. You should be my judge. But I bet it would be hard for anyone in the business to read that story and not, at some stage, think "I might just try that myself". If that's the only story you read this month, please invest the time.

I hope you will have a few spare minutes though. If so, take a look at our conference report (part 1). There are some gems here that you can find without having to dig too much. Read, for example, the report on our keynote speaker Madam Becky. Many asked before the conference, what can an ex brothel Madam teach us about running a moving company. Well, I can tell you that I used her advice last week and landed a very nice piece of business as a result. If it works for me, it will work for you. Take a look. By the way, this month Becky is talking at the House of Lords: she's promised merely to nod politely to anyone she recognises from the old days.

I had an interesting call today. It was from a journalist who is planning a story about the moving industry for the BBC. It's early days yet but she's gathering information and wanted to know about some of the characters in our industry. I confess I spilled the beans a little – all over the table actually. So, if any of you have had or get a call from Auntie, mea culpa.

Thank you to the handful of you who sponsored me for Movember. It was an interesting experience (see above). If you didn't, and you are feeling guilty, I suspect the website is still open at uk.movember.com.

I wish you all a happy, healthy Christmas and New Year and trust that 2014 will deliver you the rewards you deserve.

Steve Jordan



Cyril Worth & Son's new vehicle.

New vehicle for
Cyril Worth & Son

Cyril Worth & Son has added a sixth vehicle to its fleet. The new vehicle is a DAF CF 250 BHP Euro 5 space cab from Mac's Truck Sales.

It has a 5-pallet GRP container body, dropwell, false floor and side lockers. It's also got Kelsa stainless bars, a HiBar visor bar and Minibar lowbar, all with white LEDs. The new DAF joins Worth's existing five vehicles: a Mercedes 4-pallet, a Scania 5-pallet, Mercedes 5-pallet plus two Sprinter Lutons.

Andrew Worth said, "My father and I were passing Mac's one day and we were after a 4-pallet but decided on the DAF with Euro 5 because of LEZ, etc. Also it was all built and ready to go so no down time on build except for spraying and fitting stainless bars, etc. All in all Martin at Mac's was very good with just a few hiccups along the way, but then you always get those and they were soon sorted."

The company is a family concern with Andrew being the fifth generation. He said, "Our grandad started the family business on the

"...we were after a 4-pallet but decided on the DAF with Euro 5 because of LEZ..."

Andrew Worth

boats on the River Tamar taking local produce to Plymouth, then by road. He then started removals locally, then nationally with his A licence, then my father took over when grandad fell ill. My father has been in it for 46 years now and me for 26."

As well as the six vehicles the company has three warehouses and it does local, national and European moves; the European side being another reason for getting the Euro 5 vehicle because of the Ecotax in France.

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NEWS: UK

JANUS INTERNATIONAL ACQUIRES GLIDEROL SELF STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Janus International Corporation has announced its full acquisition of Gliderol Self Storage Solutions of Peterlee, United Kingdom.

Gliderol Self Storage Solutions was founded in 2005 as a joint venture between Janus International Corporation and Gliderol UK Ltd. The company is a leading manufacturer of rolling doors and building components for the self storage, commercial and industrial markets.

"Self storage operators throughout five continents identify with the Janus name," said the company's President David Curtis. "Reaffirming our commitment to the European marketplace through this acquisition will support the enduring growth of their market by utilising decades of experience to serve self storage investors."

Now operating under the name Janus International Ltd, the company will continue manufacturing from its location in Peterlee, UK.

● For more information visit www.janusintl.co.uk.



● Airbus technology campus.

Harrow Green relocates Airbus UK

Harrow Green has won a contract to relocate Airbus UK to a new multi-million pound engineering and technology campus in Filton.

The move will see over 2,500 of the firm's 4,000 employees move to the state-of-the-art Airbus Aerospace Park when it opens at the end of 2013. The contract was won following a lengthy tender process and will provide a managed resource for the relocation of staff, the removal and reselling or recycling of furniture and the disconnection and migration of IT equipment between buildings on the site.

The logistical dimensions of the moves are complex owing to the size and scope of the project within a tight time frame. Approximately 20 buildings will be vacated across the site with 2,800 moving into two new buildings, a further 1,400 staff into two existing buildings involving

"We are delighted to have been appointed by Airbus to help them on the journey to their new state-of-the-art campus."

Stephen Noake

the temporary move of current occupants to allow refurbishment before final occupation.

Harrow Green will also be providing Airbus with a full range of environmental services including: recycling, reuse, charitable donation and resale of redundant furniture,

IT and related office equipment. Furniture recycling is estimated to be around 3,000 furniture sets. Airbus is committed to its corporate social responsibility policy and sees the clearance of old furniture as an important element of the project.

James Buchanan, Real Estate Facilities Engineer - Filton for Airbus, said, "It is reassuring to know that Harrow Green has the skills, expertise and reputation to manage such an extremely complex logistical project. I look forward to working with them."

Stephen Noake, Harrow Green's manager for the contract, said, "We are delighted to have been appointed by Airbus to help them on the journey to their new state-of-the-art campus."

John Mason International Movers raise money for Breast Cancer

John Mason International's head office staff participated in this year's Wear it Pink on the 25 October, 2013.

Everybody joined in by wearing pink to work and donating £2 to Breast Cancer Campaign. Imaginative pink items were worn by all including: t-shirts, glasses, animal ears, tutus and fluorescent socks!

The fundraising team also held a coffee morning selling freshly baked cakes along with tea and

coffee to raise further funds. A grand total of £130 was raised from this event. Last year, £2.1 million was raised by Wear it Pink supporters and money raised is already funding world-class cancer research across the UK and Ireland that saves lives.

● Further information about Wear it Pink can be found at www.wearitpink.org/.

● Opposite, left to right: Carol Sankey, Denise D'Arcy, Patricia Ellis and Jade Clamp.



Pickfords brings out the scaffolding

Pickfords was contracted earlier this year by Leicester NHS Hospitals Trust to handle the relocation of the Respiratory Medicine departmental laboratory at Glenfield Hospital to its new home at the Respiratory Biomedical Research Unit.

The Respiratory Specialties, Clinical Immunology and Allergy Business Unit at Glenfield Hospital provides specialised services for investigation and treatment of patients with respiratory conditions from Leicestershire, Rutland and the surrounding areas. The Department has developed rapidly over the last decade and is the only respiratory facility for the 1,000,000 people living in the district served.

With a complex move planned involving relocation to the second floor of the new building, Pickfords Business Solutions was asked to develop a bespoke solution to move equipment including fume cabinets, glass-lined sample cabinets, and ten freezers and fridges weighing up to 400kg each. These last units could not be transported via the stairs owing to their size, so the team constructed a specialised external scaffold and crane to deliver them to the second floor.

The move itself was handled in two phases with the fridges and freezers removed and sited in the new facility, allowing clinical staff to transport samples to the new site promptly. The remainder of the equipment was transferred by the Pickfords team and sited according to a newly-developed floor plan, maximising space and efficiencies in the new site.



● Pickfords craning a freezer up to the second floor.



● Nicholas Nkuna on stage as The Lion King.

'The Lion King' praises Anglo Pacific

When Nicholas Nkuna who plays Simba in the stage musical *The Lion King* needed to transport his personal effects from Birmingham in the UK to Johannesburg, he called on Anglo Pacific to make sure everything arrived safely.

"I've been touring with Disney's *The Lion King* for almost a year and a half and it's amazing how much stuff you can accumulate," said Nicholas. "When I recently travelled home to South Africa for a much appreciated holiday, I took the opportunity to send back some of the bags of clothes I have been lugging around on tour with me. Thumbs up for Anglo Pacific. They offered great service, kept in constant contact and were professional throughout."

Based on the box-office-smashing 1994 film of the same name, Director Julie Taymor's *The Lion King* production transports the savannah of Africa to the stage. The current ten-city tour encompassing Manchester and Dublin, Birmingham and Edinburgh, features a 52-strong cast from 18 different countries alongside a mammoth 232 puppets. Nicholas has played (adult) Simba since the start.

Jason Diggs, Anglo Pacific's Sales Director, says, "By the very nature of our business, moving people's

"Thumbs up for Anglo Pacific. They offered great service, kept in constant contact and were professional throughout."
Nicholas Nkuna

prize possessions all over the world, we encounter a great variety of individuals with fascinating tales to tell. From love stories 70 years in the making to rock stars bidding farewell to LA, there's never a dull day. We're thrilled that Nicholas Nkuna opted to use Anglo Pacific's services and wish him all the best as *The Lion King* tour continues, as well as with writing and recording his new album which will be out soon – although he's quick to tell us that theatre will always be his first love."

New vehicle for Kidds at Silverstone

Kidd's new vehicle is a DAF FACF 75 30 on air ride suspension. It's a five-pallet vehicle and was handed over to Philip Kidd MD of Kidds and Sandersons Removals by Terry Sinnott of UVB Bodies at the Movers and Storers Show at Silverstone. "I saw the vehicle for the first time at Silverstone," said Phil. "It will be used to pull one of our four-pallet trailers on our London service."



● Kidds' new DAF as seen at Silverstone.

TRADE ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Moving etc is running a survey to see what people think of the industry's trade associations. The idea is to give people the opportunity of sharing their experiences and saying what they like and what they don't in the hope of gaining an important insight and helping associations serve their members better.

The statistical results will be published in early 2014. No written comments will be published without the writer's permission.

If you would like to take part, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/trade-association-survey>.

Got an event coming up?

Put it on the online events diary – just e-mail nikki@themover.co.uk



PROFILE: EUROPEAN RELOCATION SERVICES

● Jennifer Sloane, left and below, some of the automotive exotica that her company deals with.



Vive les differences

Ex-pat American Jennifer Sloan is the General Manager at European Relocation Services, based in Marseilles and Paris, France. *The Mover* caught up with her to talk about some of the differences she's found working and living in Europe over the last 20 years.

European Relocation Services was established by two of her senior colleagues in 1995 to look after domestic moves and outsourcing in France, and later in 2001 to cover the international trade. Since its inception, it handles more than 1,500 shipments worldwide a year. The company specialises in international removals of household goods and personal effects, corporate relocations worldwide, domestic and European removals, car shipments, customs brokerage as well as international forwarding.

Jennifer first moved to France during a study year at her American University in Missouri, USA where she studied a BS in International Business and French. She fell in love with the country and on her graduation, she decided to return to France.

"We purposefully look out for jobs that are more unusual or that offer unique challenges to keep our jobs more interesting and to constantly stay on our toes."

Jennifer Sloane

For the last seven years Jennifer has worked for ERS. Her task entails the co-ordination of international imports and exports for household goods and commercial shipments. Jennifer also

oversees management of moving teams, materials, customs brokerage, and freight for door-to-door transport by sea, air and road.

Being an English-speaker in the French shipping industry has enabled Jennifer to assist international customers and she has the distinct advantage of bringing her blend of French cultural understanding and her American emphasis on customer service to each job. This ensures that projects passing through ERS get the best of both worlds. "There's so much more to getting this job right than being multi-lingual – there is also a strong need to understand how the French work and how projects are approached here in France," Jennifer expanded. This rare combination of different attitudes has given ERS an edge over its competitors, enabling them to take on more unusual jobs.

ERS is often required to ship expensive cars to unstable regions – for instance, two brand new limousines were delivered to Nigeria for a client recently. Another task saw the air transit of a 2013 Bentley from the USA to France. In addition, extremely rare works of art are frequent cargo. "We purposefully look out for jobs that are more unusual or that offer unique challenges to keep our jobs more interesting and to constantly stay on our toes," said Jennifer.

With many years working and living in France, Jennifer has now made the place her home. The famous French 'joie de vivre' has her in its grip and long may she enjoy it.

'Vive les differences' indeed.



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NEWS: UK

Successful first Movers and Storers Show for PPS Crate Hire

PPS Crate Hire recently exhibited for the first time at the Movers and Storers Show, which ran alongside The Mover Conference at the Silverstone Circuit.

