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Issue 072 March 2017 www.themover.co.uk

TheMover

The independent voice of the global moving industry.



CHESS MEN

An interview from way out west. Page 28

MATTHEW JAMES

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TheMover

**Contact Details:
Editorial**

Contributions on all aspects of the removals and storage industry are welcomed, together with photographs if appropriate. Please contact Steve Jordan, Editor
Tel: 01908 695500
E-mail: editor@themover.co.uk

Deadline:

The deadline for article submission is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

**Contact Details:
Advertising**

For all enquiries and bookings, please contact Nikki Gee
Tel: 01908 695500
E-mail: adverts@themover.co.uk

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Just my luck!**

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LEADER

A global perspective

Steve Jordan, Editor



This month we seem to have spread our journalistic wings even further than usual with feature stories from Croatia, Russia, Spain and Australia. As you read this I will be on my travels again at the OMNI conference in The Seychelles via FIDI in Dubai. I suspect, therefore, the global coverage will continue.

I have been criticised for not focussing enough on the 'home' market in the UK. I understand that if you are running a family domestic moving company in the depths of darkest Lincolnshire the troubles and triumphs of those thousands of miles away can seem, well, distant. But I make no apologies for taking a worldwide approach.

Firstly, although *The Mover* is published in the UK, it has always been an international magazine and we have at least as many readers outside the UK as within it.

Secondly, I believe that the best way to learn about new things is to study what others do and work out how to adapt their methods to your market. Many of you in the UK will remember the study tours organised through The Movers Institute. They were very popular and are still discussed now, with extreme fondness, whenever two movers of a certain age get together. People learned a lot very quickly. Although the tours are no longer, *The Mover*, in its own modest way, tries to fill a little of the gap. So please don't think that because a story is not about your country, there is nothing to gain from reading it. I would argue the opposite.

Finally, I would urge anyone that's running a domestic moving company anywhere in the world to consider expanding into international. There are experienced consolidators in many countries that make a living out of helping those who get an occasional overseas enquiry. And one thing I have noticed, as I go around the world, is that many mainstream international moving companies developed when the owner, probably out of necessity, took the plunge to learn how to handle international work, put himself on a Boeing and set about building a new business from scratch. It can be done.

Continuing the educational message, I trust all those who attended the FIDI conference in Dubai found it to be constructive. I trust also that at least some of you dragged yourselves away from negotiating reciprocation and took a little time to attend the plenary meetings. I always find them to be interesting and useful. They were better attended last year than in the past. I hope the trend continues.

Steve Jordan



● Kidd's has been running removals industry training courses for the past 17 years.

Kidd's Training Services appointed a BAR Approved Training Centre

Kidd's Training Services of Hornsea, East Yorkshire, has become an Approved Training Centre for the British Association of Removers (BAR).

Kidd's is a highly-respected training organisation which has been running courses for the removals industry for the past 17 years.

The company is one of 11 training organisations appointed by BAR to conduct BAR approved training courses across the UK. Previously, BAR off-site training was only available at BAR's training centre in Watford, Hertfordshire.

Courses are available in a number of subjects, including estimating, foundation skills, manual handling, packing and driver CPC. All BAR

approved trainers undergo tuition and assessment in training delivery by an independent company appointed by BAR to ensure quality and consistency across the network.

Although BAR approved courses are primarily aimed at BAR members, non-members are also welcome to attend and will receive a BAR certificate on successful completion of the course. Kidds and other training providers will also continue to offer their own non-BAR training courses as usual.

● **More information from** www.kidds.co.uk.



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NEWS: UK

Trucksmith scoops *What Van?* magazine award

Readers of leading transport industry magazine *What Van?* have voted Trucksmith 'Van Converter of the Year 2017'.

The announcement was made at a special awards ceremony in London on 13 December, 2016.

The company fought off stiff competition from 14 other vehicle converters to scoop the prestigious award.

A spokesman for *What Van?* said, "It is not difficult to understand why our readers voted for Trucksmith. The company has found a way around the traditional drawbacks of Luton vans, such as poor aerodynamics, high floors, and poor handling due to the high centre of gravity."

Daniel Trebble, Managing Director at Trucksmith said, "To think that they've voted for us over some worthy competition makes us incredibly proud and it is an exceptional achievement for our business. It reflects our focus on innovation and quality, and our investment in state-of-the-art production facilities and well trained staff has been key to our success. Thousands of our vans are now on the UK's roads and the public now recognises Trucksmith brands, such as Renault Master LoLoader and Vauxhall Movano KneeHi."

Trucksmith pioneered the low-loading Luton van model and is an approved body builder for leading van marques including Renault, Vauxhall and Fiat.



● Daniel Trebble.



● Housebuilding in the UK grew for most of last year.

Good housebuilding figures likely to continue to grow in 2017

After a year of unpredictability for the UK economy as a whole, overall contract value figures for the construction sector reached £70 billion, decreasing by 5% compared to 2015, according to the latest edition of the *Economic & Construction Market Review* from industry analysts Barbour ABI.

The report said that housebuilding in the UK continued to grow across the majority of the year, with total value of contracts at £23.6 billion, a year-on-year increase of 11%. Furthermore, from the housebuilding sector the planning activity increased in 2016 with the total value of projects reaching an advanced planning stage of £49.8 billion, an increase of 19.2% from the value in 2015.

Commenting on the figures, Michael Dall, Lead Economist at Barbour ABI, said: "It is clear from our yearly figures that the housebuilding sector was the main component of growth across

"Even after the initial shock of the Brexit vote, where many housebuilders' share prices fell in excess of 20%, this did not hamper activity ..."

Michael Dall

2016. Even after the initial shock of the Brexit vote, where many housebuilders' share prices fell in excess of 20%, this did not hamper activity with both the current and future pipelines of work remaining strong."

Michael added that with important political decisions likely to come in 2017 that could have implications on construction activity, the future is difficult to predict.

HM Customs service will need more resources post Brexit

The UK government will need to address key transport concerns to ensure Brexit is a success, says the Road Haulage Association (RHA). RHA's Chief Executive Richard Burnett said, "We need to maintain fluidity through the ports for the trucks that provide a vital trade service. Should the UK exit the single market and the customs union, it is clear that HM Customs will need to have significantly greater resources than at present. We need to have the ability to clear customs without delay, 24/7. The customs resource, as it stands, quite simply would not be able to cope. We are calling on the government to establish a working group to scale up customs resources in time for Brexit. It should include representatives from the international freight industry to ensure confidence that we will be ready for the change."

The RHA's other key concern is to ensure that the industry retains the ability to bring workers in from abroad where they are needed. For example, around 60,000 foreign lorry drivers currently work in the UK and the industry would not function properly without them.



● Richard Burnett.

Kidd's Removals presented with model truck following winning bid

East Yorkshire-based Kidd's Removals were presented with a scale model of a removals van liveried in their sister company Sandersons' distinctive blue and yellow colours at The Movers & Storers Show last November. The truck, which was hand-built by Terry

Sinnott of Unique Van Bodies, was presented to Trevor Kidd by BAR's Training Manager Stephen Thorpe. Trevor was the successful bidder at a charity auction held during the BAR conference in May. Trevor's bid of £1,500 will go to The Movers Benevolent Fund.



● Left to right: Terry Sinnott, Trevor Kidd, Frank Rose and Stephen Thorpe.



● Left to right: Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service; Samantha Lee, Head of Recruitment at Bond Dickinson LLP (winner); Mark Taylor, Network Director at Pickfords; Shelley Ferringo, Head of HR and Recruitment at Softcat (Highly Commended); Mike Percival, Global Head of Manufacturing and Engineering at Rolls Royce (award sponsor).

Pickfords recognised in Centrica's Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers awards

Pickfords has been recognised in the prestigious Centrica Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list, which is compiled annually by the National Apprenticeship Service and recognises excellence in businesses that employ apprentices.

The list was announced at the National Apprenticeship Awards, which took place on 20 January at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

After a tough selection process, the most exceptional apprenticeship employers from all the National Apprenticeship Awards employer categories went forward to feature in the list, which showcases the breadth of employers who now offer apprenticeships.

Pickfords began its apprentice scheme in 2015 with a view to filling a skills gap for both HGV drivers and office-based staff. Working with recruitment company People Plus Group Ltd, Mark Taylor developed the scheme to create opportunities for young people across the country. For many, it was a first job role which provided coaching and training and lead to a professional qualification.

Commenting on the company's entry in the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list, Mark Taylor, Network

"We are delighted to be recognised on the Centrica Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list and to be voted 'Highly Commended' ..."

Mark Taylor

Director at Pickfords said, "We are delighted to be recognised on the Centrica Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list and to be voted 'Highly Commended' in the National Apprenticeship Awards. This is truly a testament to the hard work and dedication of our HR and management teams, our recruitment partner People Plus Group Ltd, and of course our wonderful apprentices themselves. My sincere thanks to all involved."