The event drew an impressively large crowd of visitors to the event, whilst the conference was informative and supported networking with key industry figures.

The sales team at PPS Crate Hire were on hand throughout the two-day show to display their comprehensive range of crates and discuss rental requirements with potential customers. The company said that visitors to the stand were particularly interested in viewing the large range of PPS crates available with the personal crate being particularly popular.

"Although we have many years' experience in supplying and washing returnable transit products within many industrial sectors, we are a relatively new supplier to the removals industry," reported Commercial Director Joanne Moss. "The show was an important opportunity for us to meet new contacts, listen and expand our understanding of what the industry needs."

The company said that the event was a great success and confirmed that it will certainly exhibit again in the future.

● For more about PPS Crate Hire visit: www.ppscratehire.co.uk.



● The scouts found the crates ideally suited to their requirements.

Kenton Scouts choose Mastercrate

When a contingent from the 9th Kenton Scout Group went on their first international camp they looked for ways of transporting their equipment as safely and securely as possible.

They were travelling with follow Scouts, Explorer Scouts and Leaders from the Greater London Middlesex West County to the International Scout Camp in Switzerland as part of a summer camp. Transportation was to be by trailer, plane and lorry and ensuring that the equipment got there and back in one piece was paramount.

Having thought about various ways of transporting the equipment it was decided to contact Mastercrate to see whether 12 of their lidded metre crates could be borrowed to house the equipment. Mastercrate very kindly agreed to loan the crates free of charge with the option of purchasing the crates at a discounted price after the trip if they had proved useful.

The scouts said the crates were indispensable as they could be easily stacked, when empty or full,

... they could be easily stacked, when empty or full ... and, most importantly, they could be secured so that nothing went missing.

and they could attach an itinerary of the equipment housed inside each crate to the outside of it – making it easy to see exactly what was where and, most importantly, they could be secured so that nothing went missing. They were also good for keeping mice and squirrels away from the food store.

The group has since purchased a supply of crates for future ventures.

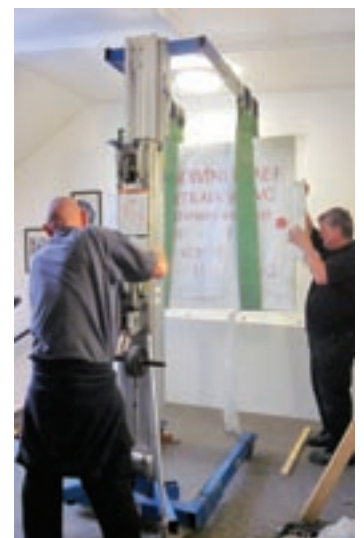
Harrow Green moves Roman history

Harrow Green recently won the contract to relocate a rare and very delicate piece of Roman history. The project was to perform the transfer and installation of a 290kg replica marble dedication slab from the Roman Legion Museum in Wales to the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents in Oxford.

Harrow Green, a business relocation specialist, won the contract after the highly complicated logistics involved had proved too challenging for its competitors. The full-size replica marble dedication slab was first lifted onto a stair climber in the basement at the Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon. A specially constructed timber staircase had to be installed so that the slab could be transported up to street level and carefully loaded on to Harrow Green's lorry. On arrival at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents in Oxford there was a logistical challenge to re-mount the artefact on to a specially constructed stand in its main stairwell.

"Harrow Green was quick and honest with its quotation and fast to organise the job," said Maggy Sasanow, Research Support Officer for The Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents.

Stuart Fitton, Contract Manager at Harrow Green said: "Harrow Green was recommended following work it had undertaken for the Welsh National Folk Museum of Wales. Harrow Green also has an enviable track record and experience in the museums and heritage sector and is often selected to handle delicate relocations for irreplaceable items at museums and libraries."



● The slab being lowered into place at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents in Oxford.

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Time to sell: property market hotspots

A new study reveals the UK hotspots where it takes the least amount of time to sell a home.

Estate agents are always asked the same question from prospective clients: "How much time will it take to sell my property?" This got the people at home.co.uk, a prominent UK property search and estate agents directory, to put together a study that could investigate and add some semblance of order to the quandary.

The results of the study revealed that the time it will take to agree a sale is influenced by a multitude of factors such as the property's ability to stand out from others, supply and demand for that type of property, price and above all, location.

The research, which incorporates in excess of 634,000 data points, shows the stark contrasts in the typical time it takes to sell a property over the last six months across England and Wales. For instance, the

shortest durations of just 20 days were recorded in parts of Bristol, London, Cambridge and Milton Keynes.

At the other end of the spectrum, property in the northern regions, much of Wales and parts of the South West of England are taking much longer to sell. Many local markets in these areas of the country remain slow, hence the average time to sell a property is edging towards four months or more. Areas that are experiencing the longest selling times are scattered throughout England and Wales. The contrast is most prevalent in Mablethorpe, where the typical number of days to sell a property currently stands at a giant 246 days.

The study indicates that the time it takes to sell is highly location dependent. The demand for property in and around the capital remains high and, consequently, the average time

to sell across the UK is 49 days or less.

"This study shows that the property market is functioning very well in many parts of the country," said Doug Shephard, Director of Home.co.uk. "Closer inspection of the high performance areas reveals thriving local economies driven

by above average household incomes and greater confidence about economic futures."

It is also clear that price falls in struggling markets are not enough to stimulate transaction levels. 'Help to Buy' schemes could be focussed on these deflating markets, and that would deliver real help where it is needed.

Shortest typical (median) periods to sell across England and Wales

London (within the M25)		Elsewhere
1	N5 (Highbury): 20 days	BS3 (Bristol): 20 days
2	SM5 (Carshalton): 20 days	CB1 (Cambridge): 20 days
3	E17 (Walthamstow): 23 days	CB3 (Cambridge): 23 days
4	TW2 (Twickenham): 23 days	CB4 (Cambridge): 23 days
5	E8 (Hackney): 24 days	MK12 (Milton Keynes): 23 days
6	KT5 (Surbiton): 24 days	CV32 (Leamington Spa): 24 days
7	KT9 (Chessington): 24 days	IP33 (Bury St. Edmunds): 24 days
8	SM6 (Wallington): 25 days	RG5 (Woodley, Reading): 24 days
9	N16 (Stoke Newington): 25 days	B48 (Alvechurch): 25 days
10	EC3 (City of London): 26 days	AL3 (Redbourn): 25 days

NEWS: INTERNATIONAL



CROW KILLS

Researchers for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority found over 200 dead crows near greater Boston recently, and there was concern that they may have died from Avian Flu.

A bird pathologist examined the remains of all the crows, and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was definitely NOT Avian Flu. The cause of death appeared to be vehicular impacts.

However, during the detailed analysis it was noted that varying colours of paints appeared on the birds' beaks and claws. By analysing these paint residues it was determined that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with trucks, while only 2% were killed by an impact with a car.

MTA then hired an ornithological behaviourist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of truck kills versus car kills.

The ornithological behaviourist very quickly concluded the cause: when crows eat road kill, they always have a look-out crow in a nearby tree to warn of impending danger. They discovered that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah" - not a single one could shout "Truck".

Absolutely amazing!

Thanks to David Trenchard for this valuable contribution.



● Santa comes to Saksham.

TEAM announces support for Plan and Project Saksham

Team Relocations has recently announced a three-year commitment to a major fund raising initiative in support of Plan, the UK headquartered global children's charity.

Founded over more than 75 years ago, Plan is one of the oldest and largest children's development organisations in the world. Plan's vision is of a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity.

Leonie Kerkelaan, Team's Group Compliance Officer commented, "We wanted to strengthen our core business values by demonstrating our commitment to helping shape society and economy in underprivileged locations, in a

positive and sustainable way."

Project Saksham, operated by Plan in India, aims to achieve decent employment for youth living in poor urban and rural areas ensuring that all entering the workforce are equipped with the knowledge and life skills required for quality jobs and work their way out of poverty.

"We are committed to bringing lasting, positive change in the lives of children of the country, particularly the excluded and most deprived," said Bhagyashri Dengle, Country Director for Plan India.

Team's commitment to the project



will encompass all of their 34 locations across the 13 countries in which they are based and will include significant fundraising initiatives aimed at contributing €50,000 to the project annually.

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Back-door recruitment – it's just not cricket!

The Mover has become aware of some companies engaging in what is probably illegal and certainly immoral practice of employing people 'through the back-door'. By Steve Jordan.

This is where the company employs the services of a recruitment consultant to find candidates for a position, does not employ them immediately, but then employs one of the candidates a short time later without paying the agency. Recruitment agencies provide a valuable service to the moving and relocation industry worldwide and life for many would be much more difficult without them. Engaging in back-door practices such as this is a very good way of making sure they direct their efforts elsewhere thereby depriving the whole industry of a valuable resource.

What's more, by interviewing a

candidate from an agency you have entered into a contract, which you break if you employ the person without paying the agreed fees. In a small industry like ours it is very unlikely that word won't get back to the agency concerned and, if they can show that they made the initial introduction, which they will be able to do, you're on a loser.

Call it what you like, it's theft by another name. Engaging in such practices is simply not cricket and anyone who does should re-think their policies. At the very least they will quickly find agencies are unwilling to work with them. At worst they will be exposed and could end up in court.



Comment

Do the fees agencies charge encourage this kind of behaviour? Have you ever done this and, if so, why do you think it was justified?

Have your say at comment@themover.co.uk.



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PROPERTY MARKET: UK HOUSE SALES



UK house sales to pass one million by 2016

According to a new housing market forecast report from property services company, Hamptons International, the UK housing market will experience double digit growth in the next three years, bringing the number of transactions back above one million by 2016.

Unlike house prices, the level of property transactions is the most accurate indicator of the strength of the housing market.

This predicted growth in transactions will pave the way to a healthier property market. The new build sector will also support transaction levels but with only about 10% of transactions coming from new build completions, returning sellers will be the most important driver.

million mark in 2016 with projected growth of 50% between now and 2018.

- The uplift in activity is due to improved confidence built on economic recovery and Government stimuli such as 'Help to Buy' and 'Funding for Lending' initiatives.

- House prices in England and Wales will increase by 6% in 2014 and by 24% in the next five years.

- House prices in Central London will

UK Property Transaction Forecasts

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
734,000	800,000	880,000	970,000	1,070,000	1,070,000	1,100,000

Source: HMLR, Register for Scotland and Hamptons International.

"The fixation with house prices as an indicator of housing market recovery is misplaced," said Fionnuala Earley, Research Director at Hamptons International. "Transaction levels are a far superior indicator of housing market health. A liquid and active market is the key to avoiding volatility and to ensuring a stable and sustainable housing market in the UK."

- Transactions will grow year on year for the next three years breaking the one

grow the most in 2014 at 8% and by 32% over five years.

- House price growth will slow in Prime Central London (PCL) to 3% in 2014 but extreme supply shortages mean that over the next five years PCL will still see 20% growth.

The housing market forecast report, that predicts transactions and house prices for the next five years, is based on national economic and house price data, and provides a national view.

Housing market assumptions and risks

2014 housing market forecast assumptions

- The UK economy will continue to recover.
- Wage growth will be modest for some time.
- Unemployment is unlikely to fall rapidly.
- Inflation will stay above its 2% target for some time.
- Conditions in the US and Europe continue to improve.
- 'Funding for Lending' and 'Help to Buy' will remain in place for the planned period (until 2015 and 2017 respectively).
- Mansion Tax will not come into force in this forecast period.
- The Financial Policy Committee and the Prudential Regulation Authority will monitor and restrict risky lending.

2014 housing market forecast downside risks

- Turmoil in the US could destabilise the world economy at a fragile time.
- Unrest in oil producing countries could cause a spike in oil prices and result in an early hike in interest rates.

2014 housing market forecast upside risks

- Global economic conditions could improve more rapidly and allow faster job creation.
- A faster, balanced economic recovery would consolidate a more sustainable housing market recovery.



Comment

Looks like 2014 is brewing up for a good year. What's your opinion? Has the upturn already started in your area?

Have your say at comment@themover.co.uk.

TWO NEW OFFICES FOR CROWN WORLDWIDE

Crown Worldwide Group has recently opened branches in Hamburg and Sri Lanka.

The Hamburg branch is just a few minutes drive from the centre of the city and represents an expansion of the existing two German Crown offices based in Frankfurt and Munich. The company said that the Hamburg office reinforces its commitment to supporting clients and developing its business in Germany following increased demand for relocation and world mobility services.

Daniel Halfpap, Country Manager - Germany, commented: "The new presence in Hamburg allows us to further expand our successful business development. Since the start of 2013, we have experienced a double digit growth rate."

In Sri Lanka the new operation is part of an on-going strategy to increase presence in this region and an enhanced level of support to clients. The branch is in Wattala, near Colombo, and is Crown's eleventh branch in the South Asia region. The company said that the new office will encourage deeper engagement with clients such as governments, corporations, diplomats and private customers. The Colombo branch will also act as a hub to service the neighbouring island nations of Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles.



● Srinivas Krishnan, Crown Managing Director, South Asia.



● Jean-Marc Ayrault wants to "listen to opponents" and "avert the escalation of violence".
Photo: Rémi Jouan/Wikimedia Commons.

France gives in to ecotax protestors

In what must have been a humiliating climb down, the French government suspended the unpopular 'ecotax' that would have imposed new levies on all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes operating in France.

It was due to come into force in January 2014 and would have raised an estimated 800 million euros in tax revenue.

Protestors said that the tax would seriously damage the region's precarious farming and food sectors by increasing transportation costs, driving companies out of business and leading to major job losses. It would, of course, also have added costs to any moving company transporting goods to or through France. The heat has now been taken off – perhaps never to return.

French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault stressed that the move was "a suspension, not a cancellation" of the tax. "I have decided to suspend the implementation of this ecotax,

to provide the necessary time for dialogue at the national and regional level," he said.

The French have something of a reputation for not taking things lying down when they disagree. The week before the announcement, for example, around 1,000 protesters clashed with police as they attempted to destroy a toll gate near the town of Pont-de-Buis. They lit bales of hay and tyres and threw eggs at police, who responded with tear gas. At least three protesters were injured, one of them seriously, while six police officers reported injuries. Jean-Marc Ayrault said that the tax was being suspended to give time for the government to listen to opponents and "to avert

the escalation of violence".

Bruno Gentry, President of France Nature Environnement - the country's federation for the protection of the environment - was not impressed. "The environment has become the scapegoat for economic problems," he said pointing out the fact that ten other countries had successfully introduced a similar tax.

"I have decided to suspend the implementation of this ecotax, to provide the necessary time for dialogue at the national and regional level."

Jean-Marc Ayrault

Christian Troadec, the mayor of the town of Carhaix however, said that the suspension was not going far enough. "Brittany is demanding the permanent suspension of the ecotax, especially since we don't know how long this moratorium will last," he said.

The ecotax, which was first put forward under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, would have been paid by all trucks, both French and foreign, travelling on a total of 10,000 km of motorways, national roads and 5,000 km of county or municipal roads. The aim was to encourage companies to use greener forms of transport and opt for shorter journeys, where possible.

All vehicles that are liable for the tax would have been obliged to be equipped with an On Board Unit (OBU) which would calculate the amount of ecotax due, based on the distance travelled and which roads were taken.

Williams Moving & Storage alive and well!

Williams Moving & Storage in Canada wishes to make its customers and agents aware that, although it has recently closed its branches in Kamloops, British Columbia and Edmonton, Alberta to gain operational efficiencies, the company itself is alive and well and thriving in nine western Canadian cities. There

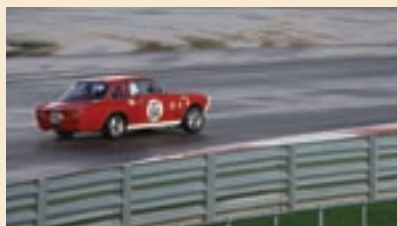
seems to be a rumour around that the company has stopped trading. This is false. The company is still healthy and operating in:

- Calgary, Alberta;
- Cranbrook, British Columbia;
- Kelowna, British Columbia (now also serving the Kamloops market);
- Lethbridge, Alberta;

- Prince George, British Columbia;
- Prince Rupert, British Columbia;
- Terrace, British Columbia;
- Vancouver, British Columbia;
- Victoria, British Columbia;
- For more information about the company and its services, contact Jim Williams, CEO via e-mail at: jimwilliams@williamsmoving.com.

REPORT: THE MOVERS & STORERS SHOW

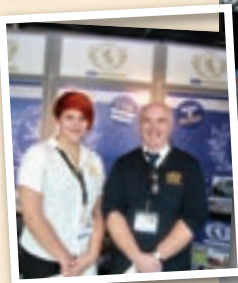
● Right: action on the Silverstone track; far right: visitors in the networking lounge; below: reallymoving.com; below right: S Jones Containers.



My 'first' expo – the Movers and Storers Show 2013

Sometimes ordinary men have great responsibility thrust upon them. I think that's how the saying goes. Whilst quote mangling is my thing, I also enjoy sneaking out of my comfort zones on a regular basis. One such recent occasion was when I attended the Movers and Storers Show 2013 at Silverstone Race Circuit a few weeks ago. By Ed Roberts.

● Above: Ed Roberts; right: Chateau Products; below right: Currencies Direct; below: Lion Containers.



If you were there you were probably aware of my stalking around the stalls brandishing a rather large camera.

This was because my brief on behalf of *The Mover* was to take as many 'great' photos as my memory cards and batteries would allow. So it was a case of 'do' or 'die' in my mind. The even scarier part was getting to meet enough of you so that I could discover a little bit more about the types of companies, the people that work for them and the reasons why you came to this year's Movers and Storers Show. This slight hesitation in getting into the swing of things proved to be unfounded when I realised how laid-back, helpful and down-to-earth you all were.

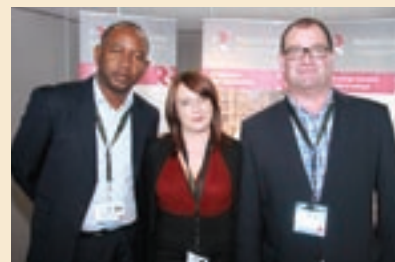
I'm counting this trade show as my first so far. And I'm happy and relieved to relate that I had a good time documenting the sights and sounds of the show. The venue at The Wing is a great spot. Exhibitors could easily take a stroll along the promenade that overlooks a section of the racetrack. Professional racers jostled

with hobbyists for track space out on the tarmac and it became a dizzying (yet minor) mission of mine to capture the sports cars hurtling around the bend on camera.

Speed was also order of the day for one of the show's most anticipated events – 'The Packer of the Year Contest'. Organised by M&G Removals from Solihull and invigilated by Matt Faizey, the competition was hard won by the Matthew James Removal & Storage Team with just one parcel to spare. The aim of the game was to fit as many parcels into M&G's smallest fleet vehicle within 22 minutes. The crew with the fewest parcels left was the victor! The competition gathered in quite a crowd down amongst the show 'Vehicle Expo' in the Pit Lane Garages.

Elsewhere, computer game enthusiast Colin of Administer Software set up an interactive F1 cockpit so fellow exhibitors could experience a virtual Silverstone racing experience. There was a draw for a bottle of champagne. Needless to say

REPORT: THE MOVERS & STORERS SHOW



● Far left: Rob Thacker of Pound Gates presents Daniel Pettit with an iPod and Bose docking station; left centre: Basil Fry & Company; left Reason Global.



The Packer of the Year Contest



● Above: Matt De-Machen of Matthew James Removals holds aloft the packing competition winners' trophy; centre: the winning team in action; right: competition judge Matt Faizey of M&G Removals.



my skills from the era of 1980s Atari have become unsuitably eroded since. I was 100% rubbish. This was one of my favourite stalls at the show and I hope this level of combination of interaction, fun and invention returns at the next one. Plans are already afoot for a 2014 show at the same venue.

Of the 45 stalls in the main hall and a further five plots in the Pit Lane Garages, the removals and storage trades were well represented by a broad cross section of international moving firms (White & Company/Kidds Services), lock suppliers (Chateau Products), packaging material specialists (BAR/Simpsons/Haywoods), industry specific insurance brokers (Basil Fry & Co/Reason Global/Pound Gates), online lead generation firms (reallymoving.com), price comparison sites (Buzzmove), lorry and fork lift sales (Bespoke/Toyota/Mac's/UVB), crate hire (PHS Teacrate/PPS Midlands), container hire (Lion/S Jones), currency exchanges (Currencies Direct) and even a new trade association (The Alliance of Independent Movers – AIM).

Just about everybody I spoke to was extremely open about the benefits the show brought to their firms as far as establishing new contacts and client relationships whilst renewing old friendships. The Silverstone venue was a big hit too, with a lot of the exhibitors expressing how appropriate the choice was being that they loved all things fast and vehicular. Even after a heavy night of partying and socialising at the on site Boozebox, that included some great food, fabulous entertainment from a guitar duo that

almost set their instruments on fire with the energy of their playing, and a show-stopping karaoke from Peter Doman of Basil Fry – everyone was openly positive about their experiences at the show.

I'm counting this trade show as my first so far. And I'm happy and relieved to relate that I had a good time documenting the sights and sounds of the show.

Much talk revolved around the presence of a certain celeb. Yes, the party was so loud The Stig came by to investigate. Photo opportunities and much misbehaviour ensued making for a memorable end to day one! I think there were even some attendees who were enjoying their hangovers the following morning.

As well as networking, exhibitors and attendees were able to attend the Movers and Storers Conference run by *The Mover*. I was present throughout the conference that complemented the main show and ran throughout the conference upstairs on the mezzanine floor. To read more, turn to page 26.

As my first trade show I found it all to be a very engaging and lively experience, and as good as others in the future may turn out to be, I'll never forget that 'first is forever'.



● Above far left: Simpson Packaging; above Kidd's and Kenneth Hayton Removals trucks; left: A Haywood & Sons; below left Toyota Materials Handling; below: some say he was born in a removals truck, all we know is, he's called The Stig.



BUSINESS: CUSTOMER DISPUTES

● The high cost of winning the argument will almost certainly outweigh the cost of regaining the customer's goodwill.

Win the customer, not the argument

However well you run your business it is inevitable that from time to time a customer will find a reason to complain. Some, perhaps most, managers see complaints as negative and sometimes view them simply as an attempt by the customer to get a reduction in the price or some other kind of compensation. By David Jordan.

In fact this is seldom the case. Most people, certainly in the UK, don't like to complain and will only do so if they feel they have received particularly poor service, so the fact they have come forward and voiced their dissatisfaction should be welcomed, not resented. It should be seen as an opportunity to improve your service and to prove to the customer, and the world, that you really do care. Why the world? Well, if you receive good service you'll probably tell half a dozen people, but if you are badly let down you'll probably tell a hundred, and now with social media it could be many thousands.

So how do you deal with an irate customer who seems to be after your blood? The first rule is not to start an argument. Regardless of who's right and who's wrong, listen

Regardless of who's right and who's wrong, listen to what the customer says and let him get things off his chest - without butting in.

to what the customer says and let him get things off his chest - without butting in. Be genuinely interested and remember to thank the customer for letting you know there's been a problem and giving you a chance to put things right. By this time you should have developed a rapport with the customer and the absence of confrontation will have changed his initial anger to a more consolatory state of mind. Ask the customer what you can do to do to rectify the situation and if possible agree to his proposal. Even better, try to exceed it! Remember, the high cost of winning the argument will almost

certainly outweigh the cost of regaining the customer's goodwill.