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by WhatVan? readers



MADE IN BRITAIN

FOR SALE: CREDO MOVERS

staff were trained by BAR; his 350m² warehouse is furnished with Trafalgar cases too. Websites, of course, can be deceptive, but one look at the Credo website and it's clear that this company cares about what it does (just check out

the English text – spot on!).

As well as its domestic and overseas moving services, Credo says that it is the only company in the region that is certified for fine art moving by Cadogan Tate. The company has also invested in specialist equipment for handling very heavy items carefully and precisely, such as safes, pianos or office equipment, without any risk to staff. Piero said that this very intricate work is in great demand in Croatia.

When Piero sells Credo the buyer will get a freehold office building, four vehicles and, most importantly, a very loyal and experienced staff of five full-time employees with additional help from part-time workers. The Credo warehouse is leased but is ideally located close to the main arterial roads for Zagreb giving easy access to foreign drivers when delivering and collecting. Piero himself, still only 50, has no intention of retiring yet and might consider staying on to run the company as a manager, if the deal was right for him.

There is competition in Zagreb. This comes mainly from the large multinationals and partly from local companies. Piero says that his company is the only independent moving company in Croatia that is a member of any outside organisation and

Credo Movers A company for sale

After over 27 years in business, Piero Peic has decided to sell his business in Zagreb, Croatia. Steve Jordan spoke to Piero to find out more.

I don't usually write stories about companies that are selling (although I did in January), usually because the internal politics is too complicated but also because it's hard to get a clear impression of a company from a brief interview; I don't want to give anyone misleading information especially with something as important as a major acquisition. But Credo was introduced to me by an old and respected friend. I felt, therefore, that I would make an exception.

It was back in 1990 that Piero Peic started his moving company, Credo Movers, in Zagreb with just one van and loads of enthusiasm. Today the company has been successful, has carved out an impressive market presence in the region and Piero, now the company's CEO, has decided on a change.

It's still a small company by world standards, just four vehicles and seven full-time staff, but Piero said that its name has

When Piero sells Credo the buyer will get a freehold office building, four vehicles and, most importantly, a very loyal and experienced staff of five full-time employees with additional help from part-time workers.

become trusted by private and corporate customers alike for top quality service and Credo holds contracts with some impressive corporate accounts, including T-COM, the local telecommunications company; LIDL, the supermarket chain; and a number of others just coming on stream.

Right from the start Piero has aimed for quality: Credo is an international affiliate of the British Association of Movers (BAR), an independent affiliate of FEDEMAC and a member of IAM. All the company's

is recognised by the international moving community.

Around 50% of Credo's work is international moving. There's a lot coming into the country from Germany and the UK with people buying and furnishing holiday homes.

If your company is looking for representation in the region and you are interested in learning more, take a look at the advertisement on page 14 and go to www.credomovers.com for more information.

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PROFILE: WEIR & CARMICHAEL

The story behind the Britwrap brand

Deputy Editor David Jordan braved the UK's hopelessly congested motorway system and journeyed north to visit packaging specialist Weir & Carmichael; the company behind the Britwrap brand.

I arrived in Liverpool too early for my 11 o'clock meeting at Weir & Carmichael; for once the motorways had been kind and I'd made good progress on my 160-mile journey from Milton Keynes. With half an hour in hand I took a detour along the city's magnificent waterfront already bristling with camera-clicking tourists despite the January chill. The Royal Liver Building, watched over by its famous Liver Birds, Bella and Bertie, seemed a popular back-drop for group photos and souvenir selfies. It is said that Bella looks down the Mersey to make sure the ships arrive safely, while Bertie keeps watch over the city to keep the people of Liverpool safe.

It was time to press on.

Weir & Carmichael, owner of reusable packing supplier Britwrap, was formed in 1955 and moved to its present home in Bootle in 2010, having spent the previous 30 years a few miles away in Pall Mall, Liverpool. It's an impressive modern building on a modern industrial estate once occupied by railway marshalling yards and dockside buildings.

Marketing Manager Kelly Ambrose met me at reception and introduced me to Managing Director Martin Ellioth and Commercial Director Julia Pemberton. I was keen to find out why a company best known for making sacks for the food industry had decided to diversify into

other types of packaging and in particular, products for the moving industry.

Martin Ellioth, who is originally from Sweden and previously worked for Ikea, explained that in 2010 they were approached by a well-known DIY chain to develop a product to protect kitchen worktops during transportation.

"The company was selling millions of worktops a year and around 5% were being scrapped because of damage in transit. At that time we were using woven polypropylene for making sacks and our design team developed a cover using the same material to protect the worktops. It was very successful and resulted in a massive 90% reduction in damage. The

FIT FOR PURPOSE

Britwrap's mattress cover was developed specifically to make moving mattresses easier and safer.





● Opposite, left to right: Kelly Ambrose, Martin Ellioth and Julia Pemberton; above: Martin Ellioth fitting a sofa cover; left: Weir & Carmichael's premises in Bootle.

"It was clear from the trials that the new covers were ideal for the moving and storage industry so we decided to target our Britwrap marketing at that sector," said Kelly Ambrose. "We use e-mail marketing and social media to make new contacts and we've recently launched a new website for the brand where customers can order online for next-day delivery. As well as the UK market, we're keen to expand our business overseas so we've enabled the website to accept and process orders in other currencies including US dollars and euros. We've also received orders from Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

At the end of 2016 Britwrap added a polypropylene sofa cover to its range, which is also proving very popular with removals companies. There are plans to introduce other similar products in the future.

As well as specialist covers, online customers can order a large range of packaging products such as polypropylene bags, floor protectors, tape, cardboard boxes, dunnage bags and carpet protectors from the Britwrap website; making it a valuable resource for both the public and removals companies.

It was time to hit the motorway.

I'd enjoyed my trip to Liverpool and it was good to meet the team at Weir & Carmichael. As Martin and Kelly showed me around the site and I was able to meet some of the 38 staff, it was clear that this is still a family business where people enjoy working. While remaining a market leader in its core markets, the management has shown that it is not afraid to diversify into new sectors. A policy that will no doubt secure the company's continued success.

● www.britwrap.com

"It was clear from the trials that the new covers were ideal for the moving and storage industry so we decided to target our Britwrap marketing at that sector ..."

Kelly Ambrose

customer was of course delighted," said Martin.

Polypropylene is a lightweight material that is very durable and almost impossible to rip, so the covers could be used over and over again, unlike the single-use cardboard sleeves the company had used previously.

Later, an enquiry from a major furniture retailer led to the development of a mattress cover that would not only protect the mattress but enable it to be handled safely and easily during storage and delivery.

"Following the success of the worktop cover we decided to experiment using the same polypropylene material for the

mattress cover," said Julia Pemberton. "The design team got to work and after several prototypes and testing by the customer and a leading removals company, we developed a protective cover and at the same time launched the Britwrap brand."

The removals company was particularly impressed by the durability of the covers and how easy it was to carry and manoeuvre mattresses during house moves. The covers were light and easy to stow in the van after use and could typically be reused at least seventy times. They were also much cheaper than the conventional quilted covers they had used previously.



NEWS: UK

5G: the evolution continues

A recent report from Deloitte predicts that 2017 will see significant tangible steps towards the launch of 5G, the fifth generation of cellular networks.

The report says that by the end of 2017 more than 200 carriers are likely to be offering services that include 5G components, including significantly higher speeds and support for low-power Internet of Things (IoT) devices and sensors.

Dan Adams, Lead UK Partner for telecommunications at Deloitte, said: "The technology building blocks for 5G readiness are being deployed in 2017 and in some markets are already in place. 5G is undoubtedly a significant, complex upgrade following the culmination of many years of sustained upgrades to 4G networks."



● 5G will be a significant upgrade from 4G.



● Left to right: Stuart Philp, General Manager and Alistair Bingle, Managing Director.

Bishop's Move Group achieves ISO 14001 and BS OHSAS 18001 accreditation

Bishop's Move has announced its entire branch network has become both ISO 14001 and BS OHSAS 18001 accredited.

This is in recognition of the company's environmentally friendly business credentials and high standard in its health and safety management systems, and are in addition to its existing ISO 9001 and BS 8522 certifications.

ISO 14001 accreditation demonstrates that Bishop's Move is focussed on proactive environmental management: reducing costs, overheads and wastage, and achieving operational excellence by

ensuring legislative awareness and compliance. The BS OHSAS 18001 acknowledges the company's dedication to improving its day-to-day health and safety management and striving towards zero accidents.

Bishop's Move Managing Director Alistair Bingle said, "Both of these prestigious accreditations help consolidate our commitment to the quality, delivery and environmental cost of our removal and storage services, especially for our corporate and commercial business."