I can hear the cynics out there saying that this is merely giving in to customers' unreasonable demands and that standing your ground and pointing to clauses in your Ts&Cs is a more realistic approach. There may indeed be times when if all else fails this is the only course to take, but for most professional responsibly run businesses this will rarely, if ever be the case. Don't forget, we live in litigious times and if the gloves really come off and the lawyers get involved you could lose more than just your reputation.

David Jordan

David is the Deputy Editor of *The Mover* and a Director of The Words Workshop. Before taking on a journalistic role he spent most of his working life in industrial and retail sales.





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INTERVIEW: MICHAEL GERSON



BUILDING QUALITY

An interview with Michael Gerson, by Steve Jordan.

For some reason I was expecting Michael Gerson not to be working from the old company offices in darkest Whetstone when I booked the appointment for, what was for me, one of the key interviews of my journalistic life. He sold the moving business some years ago and the company that still bears his name now operates from Potter's Bar five miles away. I had rather expected Michael to be running his self storage, investment and leasing businesses either from home or a plush, oak-lined office somewhere in Mayfair. Not so. As always, Michael is never quite what you expect him to be.

Michael started his moving company at the age of 23 in 1961. He, and his wife, Shirley, married the following year. During the 1970s and 1980s Michael, with the support of Shirley who he still calls 'the Boss', built the company into a phenomenon within the industry. He employed and trained some of the leading members of the industry; carved a niche for providing exceptional service in the corporate market; moved a long list of household names including Margaret Thatcher; performed a series of impressive relocations including the Royal Armouries (42,000 priceless items) from the Tower of London to Leeds; was delighted and proud to serve as FIDI President; and did more for the UK's international moving industry, largely behind the scenes, than probably anyone alive today. During all of this, he made money too.

In my interview I wanted to find out a little about the history and what drove him to join the moving industry in the first place, and how he had succeeded in

building a culture of quality that had become the hallmark of the company and an aspiration for much of the industry. I wanted to discover what made Michael Gerson different.

The early years

Of course the story started long before 1961. It was Michael's grandfather, one of 20 children living in Germany, who started the ball rolling. He came to London in the 1870s with the intention of catching a ship to Australia. Emigration in those days was a huge decision and one that only a person of extraordinary character would even consider. While waiting for the ship that was due to sail a week later, a friend offered him a job working with a forwarding company. He never caught the ship. Like so many since, the moving business had gripped him.

"He must have been an enterprising man," said Michael. "He travelled to the USA and Canada several times gathering ideas before starting his own business The Pall Mall Deposit and Forwarding Co. all before 1900. He got some help with finance and put up a prestige building between Lower Regent Street and Haymarket in London. Can you imagine putting up a new building there now!" Michael's father and uncle were also involved so the family business was already in the making.

It was some years later that Michael got the opportunity to branch out himself. He had been away learning the trade in France, Germany and Switzerland when the business, or rather the property it occupied, caught the eye of businessman Sir Maxwell Joseph. "He made the shareholders an offer they couldn't



● Top left: Michael speaking in 1992; above: now 74, Michael still works at the old offices in Whetstone; top right: as chairman of The Institute of the Furniture Warehousing and Removals Industry; above right: with his wife Shirley during his FIDI presidency in 1982.

refuse and, quite rightly, they accepted," Michael explained. At the same time as losing his job, he proposed to Shirley, which she accepted but insisted that Michael should not work for anyone other than himself.

Michael wanted to take on the very prestigious Pall Mall company name but that proved to be impossible. Michael Gerson Limited was, therefore, born to specialise in overseas moving. "Of all the things we did at the old company, overseas moving seemed to me to be the activity which we did least well," said Michael.

Building quality

The early days, by Michael's own admission, were horrendous. The company started in an old garage in Finchley with a sloping floor and not even a nod to modern health and safety requirements. "We subcontracted everything," he admitted. "The business was probably a shambles by my reckoning."

Michael knew that he wanted to work for the multinationals because he figured that it would be less price sensitive.

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL GERSON



“He must have been an enterprising man. He travelled to the USA and Canada several times gathering ideas before starting his own business...”

Michael Gerson

“Companies will usually foot the bill for sending individuals abroad, so only the best is good enough, and they don’t care how much it costs.” He said that many moving companies make a huge effort but make very little profit. His best piece of advice came from Joe Luxford who told him: “Michael, you can’t afford to work for poor people.” He kept to that advice and aimed for the top. “I realised that you normally amass the same amount of paperwork and spend just as long shipping a 40ft container as 150ft of groupage. So you might as well do the bigger jobs.”

Quality workmanship and service therefore became part of the brand. Michael had already had a good grounding

in the industry and, having spent time working abroad, had a good knowledge of languages, essential in those days for working in Europe. He was also a free spirit. He had seen how other companies operated across the world and wasn’t hemmed in by the ‘we’ve always done it this way’ attitude.

Training had always been important to Michael. He said that the people that had most influenced him during his working life were the trainers at The Institute* - people like Ken Berger, Harold Holgate, Peter Gooding, Richard Lomath, Dennis Pearce, Sam Elliott and Geoff Pygall. These people gave their time freely and appeared to be more concerned about the future generation than their own. Many would include Michael in the same breath along with other Michael Gerson Ltd. employees such as Brian Charles and Colin Gordon who did more than their fair share to teach others.

“We didn’t enforce quality with systems, box ticking,” said Michael. “If something went wrong the directors got involved to find out why and how we could prevent

it. We had a no-blame culture. We’d speak to the foreman first to get to the bottom of the problem, then modify our methods. That was the key to achieving the quality. We had very short communication lines; we didn’t send memos to each other.”

Another keystone of quality for Michael was to make sure the company was not departmentalised. “People are under stress when they move. They don’t like to have to speak to lots of different people. We trained our staff so they could talk to the client about everything. The client always spoke to the same person and was not passed around or put on hold listening to music. Everyone had their own personal letterheads and almost nobody had a title. This way the customer knew you could do anything. It created real confidence.”

It also created a problem. Staff would learn their trade by handling smaller accounts and then move up to larger ones. When they had built a very strong relationship with a company it was difficult to move them on. But Michael had worked out a foolproof way of doing it. “When someone was changing from one account to another we would say »

*The Institute of the Furniture Warehousing and Removals Industry renamed The Movers Institute in 1993 and disbanded in 2008.

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL GERSON



they had gone on holiday and the replacement took over until they got back. After a couple of weeks they were comfortable with the new person anyway."

Michael said that these relationships were very important. "I don't think people bother about these things anymore. They are more interested in systems than psychology. If you are moving top people, who are regarded as top by their employers, you ought to match the service to that."

Foremen, according to Michael, are the most important people in the company because they have to take the tough decisions on the spot. Michael empowered them by giving them the authority to negotiate with the client. He also took the unusual step of putting all foremen on salary. "If you pay people an hourly rate they complete the job and then drink tea at your expense, which is daft," he explained. "Being on salary meant that the foremen had an interest in getting the job done efficiently rather than spinning out the day. They all reacted very well."

Specialisation

Joe Luxford gave Michael his piece of gold-plated advice, so I asked Michael what advice he would give to moving companies. "My advice would be to find a niche. It doesn't really matter what the niche is but the thought you give it in advance will eventually be reflected in your performance. Specialise in something. If you just do the same as everyone else you start selling on price. Anyone who does a specialist service, defined geographically or moving something very valuable for example, will stand a better chance than being a generalist."

Industry work

Michael worked tirelessly with the wider industry to improve standards. His father

"My advice would be to find a niche. It doesn't really matter what the niche is but the thought you give it in advance will eventually be reflected in your performance."

Michael Gerson



had been the president of the National Association of Furniture Warehousemen and Removers (that became BAR in 1972) in 1939-40 and Michael is a Past President of FIDI. Although he was always keen to improve quality he was never a fan of formal Standards that he considered to be "just box ticking". "When ISO came in we got quite enthusiastic then found that we could write our own manual, so we never bothered with any of these Standards." Instead he took a more practical approach with the Michael Gerson Medal being awarded every year to the person with the highest marks in the Institute Practical Estimating examination.



Michael was also one of the instigators of the BAR's IMMI scheme, that provides a finance guarantee to cover pre-payments for overseas moves, and one of BAR's representatives to IMMI for many years. "IMMI was not for us but it did help to differentiate international movers from forwarding agents. It is a good thing for some companies, depending on how they sell it to their customers." Michael did acknowledge though that its purpose was somewhat eroded nowadays as many people pay by credit card and, therefore, have some element of financial protection.

Retirement?

At the age of 76 Michael still works from a modest office within his self storage company on the Michael Gerson Ltd site. The walls are festooned with Liz Moon original paintings and original cartoons, moving van or customer-related. His investment company still owns the buildings but they are now let to tenants. Visiting again now that so many changes have taken place seems a little eerie with the old company sign still straddling the entrance, but the moving company long gone.

For the last four years or so, Michael has been suffering from Parkinson's disease and so has begun to cut back on his time at the office. The finance side of the business is now ably run by his son, Anthony. Michael said that he had never considered retiring until now but he sometimes struggles to keep his thoughts on track. There was little or no sign of it while I interviewed him.

So as Michael prepares for his retirement and a little more time getting under Shirley's feet, perhaps it is for us all to reflect on the company he created and the lead it provided to so many would-be imitators around the world. To do the same all you need is to find a niche; have the confidence of your convictions; work hard; open your mind to what is possible; employ great people, train them, empower them and trust them; and have a fundamental understanding of the human condition. Simple really!



● Left: moving the Lord Mayor of London at Mansion House; above a successful fishing trip.

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REPORT: THE MOVER CONFERENCE



The Mover Conference

Delegates from a wide cross section of the moving industry gathered at Silverstone's brand new multi-million pound exhibition and banqueting centre on 21-22 October for *The Mover's* first conference.



The event ran alongside the Movers and Storers Show, which also gave delegates the opportunity to visit stands and bring themselves bang up to date with the latest products and services.

The Mover's Deputy Editor, David Jordan opened the conference by saying that the aim of the event was to bring people together from all levels of the moving industry, from those just starting out, to industry veterans who had spent a lifetime building successful businesses. The conference was truly open to everyone and its aim was to share ideas and experiences for the benefit of all concerned.

David explained that this was not going to be a 'sit and listen' conference and that active discussion and debate on the subjects raised during the business sessions would be the main thrust of the event. Needless to say - this being the moving industry - there was no shortage of input from the floor, all given in a positive and good humoured spirit.

This was certainly a conference with a difference. The more traditional five-star hotel and black tie gala dinner was replaced by a raucous party with live entertainment, a free bar and simple but excellent food, all served in David Coultard's Snoozebox Hotel in the heart of the Silverstone circuit. Not surprisingly, day two of the conference was a few minutes late getting underway!

Needless to say - this being the moving industry - there was no shortage of input from the floor...



● Top: David Jordan; above and far left: input from the floor was encouraged; left: Steve Jordan.





KEYNOTE
SPEAKER:
**MADAM
BECKY**

Words of wisdom from the world's oldest profession

Here at *The Mover* we believe in doing things a little differently, so when it came to choosing a keynote speaker for our conference we decided to break with tradition and bring a little spice to the show.

Becky Adams is a former brothel madam who for more than 20 years ran a successful business in the Home Counties delivering, as she puts it, excellent customer servicing where the client always comes first! Many of the lessons she learnt during her time in the sex industry can be applied to any business, including what is perhaps the world's second oldest profession - the moving industry.

Becky talked about engaging with customers, not making assumptions about what they really want, and realising their fears and anxiety when they make contact for the first time. Becky gave an example of a typical punter calling Madam Becky's for the first time. The nervous caller would say something like this. "Hello, how much is it to see Fifi for half an hour?" It would be easy just to give a price, but that would probably be the end of the conversation.

Although the punter is asking what Fifi's service costs that's not the main reason for his call, what he really wants is reassurance and to get a feel of what the place is like. So, instead of just saying £60, Becky would start a conversation by asking if he'd been before and inviting him to pop by and take a look at the facilities and merchandise before making a booking. It's the same when somebody calls your company and asks the price of a move. They ask for a price because at that stage it's the only question they can ask, but what they really want is to talk to someone they feel they can trust and help them in an unfamiliar situation. Some customers won't have moved for many years and will be as nervous as Becky's punter. Talk to your customers and be genuinely interested in them was the message.

Interestingly, while preparing for her presentation Becky phoned a number of removals companies and asked for a price



"Most men prefer curvy women in their thirties and forties who are more experienced, rather than a teenage student who's more interested in texting her boyfriend than doing the business ..."

Becky Adams

to move a three-bed semi about 20 miles, none of them she felt, dealt with her enquiry in an engaging way and just gave the minimum of information.

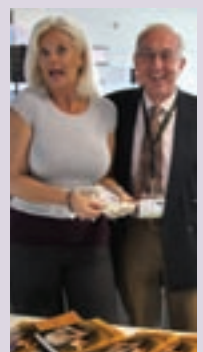
Becky went on to talk about making assumptions about what people really want. "In my industry people would probably think the most popular girls would be 19-year-old underwear models with blonde hair and firm trim figures, but actually that's not true. Most men prefer curvy women in their thirties and forties who are more experienced, rather than a teenage student who's more interested in texting her boyfriend than doing the business and making the client happy."

Becky was making the point that it's easy to make assumptions about

customers, but that everyone is different and should be treated as an individual. Again, talking to customers and satisfying their individual needs is the key to success.

Following the presentation delegates were able to put questions to Becky and gain a rare insight into the world's oldest profession. It was clear that making a success of keeping a brothel was a much more difficult task than running a removals company, but that engaging with people and treating them with kindness and respect is common to both professions.

Becky's award winning book, *Madam – Prostitutes, Punters and Puppets* is available in bookshops and online – highly recommended!



● Top: Madam Becky delivers her keynote speech; above: book sales appear to be going well.

REPORT: THE MOVER CONFERENCE**PART 1:
MAKING
MORE PROFIT**

Making more profit

After David Jordan's introduction there was a lively session focussed on ways of increasing profitability by offering additional services that don't require capital investment. These are some of the topics discussed.



What a great conference! Enjoyable, very informative and probably the best one I've been to. Thank you! Jamie Durrans, G&R Removals Ltd

Insurance

Editor Steve Jordan introduced Graham Puddephatt from Reason Global who told a heart lifting story about how one mover had rescued his business from liquidation simply by offering insurance to his customers. Graham urged all moving companies to talk to their brokers and discuss how they can start selling insurance products or if they are already doing so, how they can improve their sales performance. Later in the session Bob Tree from Basil Fry encouraged movers to buy a master policy from their broker that would give the necessary cover for the kind of moves they were doing and then sell the benefits on to their customers at a price to suit their market. This was also recommended by Neil Matthews from insurance broker Pound Gates.

Training

The focus then moved onto training and how improving the training of staff can result in lower operating costs and consequentially higher profits. Ray Marshall from Britannia Squab explained how a course he attended on export packaging resulted in fewer insurance claims, better time management and more economical use of materials. Later, training expert Philip Kidd explained how their specialist training courses were very much hands on and that people who attended them left with real-world skills

Selling packaging materials was another area that some removals companies still ignore even though the margins can be very high, in some cases several hundred percent.

that would enable their companies to take on tasks such as export packaging that they would otherwise have to decline. Although training does of course mean some investment, Kidd's two-day export packaging course costs just £240 per trainee, which should soon be recouped by extra business and more efficient processes.

Overseas work

Several delegates said they didn't currently advertise or offer an overseas service and Steve Jordan encouraged them to take advantage of the many groupage services offered by some of the larger operators. Alternatively they could simply sub-contract the whole job to an overseas specialist rather than turn the customer away.

Retail sales

Selling packaging materials was another area that some removals companies still ignore even though the margins can be very high, in some cases several hundred percent. Oliver Dawes from Simpson

Packaging described a retail stand they supply to moving companies that displays a range of packaging materials and makes it easy for customers to buy. These have been particularly effective in self storage facilities where there is a lot of walk-in traffic. Another option is to sell online. Oliver explained that Simpsons will arrange for materials to be delivered directly to the customer without the moving company even having to touch them, so there is no excuse for not getting involved.

Shredding

Shredding in recent years has become a multi-million pound industry and moving and storage companies are ideally placed to get a share of the action without having to invest in extra space or expensive equipment. Andy Dickerson from Simply Shred explained that because the industry has two profit centres - the revenue from shredding and the sale of the waste paper - removal companies can retain nearly all the charges for shredding with the shredding contractor taking the profit from the sale of the paper. Companies

REPORT: THE MOVER CONFERENCE



● Left, top row, left to right: Graham Puddephat of Reason Global; Bob Tree of Basil Fry & Company; bottom row: Steve Jordan; Neil Matthews of Pound Gates; centre: Sharon Nolan of Utility Warehouse; top: Andy Dickerson of Simply Shred; above: Oliver Dawes of Simpson Packaging; above right: David Jordan; right: Michael Zervakis from Currencies Direct.



like Simply Shred will collect bags of confidential material from the removals company's premises and carry out the whole operation. All the removal company has to do is collect the material from the customer and send them an invoice.

Currency exchange

Clients moving abroad and needing to move cash, be it savings, or the proceeds from the sale of their house, need to transfer those funds to their destination country. While their high street bank will be happy to do this, at a price, cheaper alternatives are available saving them up to 3% of the capital transferred and generating a healthy commission for the introducer. Although removals companies are ideally placed to introduce their customers, many do not and are missing out on a lucrative extra source of income simply for passing on a phone number. Michael Zervakis from Currencies Direct pointed out that on a transfer of say £300,000 the saving to the client would be in the region of £9,000, a substantial sum, and that a range of commission options are available to removals companies introducing their customers.

Utility Warehouse

With energy prices in the news for all the wrong reasons switching to an alternative supplier can save hundreds of pounds a year on domestic fuel bills. Again removals companies are in a strong position at the

time of a move to save their customers money and gain extra revenue for themselves in the process. Sharon Nolan explained how leading utilities supply company Utility Warehouse can save customers money on their electricity, gas and telephone bills and pay both initial and on ongoing commission to introducers.

Several companies at the conference already had arrangements with Utility Warehouse - which is one of the top performers on the London stock exchange - and were very impressed with its services. Sharon can be contacted at itsthepigdifference@utilitywarehouse.org.uk.

With so many additional ways of adding value to the bottom line, some delegates were a little sceptical and thought that by offering so many services they would be diverted from concentrating on their core business of removals. Conference facilitator David Jordan pointed out that it was not necessary to adopt every extra service but to consider which ones were appropriate for each individual business.



PART 1: VOSA PRESENTATION

VOSA presents at The Mover conference

Dave Murray and Mark Horton from VOSA gave an interesting presentation about the latest regulations affecting drivers and their vehicles.

With only a few months to go before the deadline for Drivers CPC, Mark reminded delegates that all drivers of vehicles over 3,500kg will need to complete their training before 9 September next year. Later he explained how the Working Time Directive has changed the way a driver's hours are recorded and the need to record time spent doing jobs other than driving, such as loading and unloading, on the driver's records.

Dave Murray said there was no magic way to improve vehicle safety but showed how by taking more care with vehicle daily inspections, prosecutions could be reduced by up to 85%. Tyre defects, faulty lights, brakes and insecure loads were some of the most common reasons for vehicles being prohibited from the road, all of which should have been spotted by the driver.

The presentation included a number of graphic pictures of some of the most serious cases taken at the roadside by VOSA officers.



● Top: Mark Houghton; above: serious tyre damage found by a VOSA inspector; below: David Murray



REPORT: THE MOVER CONFERENCE

PART 1: AIM INTERVIEW



“

Those companies who didn't attend The Mover Conference really missed a trick, I hope it runs again next year. The 'getting to know you' session was absolutely brilliant and I made some great contacts. **Matt De-Machen, Matthew James Removals & Storage**

Interviewing the new boys

On day two of The Mover Conference editor Steve Jordan turned his hand to conducting a Paxman style interview with Scott Rust and Darren House from the industry's new trade association the Alliance of Independent Movers (AIM), which launched at the Movers and Storers Show.

Steve began by asking Scott, the owner and Managing Director of the Alliance why he decided to start AIM. "We thought there was a lack of options for the small and medium sized removals companies and we wanted to offer an alternative to the Guild and BAR."

Although AIM is a limited company it is governed by a steering group made up of members of the Alliance. Members can also put forward ideas through the members' forum on the AIM website. Scott also runs his own moving company, Central Moves in Twickenham, but now spends about 85% of his time developing AIM. Steve asked Scott how he can devote so much time to AIM and still run a moving company. "I have a very good team at Central Moves and I've taken on extra people recently; so that frees up the time I need to spend on the Alliance. Eventually

I hope the split will be about 50-50 between the two roles," said Scott.

Darren House said they had had a very good response from visitors to the show and that the comments from people on the stand had been very encouraging.

"We thought there was a lack of options for the small and medium sized removals companies and we wanted to offer an alternative to the Guild and BAR."

Scott Rust

Benefits of membership include a company profile on the AIM website which is fully search engine optimised to attract customers looking for a mover and expert advice and support for smaller companies wishing to expand their services. "You may, for example have a couple of guys with a Luton van who want to grow their company but don't have the expertise or business acumen to drive the company forward," said Darren. "We can help them find ways of doing that and put them in touch with suppliers and service providers. We will also help them develop their website or even build one from the ground up if necessary." The idea was to help companies that might not meet the membership criteria of AIM or other organisations to improve standards and achieve membership in the future.

Steve asked Scott how AIM would make sure standards were maintained by the members. "We keep a careful eye on the online feedback from customers and other removals companies and also carry out physical annual inspections to make sure standards are kept up to scratch," said Scott. "We also have our own complaints procedure as well as an independent arbitration and conciliation service for more serious cases that can't be resolved in house."

Companies wishing to join AIM need to be VAT registered and have a registered company name; there is no minimum trading period required prior to membership. The annual membership fee is £1,200 + VAT plus an initial assessment fee of £395, £295 for subsequent years. There is currently a single level of membership for all companies. Full conditions of membership can be viewed at www.aimovers.com. The Alliance is aiming to attract around 50 companies during the first 12 months and 400 – 500 within five years.



● Top: Steve Jordan interviews Scott Rust and Darren House of AIM on stage; left: Matthew James Removals receives the company's AIM membership certificate; above: Isis Relocation becomes an AIM Member.





Generating leads in the Internet age

Editor Steve Jordan introduced this session of The Mover Conference by relating a story from the 2008 BAR Conference when fledgling companies offering removals service online were regarded with scepticism and often disparagingly referred to as 'Bedroom Brokers'.

How things have changed. Just five years later getting an online quote for a move is often people's preferred way of finding a removals company and several new online services have emerged to bring removals companies and customers together.

Two such companies, Reallymoving.com which has been operating since 1999, and new kid on the block Buzzmove.com gave presentations highlighting some of the benefits of using their services. Rob Houghton from Reallymoving.com explained that over 80% of people now use the Internet to research the market before making any large purchase, and that includes removals. However, just having a website is no good unless people can find it and with the ever changing algorithms used by Google and others, keeping at the top of the listings is a constant and expensive challenge. Rob mentioned other Internet tools such as Google AdWords and pay per click, but these simply direct traffic to your website and don't produce firm leads. By using a company like Reallymoving it is possible to have a constant flow of genuine enquiries without having to build and maintain an expensive website.