NKS Training Solutions congratulates its first winning student

Jordan Isbill, a senior porter with Hadley & Ottaway Ltd in Watton, Norfolk, has become the first ever winner of the NKS Trainee of the Year Award. Jordan has been with the company since September 2013 having previously worked with other moving companies. As a senior porter he takes the lead on the company's prestige moves and helps with the induction and training of new recruits.

Hadley & Ottaway Ltd was founded in 1928 by Jack Hadley & Herbert Ottaway who operated out of premises on Dereham Rd, Norwich. David Galer joined the company in 1994 and in 2004 headed up a management buy-out, subsequently moving to the former premises of Abels in Watton. David and Nick Saker, Director of Training for NKS, had both worked with Tony Abel in the past. NKS Training Solutions is based in Thetford, close to Watton.

"We have always advocated the training of our staff and so were delighted to have the services of NKS Training Solutions open their facility locally," said David. "As we were once colleagues at Abels Removals we share the same values as to how professional removals should be carried out."

Free leads from Just Homes

Just Homes Ltd is offering free removals leads to new customers for up to two months.

The leads provide the addresses of properties 'for sale', 'under offer' and 'sstc' (sold subject to contract) immediately they are flagged. Additional information provided includes: property type, number of bedrooms and sales price.

New clients can try two postcode districts (the area covered by the first four digits, e.g. MK10) for two months completely free of charge. This allows removal businesses to

measure the success of this approach and their return on investment. In addition, there are a number of postcode regions (the much larger area covered by the first two digits, see below) where the company has no subscribing clients. For a limited

period, free access is available to these complete postcode regions for two months and for up to two 'trial' clients.

The company has consistently reduced prices as its business has grown and now also offers

substantial discount to loyal clients, with many having been with the business from the very beginning. Stuart Maxwell, Managing Director of Just Homes Ltd commented: "Our ethos has always been to supply information in the most timely and cost effective way. Our reward has been to secure extremely loyal clients who continue to contribute to the improvement of our services."

● More information from www.justmovers.co.uk.

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NOT JUST ANY BODY.



BUSINESS: LEAD GENERATION WEBSITES

How removal companies can make more money from lead generation

By Damien Seaman, Brand Manager, buzzmove.com.

Some removal companies are against lead generation websites like Buzzmove. They claim we're driving down prices, or stealing customers that would otherwise go directly to them. But this isn't right.

Let's put aside the fact that, unless you have the time and money to rank highly on Google for the search terms customers are using, you won't ever attract the same leads we do. More importantly, we don't want to attract too many low-priced jobs. If our leads were all for low prices, our

removal company partners would leave. That means less money for us.

No one wants bad leads – not removal companies, and not us. That's why we focus on ensuring our leads will convert. To the point where one major national removals chain we recently started working with is telling us that the call "answer rate" of our leads is higher than other providers.

In this piece, I want to go through three steps that some of our removal companies do brilliantly to boost the value they get from lead generation. These steps are so simple, yet not everyone does them.

Step 1: look at long-term ROI

Those movers who get the most benefit from lead generation tend to measure their return on spend in the longer term. Take Ramshaw Transport, a large and growing removal firm based in Bishop Auckland in the north east of England.

The company has grown from a single van back in 2007 to a fleet of over 20 vehicles of all sizes today. Ramshaw gets all their initial business from leads received from lead generation sites.

"A lot of removal companies don't stick with it [lead generation]," said Andrew Smith, Ramshaw's Operational Director. "They have a bad month or two and then they give up. But if you look at lead generation from one month to the next, you'll fail."

"Movers that do this won't succeed because they don't have patience ... I look at it in a 12-month period. That's because I know it works. You've just got to be patient. Sometimes one lead is worth £100,000 of work in one job."

Step 2: be persistent

Several of our companies that do well, also tend to keep chasing after leads – often for months after the initial enquiry comes through. As one of them told us, "If they don't pick up the phone then I e-mail them. Then a week or two later I'll e-mail them again. After that, even if there's no response, I'll just e-mail them once a month or so. After all, what's the worst that can happen? They don't turn into a paying job? Well if you don't keep asking they definitely won't!"

Typically, a small percentage of these leads convert. But it costs so little to pursue them. Why wouldn't you do it?

Step 3: encourage referrals and repeat business

Steve Thomas from Four Square Removals told us about one lead in West London who became a customer and "then went on to recommend us to one of her colleagues who we then moved from London to Swindon. That's the power of treating our customers fairly and being transparent in all our dealings and costings."

If you're not getting referrals or repeat business, put a system in place. E-mail commercial customers every month or couple of months to ask if they have any more work. E-mail all customers after you've moved them to ask if they will recommend you to friends and family.

With these three simple steps, you can massively increase the return on investment from using lead generators and pick up lots of consistent repeat work in the process.

● www.buzzmove.com.



● Lead generation sites can find customers that removal companies may otherwise miss.



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NEWS: UK



Fox Moving & Storage opens £1,000,000 extension

Deputy Editor David Jordan travelled to South Wales on 27 January to celebrate the opening of Fox Group (Moving & Storage) Ltd's impressive £1,000,000 extension to its Cwmbran headquarters.

Bunting and party balloons decorated the perimeter fence at Fox Moving & Storage's smart HQ in Somerset Road, Cwmbran, bringing cheer to an otherwise dreary January day in South Wales. Two pristine removals vans, one in Fox livery the other in Atlas, were parked either side of the entrance; I squeezed through and found a spot in the rapidly filling car park.

I met Managing Director Paul Fox in the brightly-lit reception area and with glass of champagne in hand I mingled with the 100 or so guests, staff, local dignitaries and suppliers, that had gathered to celebrate the milestone occasion.

Paul's talented daughter Sam, accompanied by guitarist Riccardo, entertained us with their songs while we tucked in to the excellent buffet laid on by the Fox family. It was clear that a great deal of planning had gone into staging the event and I for one felt privileged to be there.

The 14000ft² extension – designed by Buckle Chamberlain Architects and built by local contractor Henstaff Construction Ltd – will provide much needed additional office and storage space as well as accommodating Fox's vintage removal

As we all looked on, the new warehouse shutters were slowly raised to the *Star Wars* 'Space' theme, flashing lights and showbiz smoke.

vehicles in an integral showroom.

In his welcoming speech, Paul remembered his father Roy and paid tribute to those early years in business when the foundations were laid down. The company had prospered through many changes and challenges in its 46-year history, including multiple acquisitions of other family removals businesses. He said the dedication and professionalism of its loyal employees had been key to the

company's success, several of whom have been with the company for over 25 years. Paul also thanked his staff for putting up with the inevitable disruption caused by the building work over the past twelve months.

Guest of honour was the Mayor of Torfaen, Veronica Crick, who said she was delighted to see a local family business doing so well, providing an important service and employment for the people of Cwmbran. Fox are long-term UK agents for the giant US Van Line Atlas and their International President Jim Gaw had travelled from Seattle to officially open the new building. Jim also took to the stage to add his congratulations



● Far left: Paul Fox (left) and Jim Gaw; centre: Mayor Veronica Crick and Councillor Colin Crick; left Sam Fox and guitarist Riccardo entertain the guests; below: exterior and reception at the new headquarters extension.



● Left to right: Clair McLaren and Diane Janczyk, co-founders of The Button Box, with David Mills, General Manager, Bishop's Move, Scotland.

Bishop's Move gives communities a helping hand

Bishop's Move's Edinburgh branch has embarked on a new charity partnership with Diane Janczyk and Clair McLaren, co-founders of 'The Button Box', in the Midlothian area.

The innovative charity helps parents in the Midlothian area by collecting donations of children's clothing and holding events throughout the year to give families the chance to access free clothing to support their growing families.

"Building strong local communities is about understanding, appreciating, and caring for the people that live within them," said co-founder of The Button Box, Diane Janczyk.

Bishop's Move began working with The Button Box in the latter part of 2016 by collecting and storing the donated clothes, which so far has proved very popular and directly benefitted the branch's local community.

Meanwhile, Bishop's Move's national 'De Clutter & Donate' scheme continues to raise money for national charities such as the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, and Sense and Chest Heart Stroke Scotland. Its emphasis for 2017 is to directly support local communities by working with a network of smaller local charities.

Chris Marshall, Bishop's Move's Marketing Director said, "One of the reasons I think it is so rewarding for

"It is our intention to support organisations in our local communities who will greatly benefit from the donations from the 'De-clutter & Donate' scheme or through our active sponsorship of local schemes."