Becky Downing, Managing Director of Buzzmove gave a potted history of her new company and explained how she was inspired by a bad experience with a removal company during her last move. She realised that people were not savvy when it came to selecting a removal company. It was difficult for them to distinguish the good from the bad operators

and how much they should be paying for the service. Becky was keen to stress that they only work with companies who give top quality service and that they are not about driving down prices. Buzzmove customers are able to select a mover, get a firm price, and book online 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

There was much discussion and plenty of questions with delegates still somewhat sceptical about how a firm quotation can be given without causing further problems down the line.

Rosie Rogers from Reallymoving closed the session by giving details of their recently introduced Ombudsman scheme designed to protect both mover and client on the rare occasions when a dispute cannot be resolved in-house.

PART 1:
GENERATING
LEADS

“For me it was far more rewarding than any trade conference which I have attended over many years.”
Trevor Kidd,
Kidds

● Top left: Steve Jordan introduces the session; top; Rob Houghton of Reallymoving.com; above: Becky Downing of Buzzmove; right: Rosie Rogers of Reallymoving.com.



**The
Mover
CONFERENCE
2013**

See our
January issue
for part 2 of
The Mover
conference
report.

INSIGHT: EMPLOYERS' OBLIGATIONS

● An employer's obligations cover pay and hours, preventing discrimination and discipline.

Understand your employer obligations

Taking on your first employees is a significant milestone for any growing business, but some businesses can see this as a daunting experience, where mistakes could lead to costly tribunal claims. Joanne Eccles, Business Advisor at the Forum of Private Business, explains the key obligations small business owners need to consider when making the move from a one-man band to a responsible employer.

Many new employers do fall victim to the fear that can come when taking on an employee, even if they know it will be a key part of their growth plans. Part of the problem is that many are unsure about their obligations as an employer before even thinking about the interview process. The problem is especially the case for small businesses that do not have the luxury of their own HR staff.

Nobody wants to think that what you thought was the perfect hire could result in a costly tribunal case, but one in six disputes do at an average cost of £9,000. Add to this the solicitor's fees and the time taken out of your business and you are looking at nearer £20,000 in costs which could be crippling for a small business.

But before the fear of fines and tribunal cases make you think again, Jo explained that making sure that you are fully aware of your employer obligations is a key first step to building your team with confidence.

"As an employer you need to

ensure you are up to speed with the basic rights of your employees. These cover the following three key areas: pay and hours, discrimination and disciplinary, and dismissal," she said.

Employees have the following basic rights that you must observe. Failure to do so can result in grounds for a tribunal:

Pay and hours

- Your employees have the right to be paid the national minimum wage and equally to members of the opposite sex doing the same work of equal value;
- Rest breaks and paid holiday must be in line with the Working Time Regulations;
- Statutory sick pay and redundancy pay;
- Protection from any unauthorised deductions in pay;
- Employees are entitled to maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay, paid leave for antenatal care, unpaid dependants' leave, unpaid parental leave (after one year) and the right to request flexible working;

- Time off for public duties including jury service.

Discrimination

- Employees must not be discriminated against unlawfully on the grounds of race, sex, marriage, pregnancy, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief;

"As an employer you need to ensure you are up to speed with the basic rights of your employees."

Joanne Eccles

- Protection against less favourable treatment for part-time workers, those that 'whistle blow' and Trade Union members.

Disciplinary and dismissal

- All employees have the right not to be unfairly dismissed, after a

qualifying period of two years;

- Employees have the right to access to fair grievance, disciplinary and disciplinary procedures, and the right to be accompanied at disciplinary and grievance procedure hearings.

All employees also have the right to receive a written statement of terms and conditions of employment (such as a contract) within two months of starting. This can avoid one of the main causes of employment tribunal claims.

Jo Eccles continued: "Tribunals and investigations may never happen to you, but by seeking advice from organisations like the Forum to ensure you are up to speed with your obligations as an employer can help you avoid any nasty surprises later."

The Forum of Private Business has produced a free to download guide *5 Essential Things Every Employer Should Know* with further hints and tips on obligations as an employer, health and safety legislation, tax and finance responsibilities and recruiting advice. To download a free copy visit www.fpb.org/employersessentials.



● Irrelevant training will only alienate drivers further, says FTA.

Don't let DCPC Directive constrain quality training

Driver CPC needs to be improved, but we should be careful what we wish for in changes arising from the Driver Training Directive. Adding additional constraints could prevent responsible, professional vehicle operators from training drivers in the knowledge and skills they need to do their job effectively - that's the view of the Freight Transport Association.

The comments came in the Association's response to the Driving Standards Agency's consultation on the Driver Training Directive as it prepares to submit its own thoughts on the regime on behalf of the UK government.

Commenting after the submission, James Firth, FTA's Head of Road Freight and Enforcement Policy said, "Driver CPC was brought in to raise standards across the industry, but many responsible vehicle operators were already developing their drivers' knowledge and skills before the European Directive came along. When it came into force these operators had to make their existing high quality training conform to the administrative requirements of Brussels. The UK government was right to implement a flexible interpretation of the requirements when Driver CPC started back in 2008, but it means that any changes to the Directive

which the Commission may be planning will have a direct impact on training courses on the ground."

The Association also warned against allowing Brussels to dictate exactly what a driver should be trained in, emphasising that, like in most other industries and professions, training requirements should be identified by the industry and not by politicians.

Firth continued, "The problem with one-size-fits-all is it usually becomes one-size-fits nobody very well. If the specific training content is defined by politicians - either in Brussels or Westminster - we run the risk of every driver investing time and money on redundant training. For instance a driver in the retail sector should not be forcibly required to be trained in loading and securing aggregates. There is certainly a challenge still in engaging drivers fully with DCPC, but insisting upon irrelevant training is a sure-fire way to alienate them further."

A youthful exchange

The Mover met with the father and daughter team of Glasgow's Lomond Removals at the EUROMOVERS conference in Istanbul earlier this year to learn about their business whilst also getting to know one of the removal trade's youngest and brightest new members.



At 16 years old, Carly Beattie helps her father, Robert, keep the office administration duties up to date in their new removals firm - Lomond Removals. Robert established the new firm back in February this year after 40 years in the removals business. Carly wanted to help her dad get organised whilst juggling her GCSEs. She has now returned to school of course to study for her highs - the Scottish university qualifiers - where she intends to get a degree in Business. When she has time she helps with book-keeping and administration duties, an

● Carly and Robert Beattie at the EUROMOVERS conference in Istanbul.

occupation that will stand her in fine stead for a future managerial role.

At present, Lomond Removals primarily operates a groupage service, providing domestic and international services from its headquarters near Ben Lomond and Loch Lomond in Scotland. Ensuring a youthful and lively approach to the trade is crucial to any company's success - and it looks like Carly will be bringing that particular attribute to Lomond Removals in spades.

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NEWS: ON THE ROAD

Remote Enforcement Office

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency's Remote Enforcement Office (REO) is a different method of following up VOSA's encounters with your vehicles.

Instead of visiting the operator's premises, VOSA will ask for information to be sent to them to be analysed remotely. This analysis will include information validity checks as well as straightforward analysis, such as checks against ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) data.

There will be an initial six month trial in the western traffic area. The REO process will only be applied to new encounters, it will not interfere with any ongoing encounters. VOSA says it will review the trial as it goes so timescales may be affected.

The REO trial will cover general follow up visits where there have been, for example, Most Serious Infringements, or MSIs, prohibitions for overloading, insecure loads, drivers' hours and S-marked prohibitions.

VOSA says it believes the REO will free up its resources for more effective enforcement, and free up operator and transport managers' time by allowing them to deal with VOSA's requests in a more convenient timeframe.



● Good provision for deliveries is essential for businesses, says the FTA.

Transport Committee calls for greater clarity for loading and unloading

The Transport Select Committee has announced recommendations to the government regarding Local Authority Parking Enforcements in England.

Included is that they should discuss with transport companies and local authorities ways of dealing with the needs of businesses, and that greater clarity should be provided on the rules for loading and unloading.

The report published in October reflected the views of the Freight Transport Association's evidence provided to a recent inquiry looking at Local Authority Parking Enforcement in England. FTA had told the House of Commons Transport Select Committee of the impact and costs of local authority parking enforcement on business.

FTA's Managing Director of Policy & Communications - James Hookham had provided oral evidence to the Transport Select Committee when he stressed that the Traffic Management Act (TMA), that governs local authority parking policy, was in need of fundamental review as it fails to distinguish between 'parking provision', which is mainly concerned with private cars, and deliveries to commercial and residential premises, which are an essential economic activity.

James Hookham said, "FTA is delighted that its voice has been heard on behalf of its members. We told the Transport Committee that the Traffic Management Act (TMA) was in need of fundamental review; the Committee's recommendation to the government to hold a roundtable discussion with road hauliers and local authorities has to be a step in

"...delivery vehicles have little choice but to stop on restricted routes to gain access to adjacent premises, and become 'easy pickings'..."

James Hookham

the right direction. Whilst reducing congestion is important, there needs to be a balance, and good provision for deliveries is essential to support local businesses."

In addition the Committee Announcement stated that local authorities must work with local businesses to develop innovative parking solutions that work for their areas while government should consider developing business rates relief for businesses that invest in affordable town centre parking.

Mr Hookham added, "No operator sets out to deliberately contravene the restrictions on parking, but the lack of adequate provision means that delivery vehicles have little choice but to stop on restricted routes to gain access to adjacent premises, and become 'easy pickings' for enforcement officers. The law needs to be clarified to distinguish between 'parking' and 'delivery and servicing activity'."

Witness cameras reduce haulage company's insurance bill by £25,000

A haulage company has reduced its annual insurance bill by more than £25,000 since installing its fleet with Smart Witness incident cameras.

Brian Yeardley Continental, based in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, owns 43 trucks and eight company cars which all now carry the recording device. Managing Director Kevin Hopper decided to install the cameras after becoming increasingly concerned about 'cash for crash' scams in which fraudsters deliberately cause accidents to submit damage and bogus injury claims. He was also concerned about conflicting accident reports and since spending just £7,000 on the cameras in May, his insurance bill has reduced from £135,000 to around £110,000.

Brian said, "I wish I could have installed Smart Witness 20 years ago. Year on year our insurance bill has gone up and up but now it has finally gone down. I would have been happy if the bill had gone down by £5,000 but I never expected it would reduce by £25,900."

"Our accident rate has gone down by about 50% from 15 incidents last year to seven so far this year. Each accident cost us at least £1,300 in excess, so the cameras have saved us a lot of money."

The cameras have also deterred immigrants from targeting the fleet in Calais to travel illegally to the UK. Stickers warning of the cameras have been fitted to the rear doors of the vehicles and no incidents of stowaways or theft from vehicles have been reported since.



● The Smart Witness incident camera.

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WORKING OVERSEAS: GETTING CREDIT IN THE US



● Credit is difficult and expensive for expats to get hold of in the US.

US credit history woes for expats

The United States welcomes over 200,000 foreign national assignees every year in managerial, technical and consulting professions. And while their skills, talents, families and belongings all make the trip safely, their credit-worthiness doesn't travel – and it is costing them and their employers a fortune.

In all it is estimated that the lack of availability of US credit is costing US businesses and their incoming talent over \$2.4 billion every year in excess interest charges, foregone tax breaks and compromised productivity. According to a recent survey of global mobility managers and international HR professionals, over half of all respondents claimed that lack of access to US credit facilities impacted assignee morale and productivity "somewhat", while the remaining 47% indicated that the issue "very much" impacted their employees - a startling level of unanimity.

Cost-conscious employers are increasingly concerned, as they migrate towards allowance-based or lump sum transition management policies requiring much higher levels of self-sufficiency from assignees. Despite widespread awareness of the difficulties caused by the scarcity and cost of credit for

incoming assignees; one third of employers responding to the survey indicated that they make no provision to assist incoming foreign nationals with financial matters. However, over 60% indicated that they would consider including such assistance in their transition management processes.

For many companies, adding credit migration to existing transition management processes is a logical next step, once an allowance-based approach is adopted. Equipping incoming employees with the knowledge to make the early decisions themselves builds the overall integrity of the policies underpinning allowance-based international assignee programs.

The biggest single obstacle is the widespread and growing implementation of data protection legislation across the world which prohibits the sharing of personal information internationally. Secondly, different source data,

algorithms, and the score ranges used by credit bureaus in different countries means that credit scores do not easily translate across borders. Since the birth of the US credit reporting industry, over 90% of US institutions now use broadly similar methods to determine the level of risk in lending to an applicant. Put simply, they have been using the same system for generations, and aren't about to change for a few thousand expats needing mortgages, car loans and credit cards. So, in most cases, no credit score means no credit at worst, and prohibitively expensive credit at best.

Costs can be eye watering. According to Informa Research Services (and based on national average rates at 4 October, 2013) those with a FICO score above 700 will pay \$248 less per month on a \$300,000 mortgage than a borrower with a FICO credit score below 640. On car loans, the difference is even more pronounced, with rates ranging from 4.82% for those scoring above 700, to 16.9% for those scoring below 640 – a difference in cash terms of over \$140 per month on a typical \$25,000 car loan.

So how do the thousands of arriving assignees who are denied car loans, rejected for local credit cards, and struggle to find a lender willing to fund the purchase of a home break the vicious circle of getting access to reasonably priced credit without a US credit score?

"There had to be a way," said Andrew Cox, the founder of Mycredex, the industry pioneer of credit migration. With seven international moves throughout his corporate career, Cox and his Dallas born wife set about rebuilding their credit profile. "It was tough. We were treated more like ex-cons than expats – seemingly, being away from the US for seven years had the same effect on our credit worthiness as time in the state penitentiary (prison)."

Over 18 months, they built their credit profile paying sub-prime rates for car loans, mortgages and using secured credit cards. Once they achieved scores above the magic 700, they gained access to much more affordable financing.

The solution lies in making it easy for US institutions to make informed lending decisions by leveraging home country credit usage, and proving credit worthiness. Finding institutions who understand the problem and are able to bring a discretionary element to the loan

approval process is key. Many of the big national banks cannot be flexible, as they are driven largely by well established processes, but there are many institutions that want to do business with people who may lack an orthodox credit score, but have great jobs, above average incomes and years of responsible credit management behind them.

The solution lies in making it easy for US institutions to make informed lending decisions by leveraging home country credit usage, and proving credit worthiness.

"The problem isn't going to go away," said Cox. "The demand for foreign talent will only increase as the recovery gathers pace, and US companies seek to optimise their global talent pools, and drive innovation and competitiveness by building globally diverse workforces. The sooner new arrivals establish a US credit profile, and learn to manage it well, the sooner they start getting access to mainstream rates, and start saving thousands. Every week counts."

Andrew Cox

Over the past 25 years, Andrew Cox has done business in over 75 countries and has served as a director of firms based in the UK, Guernsey, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Brazil. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, he holds an MBA from Cranfield University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Portsmouth.



NEWS: ON THE ROAD

Drivers wary of automatic speed limiters

Three quarters of drivers are concerned that the use of Intelligent Speed Adaptations (ISAs) will compromise safety, according to research by the Institute of Advanced Motorists. Last month, the EU announced they were considering rules for new cars to be equipped with ISA technology. This would be capable of detecting limits through cameras or satellites and automatically applying the brakes. Existing vehicles could be forced to be retrofitted with the devices.

78% of drivers don't want to see the retrofitting of ISA technology onto older vehicles, while 57% think that ISAs won't have a positive impact on road safety.

However, there is overwhelming support for ISAs when vehicle control remains with the driver. 67% of respondents would prefer ISAs to operate with warning messages with no control of the vehicle. 52% see a reduced likelihood of speeding convictions and less money spent on traffic calming measures such as road humps. 31% of respondents feel that, if enforced, ISAs should be restricted to younger drivers, newly qualified drivers and drivers with previous road-related convictions.

IAM Chief Executive Simon Best said, "ISAs could help to save lives but it's clear that drivers remain dubious about the benefits of the technology. More research into the benefits would help to reassure the public that this will improve road safety. Unfortunately, over a third of respondents see this as a way of controlling drivers, I believe if drivers are trained properly and have access to on-going learning, the government would not need to enforce ISAs."

Keeping on the move in severe weather

The Highways Agency, which looks after the motorways and major A-roads in England, has help and advice for everyone travelling this winter – especially in severe weather.



● The Highways Agency has a severe weather plan for every mile of motorway.

Keeping the network open can be a massive task for the Agency, even with a fleet of more than 500 snowploughs and salt spreaders available round the clock. It's an important task too, as the Highways Agency network carries more than two-thirds of freight and tens of thousands of coach passengers.

Every mile of the network is covered by a severe weather plan identifying the micro-climate and the most suitable road treatment to help keep traffic on the move. It even identifies critical sections of route where extra tow trucks and snowploughs can be stationed in advance when really severe weather is forecast. Hopefully they won't be needed!

Even with all this effort, the weather still has the power to cause disruption so the Highways

Agency control centres monitor the network – as they do all year round – to provide the latest traffic updates. Keep in touch from your cab using the Highways Agency's Twitter services and mobile website. However, the Agency stresses that this should only be done when parked safely otherwise get a co-driver to check as it's dangerous and illegal to use a mobile device while driving. You can also call the Highways Agency Information Line on 0300 123 5000.

Fleet managers can use the free Atlas Pro website, which allows customisation of traffic information for your own delivery areas or key routes.

The agency recommends always preparing for a journey by carrying an emergency kit and planning around the weather.

Pay Hungarian tolls with DKV

From 1 November, 2013, it will be possible to pay the Hungarian toll 'HU-GO' using an On Board Unit.

DKV Euro Service customers can also use their DKV Card to buy and top up the prepay toll box, available at more than 180 stations of the oil brands OMV, MOL and ENI. The 'Relational Ticket', which was introduced in July 2013 and needs to be booked and paid before the start of the journey, remains fully valid.

To be able to use an On Board Unit it is necessary to register in advance at www.hu-go.hu. The toll box can only be used after successful registration of the prepay toll box in the HU-GO customer portal.



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The Longest Journey

By Steve Jordan



He was a bad boy. He had always been naughty. Even when he was at little school he liked to pull the girls' pigtails, leave pins on the teachers' seats and, sometimes, when he was feeling particularly wicked, put spiders in the book shelf so that when Suzie reached for her favourite Enid Blyton, she would scream and scream. It made him feel good.

When he was older his antics took on a more sinister style. He learned how to hack into people's Facebook accounts and leave hurtful, sometimes very scary messages anonymously. Nobody knew it was him. Sometimes he would even get the smaller boys to do it for him so he could never be traced and threaten them if they dared to snitch. His victims were in despair. They didn't know what to do. They couldn't stop it. They had no one to turn to.

Then the demands for money started. If you want to stop this happening, you must pay. At first, the sums were small. Just a few

He covered his tracks well. In truth he didn't much mind if people did know who he was, he liked people being scared of him. But he never reckoned with the Santa factor.

pounds. But then he got greedy - £50, £70, sometimes more. More than pocket money could pay. Pay me now or I'll tell your mother what you've been doing behind the bike sheds with Jimmy Brown. Pay me or your dog gets it. Then it was the Christmas cards: blank, except for a single chilling message - 'Merry Christmas, I know where you live'.

The children were terrified. Nobody dare speak to anyone else in case he, whoever he was, found out. Nobody knew who were their friends and who were not. Everyone lived in fear of the next message spreading its own evil brand of poison among the innocents of the town.

Then things changed. She moved in. She had met bullies before and wasn't planning on putting up with him for long. It was show down time. She didn't have to do much.

She just spoke to a friend who ran the school newsletter. The friend put in a simple message telling the victims that they were not alone. Instantly, they began to feel better. They were not so scared. They laughed at his threats. Some even told their parents - and guess who else they told ...?

It was Christmas day. The children woke to the smell of fir trees and mince pies, brightly wrapped gifts and smiles from long lost relatives with whiskery chins. He too awoke. The tree was there but its fragrance never reached his nostrils. The presents were there too, but none were for him. The family came but their smiles dimmed in his presence. The fire roared in the grate, but its heat did not comfort him. He sat down and cried.

He had always known that he couldn't be found out. He was

clever. He covered his tracks well. In truth he didn't much mind if people did know who he was, he liked people being scared of him. But he never reckoned with the Santa factor. He never expected Father Christmas to find out. He never thought he would ever feel the hollow despair he had inflicted on his victims for so long.

That evening, as the family chatted and laughed in the other room, he sat by the tree. Had he been so bad that Father Christmas has forsaken him? Had he caused so much pain? What could he do to make amends? Then he saw it. Glinting under the tree, partially hidden by a bauble, was a small package, wrapped in gilded paper with a tag bearing his name. He reached out, took it in his trembling hand, and opened it. It was a single sweet: a toffee with chocolate cover. With it a note written in old-fashioned handwriting in ink that was somehow red, green and gold at the same time. "The longest journey starts with the smallest step," it read. And so it did.

PROPERTY MARKET: UK HOUSING MARKET BUBBLE

Slim chance of UK housing market bubble

According to the Ernst & Young ITEM Club, the chances of the UK experiencing a housing bubble as a result of the government's Help to Buy Mortgage Guarantee Scheme are slim.

The organisation's Chief Economic Advisor, Peter Spencer, commented: "House prices and transactions are only just recovering from the credit crunch and will be paltry in comparison to those of a decade ago. Household finances are also in much better shape, with debt to income ratios now at sustainable levels. Lenders will still check that the borrower's income is sufficient to support the loan and this check is the main protection against rising interest rates and other problems in the future."

The government scheme has led to a rapid improvement in prospects for the housing market, says the latest quarterly forecast from the EY ITEM Club. Over a million people are expected to move home this year alone, while investment in new housing projects is set to increase by 7.5% next year and an additional 10% in 2015. The EY ITEM Club's autumn forecast says the boost to housing demand will have a knock on effect on house prices, rising by 3.5% this year and 6.6% in 2014. However, it says that fears of a housing bubble are unfounded and premature at best.

This improving outlook for the housing market and consumer confidence has contributed to upward revisions to the EY ITEM Club's latest growth forecasts for the UK economy. GDP is expected to reach 1.4% this year and 2.4% in 2014 – up from the 1.1% and 2.2% respectively that were predicted last quarter.

Consumer-driven recovery

According to the report, the UK's short term growth will continue to be fuelled by the consumer. The recovery of the housing market, combined with falling unemployment, rising real incomes and improving confidence levels, will help to keep the tills ringing on the high street.

"Lenders will still check that the borrower's income is sufficient to support the loan and this check is the main protection against rising interest rates and other problems in the future."

Peter Spencer

Despite only modest increases in disposable incomes of 0.2% this year, consumer spending is forecast to grow by 1.6% before rising to 1.9% in 2014. Although the report warns that this latest spending splurge means we will be saving less than before, with saving ratios easing back to 5.7%, down from last year's 6.8%.

Investment and export boost

However, the most significant boost to UK growth will come next year, when the revival in business investment and exports – heralded by recent surveys – finally kicks

in. With the economy on a more sustained path of recovery, the Bank of England signalling that interest rates aren't about to rise anytime soon, and the Eurozone crisis in remission, the EY ITEM Club expects business investment to increase by nearly 7% in 2014 and 9.4% in 2015, after falling by 5.6% this year.

An improving outlook for world trade, particularly in key markets such as the US, Europe and China, will also see exports grow by 2.5% this year, rising to 5.3% in 2014 and 6% in 2015.

Mark Gregory, EY's Chief Economist, commented that business confidence has been improving but has yet to be translated into capital spending: "After the slowest recovery from a recession in generations, it's perhaps unsurprising that business investment to date has been cautious. But with the recovery now gathering pace, staying in wait and see mode is no longer a viable option. Businesses will need to keep a close eye on the economic indicators to ensure they are ready to move when the tide turns."