Chris Marshall

businesses and our employees to help the local communities around them is that the results are so visible and significant. It's inspiring to see the donations making a real difference that can be seen, such as helping the local school buy a new minivan. It is our intention to support organisations in our local communities who will greatly benefit from the donations from the 'De-clutter & Donate' scheme or through our active sponsorship of local schemes."

to Cwmbran HQ

to the Fox family and said how much he valued their close association with Atlas over the last 20 years.

After the speeches, guests were ushered outside to the cracks and bangs of fireworks lighting-up the early evening sky: but that was by no means the end of the entertainment. As we all looked on, the new warehouse shutters were slowly raised to the *Star Wars* 'Space' theme, flashing lights and showbiz smoke. Then, as the air cleared, the red-coated ranks of the Pontnewydd Male Voice Choir burst into song with a medley of Welsh classics. It was a big surprise and everyone was delighted.

It was time for me to leave the party and head back along the M4 on the long journey home. It had been a memorable evening and it was good to see that despite the uncertainties of modern day business there are still people prepared to stick their neck out and invest in the future. I wish them well.

Property completion nightmares: who's to blame and what to do?

Very few established or busy removals companies will not have experienced the hassle and nightmare of a delayed property completion but some may not know why this happens and what, as a removals company, you should do to protect yourself.

It seems really bizarre that a legal system, which relies on certainty and precision, can result in a situation where after lunch, and possibly later, on the day of a property completion, sellers, buyers and removals people can be in no-man's land as to what's going on and whether they can start moving items into a new property. However, whilst not common, this situation is also far from rare.

Problems and causes of delays on the day of completion/removals

There can be several causes of delayed completion. Ranked in order of importance/increased risk they tend to be:

- A long chain of transactions completing all on the same day and all being dependent on each other – a long chain inherently increases the risk that money won't get up the chain smoothly/in time.
- Banking system – banks will only ever confirm same day transfers which means

a bank might receive funds from another bank at 10:00am but might not action a payment for an hour or longer. If there are a few linked transactions where banks don't act quickly, it doesn't take much to result in a problem,

- Client disorganisation – clients often tend to blame lawyers but with many transactions, in addition to the mortgage advance, the client buyer will need to send some completion funds to their lawyers. If the amount does not arrive or is not cleared funds, this will mean delayed completion.

- Solicitor inefficiency – with any chain of transactions, law firms who undertake conveyancing have the problem of having to check and recheck bank accounts numerous times on the day of completion to see if funds have arrived and to act

... with any chain of transactions, law firms who undertake conveyancing have the problem of having to check and recheck bank accounts numerous times on the day...



rapidly once funds are received if they need to be used on an onward purchase. If checks on incoming funds aren't regular or there is a delay in sending money, this can create havoc further up a chain.

- The contract system – it is standard for contracts of sale of properties to provide that funds must be received by the buyer in full by 1:00pm. If there is any delay, the seller can technically insist on penalty monies being paid and a solicitor might serve a notice to complete which attracts an additional legal fee. Most solicitors and their selling clients allow a period of grace, but some don't. The buyer or his/her/their solicitors might refuse to pay any additional fee which can create an impasse. There can also be problems if a buyer is waiting at a property and notices that a seller has not fully cleared the property out or has taken fixtures and fittings they said they would leave.

If there are delays and funds have not been received by a seller, either at the top of the chain or even a seller below, by 3:30pm then no money will arrive that day as there is a cut-off point for money being sent. What happens then?

In a worst-case scenario, where money has only gone so far up a chain, you can face a situation where completions may not happen and removals vans are loaded but can't unload. This does happen very occasionally.

More commonly, according to James Swede, specialist property lawyer with Darlington's LLP, common sense will prevail. He says, "My law firm deals with upwards of 400 completions every year. Less than 5% involve a problem with completion and some form of comfort may be possible whereby solicitors can confirm to those further up the chain, via a series of undertakings, that money is in place but has just not arrived and that it will be sent without fail as soon as it arrives and/or that non-cancellable instructions to send the required amount have already been lodged with a bank. This often solves the problem but is not ideal and may require a lot of haggling and frantic e-mails after 3:30pm".

The above will usually mean that unloading can't even start until late in an afternoon when removals people have been ready for many hours, expecting to have almost finished by late afternoon.

In some cases, completion doesn't happen until after the weekend, meaning removals companies have a headache as well as clients.

What are the implications for removals companies?

- Get your contracts right – delays will cost your business money, staff costs and time spent waiting which may mean you are late on other jobs. Knowing that in some cases your clients won't be able to allow you to unload or load should mean you think about contract clauses which protect you for those eventualities.

- Employment law – can you compel your staff to stay late, for example, if their normal hours are 9-5 but due to delay they can only start the main part of their job at 4:00pm and must work till 9:00pm to unload? If you can't, where does this leave your customer and your reputation?

- Storage risk – in the unlikely event a completion doesn't happen and you have a van loaded with expensive items, you may have to retain these items in your lorry over a weekend – are you insured for this? What happens if there is a theft or some other problem while you retain a customer's possessions?

● **Further information from**
www.darlington.com.

In some cases, completion doesn't happen until after the weekend, meaning removals companies have a headache as well as clients.



NEWS: INTERNATIONAL

Continued uncertainty for container shipping market

Xeneta, the global benchmarking and market intelligence platform for containerized ocean freight, is forecasting further uncertainty for the global container shipping market in 2017.

Although rates have risen significantly from the historic lows of early 2016, giving battered ship owners some reprieve, structural problems continue to undermine stability, while macro-economic and political factors are casting long shadows on the horizon.

"Prices rose from Q3 into Q4 before flattening out a little," said Xeneta CEO Patrik Berglund, "but the carriers' position improved significantly from the dire situation they found themselves in early 2016.

That said, it had to. With the majority of carriers losing money hand over fist last year, the industry simply wasn't sustainable."

As it stands, further uncertainty is provided by an unpredictable economic and geo-political situation, as Berglund explained. "With the inauguration of Donald Trump, the continued fallout from the Brexit vote and a rising tide of more 'insular' political thinking, the outlook for global trade is, well, interesting," he noted. "Carriers will be paying close attention to developments."



● Patrik Berglund.

Orphee Beinoglou receives growth award in Greece

Orphee Beinoglou in Greece has been honoured as one of only 20 winners in the country's Awards for Growth and Competition 'Growth Awards', organised jointly by Eurobank and Grant Thornton.

The aim was to reward enterprises that were able to combine high financial performance with a successful modern corporate management and who have the drive to contribute to the structure of the business environment and corporate culture in Greece. The awards were made on Thursday, December 1 2016 at the Athens Music Hall.

In a letter to Orphee Moschopoulos-Beinoglou, the organisers said that his company was one of the country's 20 most dynamic enterprises, which despite adverse conditions had distinguished itself amongst hundreds of other Greek companies. "The ultimate choice made by the

Evaluation Committee was extremely difficult because all 20 enterprises hold a powerful and equally-valued presence, high financial indexes, escalating turnover, employment and profitability as well as inspired management," they said. "You all are a strong base for the shaping of a modern entrepreneurship, upon which will be structured a new national determination and financial vigour, that will drive the country to exit the crisis and back to a stable financial track."

The 20 winners were chosen from 172 shortlisted companies, themselves distilled from 8,000 entrants. The organisers said that the 20 winners "set the example of Greece's development efforts".



● Orphee Moschopoulos-Beinoglou (left) receives the 'Growth Award'.

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● Donald Frazier, Senior Vice President of Information Technology at Arpin Group.

Arpin Group undergoes cyber security test to bolster defences against hackers

In January 2016, Arpin Group completed a cyber security penetration test, administered by an independent firm, to evaluate the company's defences against hackers.

Arpin Group hired Digital Boundary Group (DBG), a firm that specialises in making companies hacker-proof. DBG/Nutanix spent several days in secret, probing Arpin Group's digital defences, deploying the same methods that a criminal might use to discover and exploit the company's potential vulnerabilities.

The test started by gathering information about Arpin through publicly available sources such as social media, domain registries, certificates, e-mail, mobile phones, etc. Once phase one was complete, DBG then attempted to break into Arpin's systems by exploiting possible points of vulnerability, such as sending e-mails, texts and faxes to employees with malicious links or forcing entry via known software bugs, for example.

Donald Frazier, Senior Vice President of Information Technology at Arpin Group said, "This is an exciting time for Arpin Group because we are growing rapidly on an international scale. However, with that growth, we are also exposed to greater visibility and potential threats from cyber criminals. Therefore, we are being proactive about bolstering our information security so that all our

clients; corporate, government and COD customers, may be assured that their personal information is protected."

The penetration test will be repeated on an annual basis, occurring on a random date so that Arpin staff cannot prepare for it.

"... we are also exposed to greater visibility and potential threats from cyber criminals. Therefore, we are being proactive about bolstering our information security."

Donald Frazier

Arpin is also in the process of conducting an ISO Security Assessment of its physical security, including doors, windows, cameras, and parking lots, as well as lockdown, disaster recovery, pandemic procedures and senior management security policies. Arpin staff all over the world are being trained on updated security measures.



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PROFILE: MUDINMAR

MUDINMAR:

THE SPANISH CONNECTION

Mudinmar is a family-owned business based in Valencia, Spain. It's a family company that specialises in providing a service to The Canary Islands and The Balearics. Steve Jordan spoke to the current generation to find out more.

It was in 1988 that Gregorio Martinez and his brother José started their moving company. They had both been involved in the industry for some time but now wanted to branch out on their own. They set up in Valencia, the main port for Madrid, and also opened in Gran Canaria in The Canaries. In 1992 they opened in Tenerife. The business specialised in the shipping of new furniture to the Balearic Islands and general cargo and household goods to The Canaries.

International moving became more important in 2000 when Gregorio's son, also Gregorio, joined his sister Maria José and brother Juan. Since then the company has grown steadily and now has ten people in the head office in Valencia with shipping managers each specialising in their own regions: South America, USA, Europe, The Balearic and

Canary Islands – and domestic moving within Spain.

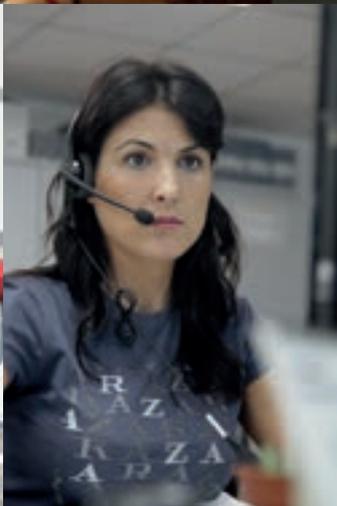
"In 2000, when I started, I asked my father: what can I do for the company?" said Gregorio. His sister and brother were already working there. Gregorio was immediately put to work loading boxes in the warehouse, packing with the road crews and learning every aspect of the job. "I was very grateful to my father for making me do it that way. Now it's much easier for me to manage people because I understand the problems they have."

Mudinmar has the distinction of being the only moving company in Valencia that is also a customs broker. This should help the company secure new business in the future as the customs clearance regulations changed in Europe this year requiring goods to be cleared in the country in which they will be used. Gone are the days

when goods could be cleared in the UK and then delivered throughout Europe.

Mudinmar runs a daily service from Valencia to the Balearic Islands of Majorca and Minorca and has a weekly service for The Canaries leaving on a Saturday and delivering to Gran Canaria on Wednesday and Tenerife on Thursday. The company also has a weekly service to and from Europe from Spain and has regular consolidated shipments to the USA, especially the main ports of New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

The company has been a member of IAM for five years and has recently joined PAIMA to cement its contacts with agents especially in South America, Argentina in particular. "Argentina is our best market," said Gregorio. "We have six to eight shipments a month going there, FCL and LCL, and a constant flow of traffic back."



“I was very grateful to my father for making me do it that way. Now it’s much easier for me to manage people because I understand the problems they have.”

Gregorio Martinez

Mudinmar has a very young team. It has a strong online presence, including specific landing pages for the South American countries allowing it to position itself there – virtually. Although the company is ambitious, it has no plans to expand its physical operations outside Spain. Instead it will rely on the agency relationships it already has and new ones it will develop in the future.

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OPINION: FAKE NEWS



Fake news: the weapon that leaves

There's nothing new about fake news – it's been used in warfare and politics for centuries – but with the invention of the Internet and social media the ability to disseminate fake news is in everyone's pocket. Deputy Editor David Jordan looks at the possible consequences.

During the Second World War, Winston Churchill ordered the creation of an organisation charged with waging a propaganda war against Nazi Germany. It was called the Political Warfare Executive and its job was to spread fake news across Germany by dropping tens of thousands of forged German newspapers and leaflets over enemy lines that told harrowing tales of imminent defeat and disaster. A parallel campaign used a secret radio station in southern England to broadcast German language 'news' programmes designed to demoralise the enemy and hasten their surrender. The Germans in turn fought their own

propaganda war against the UK with frequent radio broadcasts by traitor William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw, who tried to convince the British public that their days were numbered. Joyce was hanged by the British for treason in 1946.

Using fake news in warfare is one thing, but using it in peace time as a political weapon or to simply make mischief, is in my opinion one of the greatest threats to civilised society and even world peace. Unlike mainstream media, which however imperfect, is identifiable and accountable for its actions, social media has given anyone, however irresponsible, the means to instantly disseminate 'news' anonymously and without any form of

accountability or sanction to a worldwide audience. In the past, you needed a printing press and a squadron of aircraft, or at the very least a radio station, to broadcast propaganda, now all you need is a smartphone.

It is of course impossible to tell how much damage is caused by fake news and misinformation, but given the public's apparent obsession with the likes of Facebook and Twitter and the millions of subscribers across the globe, it is likely to be considerable.

Two particularly note-worthy stories posted by bogus news agencies that appeared in the run up to the US election were that Pope Francis had endorsed

WikiLeaks CONFIRMS Hillary Sold Weapons to ISIS... Then Drops Another BOMBSHELL!



Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, is a controversial character. But there's no denying the article he has posted up here made the Democratic Party, the left, and left's allies to exonerate Hillary Clinton.

Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Releases Statement

TOPICS: Pope Francis Endorses Donald Trump



As the Pope, Don Trump, the most powerful man in the world, has endorsed Donald Trump for President, and Hillary Clinton for Vice President.

● Top: the Hillary Clinton fake story as reported by politicalinsider.com in August 2016; above: the story about the Pope allegedly endorsing Donald Trump, as reproduced on the *Independent* newspaper's website in a story about fake news; left: a newspaper produced by the Political Warfare Executive during World War II.

after the inauguration, he claimed that the event had been attended by more people than Barack Obama's in 2009 even though aerial photographs, live TV pictures and other evidence proved plainly otherwise. Later, senior White House aid Kellyanne Conway defended Spicer in a TV interview with CNN saying he was giving "alternative facts". What the hell does that mean? And what does it say about future press statements from the Trump administration?

Using fake news in warfare is one thing, but using it in peace time as a political weapon or to simply make mischief, is in my opinion one of the greatest threats to civilised society and even world peace.

Getting back to the Internet, there is no doubt that its social networking platforms present a serious threat to us all when people abuse them, so you would think the organisations who run the sites would be doing all they could to combat the problem.

Adam Mosseri, speaking on behalf of Facebook said, "We believe in giving people a voice and that we cannot become arbiters of truth ourselves, so we're approaching this problem carefully. We've focussed our efforts on the worst of the worst, on the clear hoaxes spread by spammers for their own gain, and on engaging both our community and third party organisations."

Well, if that's the case, how come Facebook allows spammers to post false obituaries of film stars and celebrities as sponsored links, for which they are presumably being paid? Any legitimate news agency that published rubbish like that would be sued for every penny they had.

The Internet has brought enormous benefits to the world of communications, but it has come at a price. Giving irresponsible organisations and people with antisocial or even criminal intentions the power to spread lies and propaganda with impunity to an often gullible public, is a recipe for chaos and catastrophe.

Unlike conventional weapons, fake news leaves no scars or burning buildings, but its effects can be every bit as devastating. Nazi propaganda merchant Joseph Goebbels loved it; thankfully the Internet hadn't been invented!

no scars

Donald Trump and that Hillary Clinton had sold weapons to ISIS. The sad thing is the stories attracted over two million Facebook engagements over a three-month period, while at the same time, the *New York Times*' best performing Facebook story managed only 370,000. Did those fake stories influence the result of the US election? We will never know.

For some reason the public seems to be remarkably tolerant of fake news and unsupported claims, even when the perpetrators are high-profile public figures who should know better. The slogan on the Vote Leave campaigner's bus during the 2016 referendum falsely claiming that the UK was spending £350 million a

week on EU membership and that they would use it to support the National Health Service, didn't result in the politicians that invented it being publicly shamed and thrown out of office. Far from it. They won the public vote; Boris Johnson landed the plumb job of Foreign Secretary; and several others were given top roles in Theresa May's new government. Meanwhile Nigel Farage was rewarded with his own talk-show on London's LBC radio while he awaits a call from his friend Donald in Washington.