Peter Spencer concluded: "The boost from the consumer has pushed the UK economy into a progressively higher orbit, but this now needs to be supplemented by a thrust from the engines of export and investment. Otherwise, there's a real risk that the recovery will falter in the face of the sustained pressure on real incomes from high prices and low wage inflation."

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KEVIN THOMPSON
the removal guru 

NEWS: PEOPLE



King's Silver Medal of Merit for Mr. Gudmund Håkull

Mr Gudmund Håkull, owner of Håkull AS, was recently presented with the King's Silver Medal of Merit. This was presented by the Mayor of Sandnes on behalf of the King, who also made a presentation speech to Mr. Håkull.

This medal is only given to a few special people who have been active in the same company for more than 50 years and also have shown great interest and support to sports or other outside company activities over many years.

Mary Stoik Dymond honoured as top five in HR

Human Resource Executive, a US publication that focusses on strategic issues in HR, has selected Mary Stoik Dymond, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, from Graebel as one of its top five Human Resource Executives for 2013.



● Mary Stoik Dymond.

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We had a pretty good response last month from many of you who recognised David Tracey in the photo, ex MD of Britannia Movers International. Well done all. But it was Peter Varrall, of Castles in Deal who got in first. Well done Peter. This time there are two. But who are the quizzical-looking couple at the conference? Be the first to e-mail editor@themover.co.uk with the right answer and win a White and Company Red and Black watch.

This marks the first time that an executive from a global mobility management company has been selected. Mary and other winners were honoured at a black-tie awards dinner at the Trustee Ballroom at Boston University on October 10, 2013. The evening event was sponsored by Monster.

According to David Shadovitz, Editor of *Human Resource Executive*, "The HR Executive of the Year award recognises human resource leaders who have made outstanding contributions to their organisations and who exemplify the increasingly strategic role of HR in business today."

Mary was named a top five human resource executive for having transformed the human resource department at Graebel into an effective, employee-focussed team around the world. Among the key factors that led to this honour was her creation and leadership of the company's Well-Being Program. Mary has also been instrumental in the rapid deployment of country-specific policies along with the relocation or recruitment and

training of the company's global workforce during its offshore expansion into Europe and Asia that began in 2008.

"Mary's extensive background in global workforce management and her vision has brought both immediate and lasting results ..."

Bill Graebel

Chief Executive Officer Bill Graebel remarked, "Mary's extensive background in global workforce management and her vision has brought both immediate and lasting results in our quest for Graebel to become the undisputed employer and supplier of choice in global mobility."

Mary joined Graebel in 2008.

Add shine and reduce weight with xlite

Don-Bur, designer and manufacturer of commercial vehicle trailer bodies, is offering xlite super single forged aluminium wheels as an option on its vehicles.

The wheel, which has a reduced weight and increased load index, has been fitted for several clients on the company's innovative, aerodynamic Teardrop™ trailer range.

Mark Oxer, Purchasing Manager for Don-Bur, said: "The decision to order forged aluminium wheels is customer driven and usually due to weight constraints. xlite is a particular favourite based on both performance and cost. Of course the ultimate advantages of operating with lighter, stronger wheels can include extra payloads, reduced fuel usage and decreased CO₂ emissions, depending upon what is being transported. The new super single is a very good product and we are happy to offer it to our customers, who will keep requesting it for many years to come."

Motor Wheel Service Distribution (MWSD), exclusive distributors of xlite wheels, says the new super single forged aluminium products are among the lightest on the market, with a change in profile by

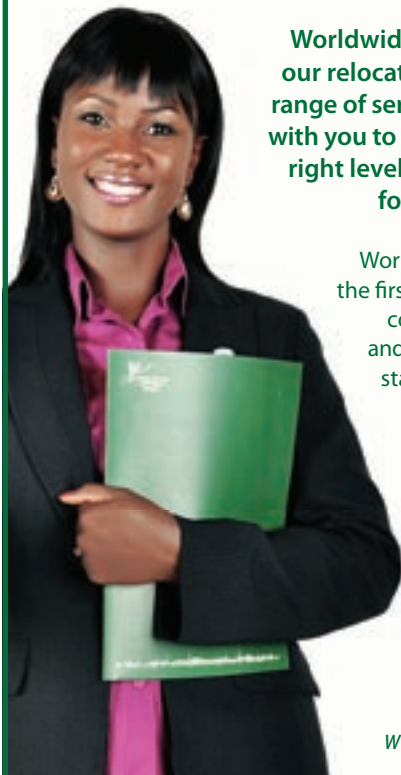


● xlite wheels.

manufacturer Wheels India enabling the load index to be increased to 5,000kg from 4,500kg. xlite wheels are forged from a single aluminium billet using a computerised numeric control machine to produce a higher degree of production accuracy.

They are available in 17.5, 19.5 and 22.5 inch sizes.

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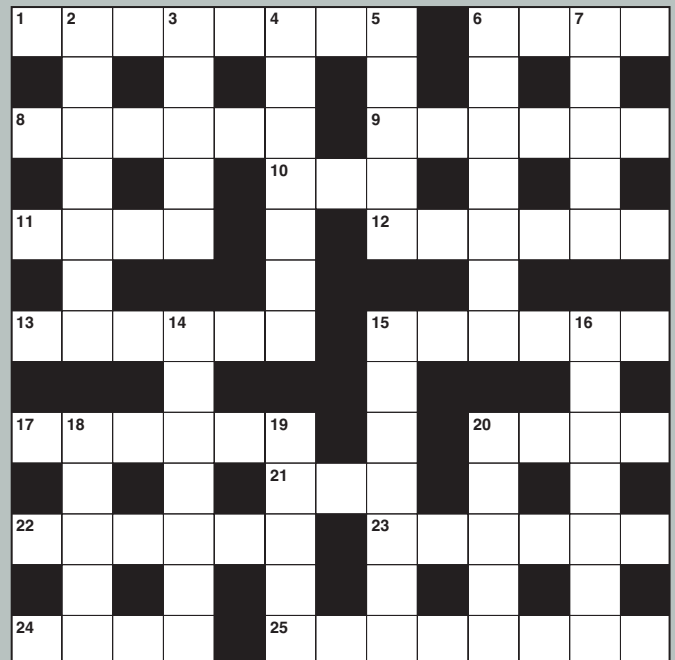


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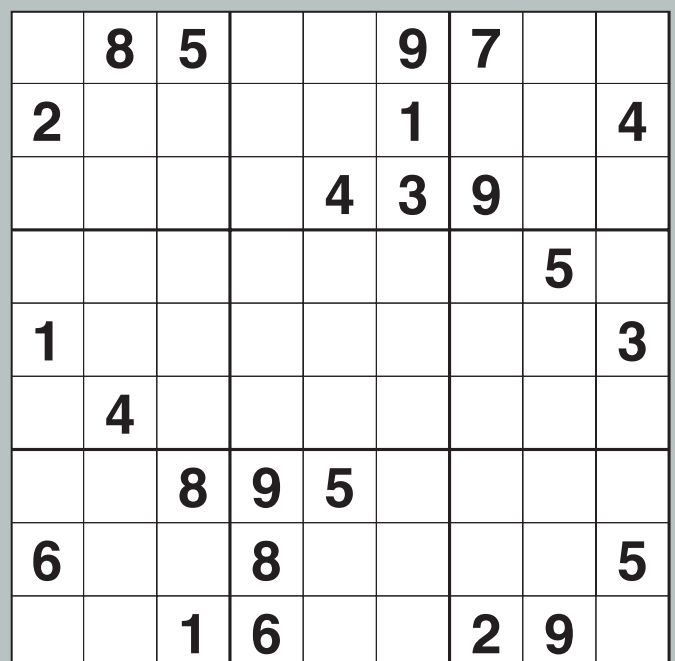
ACROSS

- 1 Eg Tim Rice (8)
- 6 The wise men (4)
- 8 For a short time (6)
- 9 Distributed (6)
- 10 Steal (3)
- 11 Express a desire for (4)
- 12 Happenings (6)
- 13 African country with capital Kampala (6)
- 15 Considering (6)
- 17 Resistant to something (6)
- 20 Large wading bird (4)

- 21 Wander aimlessly (3)
- 22 Tempestuous (6)
- 23 Situated within a building (6)
- 24 Legume (4)
- 25 Small turtle (8)

DOWN

- 2 Expressing boredom with the mouth (7)
- 3 Nationality of Oscar Wilde (5)
- 4 Resistance to change (7)
- 5 Biter (anag) (5)
- 6 The ____: major golf tournament (7)
- 7 Person invited to one's house (5)
- 14 Sub-atomic particle (7)
- 15 Dirtier (7)
- 16 Capital of Kenya (7)
- 18 Unit of measurement (5)
- 19 Cairo is in this country (5)
- 20 Country in southern Asia (5)



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OMNI Annual Conference

4 – 8 April, 2014,
Bali

EuRA International Relocation Congress

9 – 11 April, 2014,
Edinburgh, UK

EUROMOVERS Conference

9 – 13 April, 2014,
Rome, Italy

Young Movers Conference

1 – 3 May, 2014,
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100m world record holder Usain Bolt.

On the traffic island at the junction of
Edgware Road and Marble Arch is a plaque
which most people ignore, marking the site
of the Tyburn Tree, London's main execution spot,
where about 50,000 people were executed.

Karaoke means 'empty orchestra' in Japanese.

The plastic bits on the end of shoelaces
are called aglets.

In an average lifetime, a person will walk the equivalent
of five times around the equator.

The 'dingo fence' in Australia is the
longest fence in the world, and is about twice
as long as the Great Wall of China.

The sentence 'The quick brown fox jumps over
the lazy dog' uses every letter in the alphabet.



Puzzle solutions

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8	4	2	3	7	5	6	1	9
3	2	8	9	5	7	1	4	6
6	9	4	8	1	2	3	7	5
5	7	1	6	3	4	2	9	8

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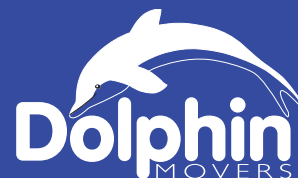
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Copy dates

Booking of adverts: 1st of the month preceding publication.
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Enquiries

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PLEASE NOTE:

Advertising rates cover the cost of advert insertion only. Advertisers should provide their own advertising artwork. The Mover can generate new or amend existing artwork for an additional charge. All advertising must be paid for in advance by credit card.

* Marketplace advertisements are booked per unit or multiples thereof, and run for a minimum of 12 months. 1 unit measures 30mm (height) x 60mm (1 column).

	1 – 4 insertions	5 – 8 insertions	9 – 12 insertions
DISPLAY			
Full page	£945	£920	£895
Half page	£600	£585	£570
Quarter page	£345	£335	£325
Quarter page single column	£345	£335	£325
Two column square	£260	£250	£240
Four by one	£260	£250	£240
Three by one	£200	£190	£180
Inside front cover	£1155	£1125	£1095
Outside back cover	£1210	£1175	£1145
Centre spread	£1470	£1435	£1395
MARKETPLACE*			
1 unit mono	£420 (1 year)	n/a	n/a
1 unit colour	£525 (1 year)	n/a	n/a
CLASSIFIED			
Lineage – up to 20 words	FREE	n/a	n/a
Semi-display – per column centimetre	£25	n/a	n/a
Vehicle for sale box	£190	n/a	n/a
Box number for confidential responses	£30	n/a	n/a
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Loose inserts (per 1000 A4 supplied)	£160	n/a	n/a



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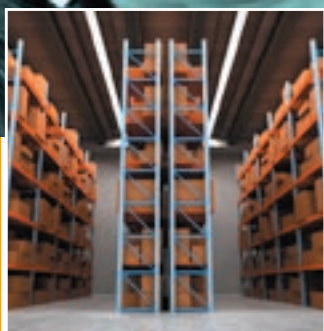


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