It seems the truth is becoming ever more elusive. The very first time President Trump's new Press Secretary Sean Spicer faced the world's media immediately

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Whilst there really is no such thing as a totally safe speed, by cutting speed, driving defensively and observing speed limits we can all play a part in reducing accidents on the road and reduce damage and down time to our businesses. Saving potential untold costs in van hire and interruptions resulting in missing removal deadline dates for your customers. Of course, when it comes to speed limits, we all think we know them. **Or do we?**

A recent survey in 2015 by co-operative insurance suggests that over a third of standard car licence drivers are motoring around Britain with no idea what the speed limit is and this may be the case for many commercial 3.5t removal drivers too. Of the 2,000 drivers surveyed by the Co-op, 38% of drivers didn't know that the national speed limit on a single-carriageway road is 60mph, 25% of motorists believed it was 50mph and 10% believed it is 70mph or higher.

means their stopping distances are generally a lot longer than the standard passenger car.

So what is the limit for commercial vehicles

The law states that commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of up to 2 tonnes can travel up to 60mph on single carriageways and 70mph on dual carriageways and motorways, effectively making them the same as cars. These are called car derived vans, and include the likes of the Fiesta van, the first generation Combo and Punto van. However for a 3500kg commercial Luton van the law is different. Luton low loader box vans have many benefits such as a greater volume capacity, a lower loading height and a greater payload, all of which can be driven on a standard car licence if the vehicle has a gross weight of below 3500kg. This puts the 3.5t Luton box van in a different category to the car derived van and the law on speed limits is different. Luton box vans with a minimum gross weight above 2000kg and a maximum of 3500kg are restricted to lower speed limits compared to passenger cars and derived vans. It may be worth investing in a speed restricter for your van.

A staggering 12% of drivers didn't know what the correct motorway speed limit is.

Speed limits have been different for passenger cars and commercial vehicles since the Road Traffic Act of 1930 was introduced, however in April 2015 the speed limit in England and Wales for commercial goods vehicles changed. In this short article, we attempt to unravel the mystery surrounding speed limits and lay the law out plain and simple.

Why is it different for commercial vehicles

The reason for commercial vehicles having a different law has always been simple; commercial vehicles and their loads weigh more which

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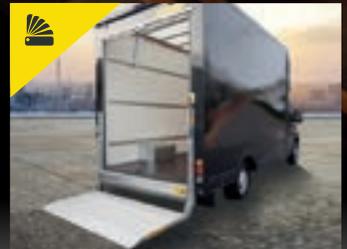
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2.5m	2.1m	21m ³	1300kg	2.5m	2.1m	23m ³	1250kg	2.7m	2.1m	29m ³	1200kg
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COVER STORY: CHESS MOVING AUSTRALIA

WAY OUT WEST

Steve Jordan dropped in to see an old friend in Perth, Australia, to chat about the business and to speculate on what the future may hold.

It was a warm (I might say hot) morning at the Fremantle cruise terminal when I spotted the familiar face of Kim Moseley waiting to pick up my wife and I after a short holiday. It's always a slightly surreal feeling when you first meet someone you know in an unfamiliar place; although you are hoping and expecting to meet them, it's still a surprise when you do: the welcoming glow of the past amidst the harsh glare of the present.

I had never been to Fremantle before (which, by the way, instantly became one of my favourite places anywhere) and I hadn't been to Perth for 30 years so Kim's brief guided tour of his isolated, pristine city was a real treat.

Kim's company is called Chess Moving. The offices and warehouse are located in an industrial centre in Kewdale in the east of the city, close to the airport. I say 'industrial' but that doesn't really give the right impression. The word conjures up images of belching chimneys and close-packed factories, but that's not the

Perth way. It's more a leafy suburb with warehouses. Just like the rest of the city, it's virtually spotless.

In the 1970s, Kim worked for J Wilson Removals in Perth, a company that had operations throughout Australia and connections back to the early 19th century settlers of what was then the Swan River Colony. When the company fell upon hard times Kim, and his then business partner Kevin Rowe, bought the Perth operation from the liquidator and set about building it back to success. At that time the company had around a dozen employees, significant business in the north-west serving the mining community, and some storage.

Moving in Australia was a tough business in those days. Interstate moving was done on high-volume trailers that would traverse the whole country with a single driver, employing the local agents' crews to help with the delivery at destination. It was particularly bad for consignments going north. "In the old days the bitumen stopped at Carnarvon and didn't go all

the way to Karratha (1,500km from Perth and the main port for the mining industry)," explained Kim. "The weather was pretty tough up there too." Today the interstate work is all done in containers by rail. "It's much cheaper and more flexible."

Despite the inherent difficulties, Kim and Kevin's project worked well but when Kevin headed east to open up in Sydney, Kim took over 100% ownership in Perth.

Kim was quick to recognise at that time that it would be international work that would create the growth he was looking for. In the early 1980s he joined BAR (British Association of Removers), jumped on a plane and started making contacts. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without BAR," he said. "We had to belong because it was the only way we could meet everyone in the same place. It was a big investment but it did kick-start the process of getting us into the international market."

As well as getting the international work, Kim and his team also had to learn

COVER STORY: CHESS MOVING AUSTRALIA



● Far left: Chess staff wear badges to show their packing qualifications; Main image, left to right: Brian Hooper, Training and Quality Manager (30 years' service); Mick Moso, Mover and Driver (20 years' service); Spencer Wong, Export Packer (29 years' service); Hayley Richards, Packer (3 years' service); and Kim Moseley, Managing Director; below: the new Hyster lift truck automatically provides the VGM (Verified Gross Mass) to help Chess meet SOLAS regulations.



“We were dealing with individual movers on the east coast and we felt it would be a good idea to have a common name for marketing. So we formed Chess Moving Australia ...”

Kim Moseley

how to handle it. Staff had to be trained in the handling and packing requirements of international work and administration staff had to become familiar with shipping and airfreight documentation. Although inbound work, in the shape of migrants recruited largely to meet the needs of the mining companies, came in quickly, J Wilson needed to generate enough

export work to provide the reciprocation the UK origin agents expected. There were no consolidators in Australia so Kim had to start filling 20ft containers straight away.

“In the early days we could only manage 5-1 reciprocation,” Kim explained. “But eventually the figures improved.” He said that they were able to get the work, in the

face of stiff competition, by making sure they did the job right. “We had to focus heavily on staff training, but it was cash flow that was the biggest problem in the early days.” With the origin agent customer at the other side of the world, that was an inherent problem with the international business.

continues over

COVER STORY: CHESS MOVING AUSTRALIA



● Brian Hooper in the Chess training room.

continued from previous page

The name Chess was coined in 1995. It's supposed to relate to 'making a smart move' but Kim admits that any clever meaning is not something that troubles him. It was a way of competing nationally and internationally with the big name companies. "We were dealing with individual movers on the east coast and we felt it would be a good idea to have a common name for marketing," he explained. "So we formed Chess Moving Australia and currently there are shareholders in Perth, Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Launceston, Canberra, Cairns, Toowoomba and Townsville. All the owners have equal shares in Chess while retaining their own PTY companies."

As well as the marketing benefits of the Chess name the formal cooperation between its members allows it to invest in multi-use materials that can be used between depots while remaining within the group. This gives the company a tremendous advantage over local companies that cannot use these high-quality materials in such an economic way.

But the key to success for Kim has always been his people. A number of the staff have been with the company for 20 years or more including John Rowe (Kevin's son), the operations manager, now in his 50s, who has never worked anywhere else; and Rohan Coutinho, the international manager, who has also been there all his working life. "I am pretty keen to keep the people who do the right thing," said Kim. "You have to acknowledge them and treat them the right way. Long-term employees help to settle a business down rather than waste time bringing in people without the right experience."

Today the business looks very different than it did when Kim bought it. It has moved four times to bigger premises,

employs around 70 people, 30% of its work is international, 25% interstate and the rest made up of storage, business moving, and some corporate work. Chess Moving in Perth also has a thriving document storage and management company, Integrated Records Management, within the confines of its household goods warehouse. "One of the benefits of records management is that it's constant," said Kim. "You are not worried about what the sales are going to be next week because it's all there."

"One of the benefits of records management is that it's constant. You are not worried about what the sales are going to be next week because it's all there."

Kim Moseley

Traditional storage, however, so important for moving companies, has fallen off significantly in recent years as self storage has gained in popularity. Kim said that he has often been tempted to open his own self storage facility but the right place hasn't come along yet. "I should have done it 15 years ago."

Kim admits that the last few years have been 'rocky'. The downturn in the economy has had a negative effect on the mining industry on which Western Australia so heavily relies. However, Kim continues to drive the business forwards and has embraced technology as a tool to do so. Justin Davies has worked with Kim for many years and now focusses on the

company's use of technology and social media as part of its marketing strategy.

"Online marketing is a bit like prospecting for gold in Kalgoorlie," he explained. "Once upon a time you could wander around and pick up nuggets but now you have to find new ground or get smarter with your mining."

Holding up a smartphone Justin said: "Millennials do not understand that you make calls with these things. So you have to work out different ways of getting in touch. We are working out new ways of automating the marketing process and they need constant tweaking to keep them successful."

The company uses video surveys, however they are not as useful as it might appear in such an expansive country as Australia. In WA most of the business is concentrated in a local area around Perth and the coast, so personal surveys are still practical and allow a better opportunity to build a relationship with the customer.

Kim has accredited the company for ISO 9001: 2008 for Removals, Move Management and related services and AS/NZS 4801: 2001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. He's currently looking to add the environmental and data protection standards too. He believes in Standards, not because they allow him to get more business but because they enable him to run his business better.

But most important for Kim is his workforce and the training they receive. Brian Hooper has been with the company for 30 years and is in charge of training. As part of their training he gets the export packers to pack a china carton then throw it off the balcony in the warehouse. They keep repacking it until nothing breaks.

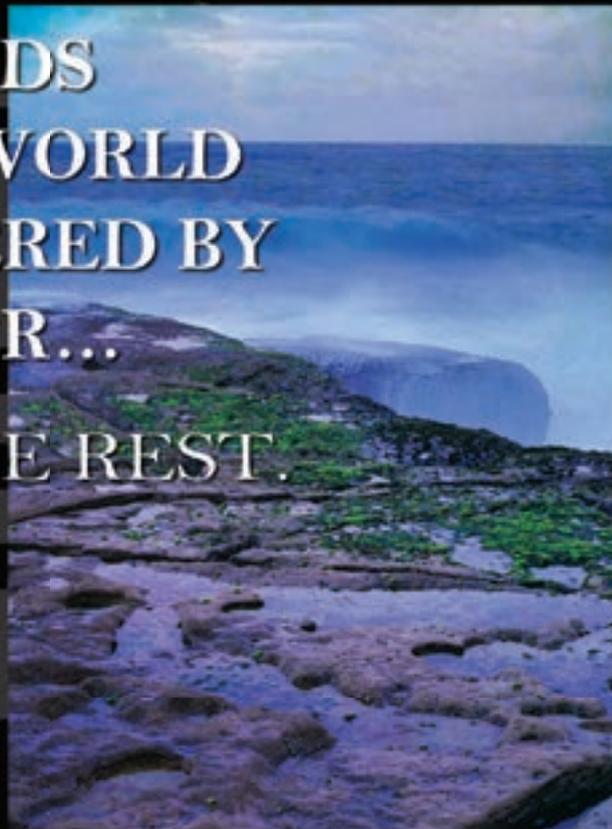
"We have a thirteen-phase training programme that everyone goes through," said Brian. "It covers packing, handling, safety, loading, international wrapping, customer service, leadership – the whole job." Brian also attends most of the jobs so if he sees something that's not right he can correct it straight away. Chess awards its own certificates and badges so that the staff get recognition from the company and customers can see that they have been fully trained.

On the wall in the Chess boardroom, as with many such rooms I have seen around the world, are the company values. It talks about honesty, morality, responsibility, reliability and integrity. I asked, perhaps mischievously, if the staff would be able to recite them. Kim said some probably would but that wasn't really the point. They are his values and, as in any organisation, the way in which the boss behaves influences the behaviour of everyone else. "That's just the way we do things here," he said.

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NEWS: ON THE ROAD

FTA: Northern Ireland road scheme will improve safety

A £230,000 investment in the A1 in Northern Ireland will improve safety and keep traffic moving, says the Freight Transport Association (FTA).

The improvements to the main road connecting Belfast and Dublin were announced in January by Infrastructure Minister Chris Hazzard. Work on the dual carriageway at Hillsborough was scheduled to start in February 2017.

Seamus Leheny, FTA's Policy & Membership Manager in Northern Ireland, said, "FTA has been pressing the government to make these long overdue safety improvements that will permanently close crossing points along this stretch of the A1."

"We hope the Department for Infrastructure will eventually close all crossings on the entire dual carriageway due to the constant risk of slow moving vehicles crossing the carriageway. The road is used by 40,000 vehicles a day including a high number of HGVs and FTA members have repeatedly made us aware of the dangers."



● Seamus Leheny.



● The majority of government support for low emission vehicles has so far been allocated to cars.

FTA calls for government support for switch to green fuels

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has called for the government to give transport operators similar support to the car sector by providing significant financial support to help achieve more widespread industry take-up of green fuels and technologies.

FTA's comments followed the release in January of the final figures from the government's Low Carbon Truck Trial which put more than 350 gas-powered HGVs on UK roads and supported over 15 public refuelling stations.

The trial has given industry the opportunity to test alternative fuels to diesel: however, operators believe that alternatively-fuelled truck numbers will decline if further financial support is not provided to help bridge the gap to large-scale commercialisation.

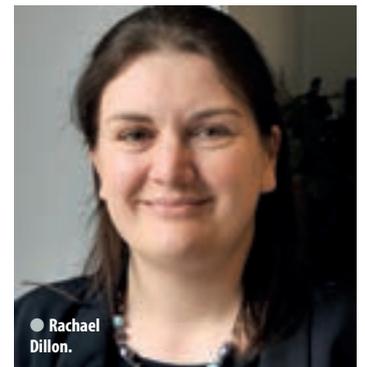
Rachael Dillon, FTA's Climate Change Policy Manager said, "The new Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial announced over summer 2016 and the extension of the plug-in vehicle grant to vans over 3.5 tonnes were welcome moves to help the industry reduce its environmental impact. However, the majority of government funding to date has been allocated to cars. The UK's gas truck fleet makes up just 0.2% of the overall fleet and there is potential for significant progress to be made in increasing these numbers. However, if the

government is serious about increasing the presence of 'green' trucks on our roads, it must ensure that it continues to help provide facilities and incentives for operators to use them."

As operators seek to achieve further significant reductions in carbon emissions and to improve air quality performance beyond Euro VI in the 2020s, FTA asserts that they will require financial support to adopt greener fuels and low carbon technologies, alongside government policies that support alternatives. The industry believes that high costs of vehicle conversions or purchasing ultra-low emission vehicles, plus a lack of public refuelling infrastructure, are significant barriers to putting greener trucks on the road.

Ms Dillon added, "It is crucial that renewable fuels such as biomethane can be utilised in trucks to bring bigger emission reductions, especially when there are limited options for heavier vehicles to decarbonise. Government must incentivise the production of biomethane for use as a road transport fuel rather than through the heat sector."

The Department for Transport has also released results of Emissions Testing of Gas-Powered Commercial Vehicles, which recommend that the government continues to support the development of gas vehicle infrastructure and gas powered vehicles.



● Rachael Dillon.

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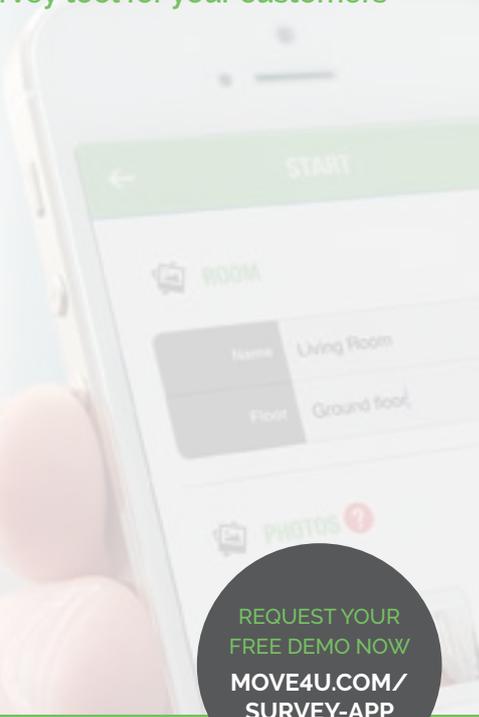


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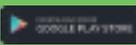
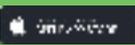
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INSIGHT: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



● Cloud services, though cheap and effective, may only be a short-term solution.

The future of information management

Dominic Johnstone, Head of Information Management Services at Crown Records Management, looks at five hot topics that should exercise the minds of all those involved in information management.

The world of information management is set to hit the headlines in 2017 as new technology and new legislation forces businesses to focus on how best to look after their data assets.

One of the biggest growth areas is likely to be long-term digital preservation as an increasing number of companies seek to put in place watertight solutions to hold onto their ever-growing corporate footprint. Keeping information up to date is one thing, but what happens if the format it is stored on becomes obsolete in the future?

It is estimated that 98% of organisations need to keep digital records for the long term because of issues relating to compliance, legal defence, litigation and enduring corporate backing. This throws up important considerations as technology changes so quickly.

The BBC's *Blue Peter* Domesday project illustrates the need for a preservation strategy. The corporation spent £12m on storing schools' Domesday records in the 1980s yet 20 years later found they could no longer be read, taking vast amounts of work to recover and re-present the content.

But digital preservation is not the only issue likely to shake the industry this year. We expect to see more companies putting measures in place for the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which is edging ever closer. Plus, increasing storage costs and a boost in global data handling is also likely to have a major impact.

Here are the key points I believe will influence the information management industry in 2017:

1. Long-term digital preservation

With such vast amounts of corporate information needing to be saved, we are seeing more companies utilising cloud services. This is a cheap and effective short-term solution but poses a real threat in the long term as, in reality, any content older than ten years is at risk of becoming obsolete as hardware, operating systems, programmes and file formats rapidly develop. In 2017, we are likely to see an emerging awareness and need for long-term digital preservation solutions as the industry wakes up to these inherent threats.

2. EU General Data Protection Regulation

Regulation in the data world is evolving and the next big shake-up we can expect is the impending EU GDPR. Coming into force in May 2018, the new regulation will have major implications for all sectors regarding the way data is collected, stored and accessed. As a result, we expect to see more companies putting in place comprehensive information management systems and processes which will allow them to identify what information they have, where it is, how it can be utilised and who is responsible for it. At the end of the day Brexit Britain may not be part of the EU, but the majority of organisations will have to comply with its regulations as they will stand until the UK defines its own.

3. Dark Data

The International Data Corporation estimates that as much as 80% of customer data is 'garbage'. As such, millions of pounds are wasted each year on storage and countless opportunities

are being missed as information hidden in dark data, which could inspire new products or services in the future or at least provide some useful insights, is ignored. In the future, more companies will wake up to the importance of unlocking this value and of understanding its risks. Or most importantly not ignoring the fact it is there.

4. Hidden cost of storage

With the cost of rental space expected to increase in 2017 and digital storage continuing to drop, it is unsurprising that more companies are expected to move from paper storage to digital storage in a bid to save space and money. However, unlike paper, digital storage is continually being improved and updated. This means the information must be updated too so that it remains compatible with new software. If it isn't, the price to retrieve it could prove costly in the future.

5. Global data handling

Impending Brexit has given the UK a chance to become the de facto standard in information management and data storage in the future as legislation affecting America and Europe will no longer apply. Because of this demand, we are seeing more data centres being built in the UK. In fact, according to Data Centre Map, there are nearly 250 data centres in the UK alone - a figure that is likely to increase over the next year.

Dominic Johnstone

Dominic Johnstone is Head of Information Management Services at Crown Records Management, www.crownrms.com, and has more than 17 years of experience in the industry. As an advisor on information management strategy Dominic has particular expertise in the area of information governance.



NEWS: ON THE ROAD



● Some users will save 75% when the new tolls take effect in 2018.

UK government proposes cuts to Severn Crossing tolls

Drivers and businesses will benefit from proposed cuts to Severn Crossing tolls following the return to public ownership, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced on 13 January during a visit to Wales with Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns.

The government's proposals would see the prices paid for all vehicles halved, making a significant difference to commuters, travellers, and small businesses in particular, with some drivers seeing savings of more than 75%. The new toll

charges are expected to be introduced in 2018. The government is also looking at removing toll barriers and introducing free-flow tolling on the Severn Crossing that will help cut congestion and journey times.

Secretary of State Chris Grayling said, "The

government is determined to make the right decisions for Britain's future and reducing the tolls on the Severn Crossing will cut costs for businesses helping boost jobs and trade in Wales and across the south-west."

Once the crossings return to public ownership they will be managed by Highways England.

Under the proposals cars will pay £3 instead of £6.70; small buses or vans will pay £3 down from £13.40, lorries and coaches will pay £10 instead of £20.

Blue Badge holders and motorcycles will continue to be exempt from the tolls. The money raised will pay for the operation and maintenance of the crossings as well as future improvements.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said, "This is excellent news for people living and working in Wales who use the Severn Bridge, particularly van drivers who will pay over 75% less. These savings will make a huge difference to those who use the crossings regularly and it will provide a major boost to companies pitching for new business, who can now be much more competitive."

The government has also set out plans for these reductions to be applied to the rates paid by electronic TAG users, who are amongst the most regular users of the crossings. Cars will save £65.12 a month; small buses and vans will save £183 a month, lorries and coaches will save £198 a month.

The removal of toll barriers and the introduction of free-flow tolling on the Severn Crossing would also allow two-way charging which could mean the price charged for a single crossing will be halved.

Drivers should study first aid

Statistics from Driver CPC Consortium RTITB (Road Transport Industry Training Board), suggest that many LGV drivers may be lacking crucial first aid and road traffic incident management skills.

According to data from the Master Driver CPC Consortium, only 2% of Driver CPC Periodic Training courses delivered since September 2015 included first aid and/or road traffic scene management. By contrast, 33% of training hours uploaded have been centred around driver hours or tachographs, while 24% concentrated on load safety and security.

"If Driver CPC is about improving road safety, why do employers and drivers feel that prioritising courses on tachographs and driver hours is right for them?" said Laura Nelson, Managing Director of RTITB. "Taking training that tackles compliance issues is important but alone it simply isn't

going to help improve safety on the roads."

Laura said that lorry drivers are often first on the scene when an accident happens, so first aid and incident management skills are absolutely crucial. "Improving safety is our top priority at RTITB, so we strongly urge more drivers and employers to include these important training courses in their current Driver CPC training cycle."

The RTITB Master Driver CPC Consortium gives members access to a vast collection of high quality training topics, as well as the opportunity to contribute to the future of Driver CPC both within the consortium, and on a national level.



● CPC training in progress.



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PROFILE: IWM

THE RUSSIAN WAY



In 2016, IWM in Moscow chalked up 20 years in the moving industry. Steve Jordan talked to Victoria Chub, the company's managing director, to find out more about running a moving business in Russia.

It was in 1996 that IWM, a Singapore-based moving company struggling through the Asian financial crisis, decided to open in Moscow. Today the company has expanded out of all recognition with additional offices in St Petersburg and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island (just north of Japan) and even, since 1 February, 2015 in Cuba – more of which later. The company celebrated 20 years in business on 10 September last year with a party at the Radisson hotel in the centre of Moscow; staff from all the company's offices joined in.

It was the Russian gas and oil industry and the diplomatic sector that gave IWM its first customer base. When the oil companies started drilling on Sakhalin, IWM opened there and is still the only moving company on the island. But as the country became more open and the Russian corporate world became mainstream, so corporate moving took over and now represents the majority of the company's business. IWM is now the largest moving company in Russia, covers the whole country providing moving and relocation services and employs 120 people in Moscow alone.

Victoria Chub is the company's managing director and is well known on the conference scene having attended IAM and FIDI conferences for some years. She said that the old image of the typical Russian worker, with little regard for customer service, is just not true anymore. "The average age of our people is around 30-35," she said. "It's a new generation; not the Soviet Union generation. They travel all around the world and they understand the concept of service." Victoria said that she believes Russian workers to be the best because they don't



● Left: Victoria Chub, Managing Director; other images: IWM is now Russia's biggest mover and employs 120 people at its Moscow branch alone.



“Drivers have to use their initiative when they are away. There is no other choice. We don't understand ‘can't’. We just do the job or find someone who can.”

Victoria Chub

count hours. “They leave when the job is done,” she said. “They don't complain and they work hard. We have good feedback from our agents because I think we have a really great team. They are always ready to go the extra mile even when it's not

necessary.” Victoria added, maybe not entirely in fun, that sometimes she has to ask staff to back off a little. “If you give exceptional service all the time people will expect that it's always like that.”

Russia is, of course, a huge country: 11 hours' flying from west to east and a seven-hour time difference between Moscow and Sakhalin. The distances are immense and often the roads are poor. Sometimes there are no roads at all. “In some parts of Siberia there are no roads so we have to use railways,” she explained. “Sometimes we have to wait until the rivers freeze and towns are icebound so we can drive our trucks over the frozen water.”

Logistics in Russia is sufficiently different from the international requirements that IWM has a separate logistics department to handle the domestic work. “Drivers

have to use their initiative when they are away,” said Victoria. “There is no other choice. We don't understand ‘can't’. We just do the job or find someone who can.” Much of the time IWM uses local crews to cut down on the number of man hours spent travelling, but they do have some customers that insist upon a ‘white glove’ service with a Moscow crew. “Planning is the key. 99% is planned centrally leaving the driver and crew to sort out any remaining problems on the spot.”

Russia is punishing on the trucks too with long distances, bad weather and frequently poor roads. “We have our own garage for maintenance and only use Mercedes vehicles as they have proved to be most reliable,” she said. “Also, if something happens, wherever you are there is usually a Mercedes mechanic.”

Russia also has something of a reputation for having to ‘encourage’ officials to do their jobs. But, according to Victoria, this type of corruption no longer happens. “In the early 1990s everyone did that because you didn't have a choice,” she explained. But since 1996, when IWM began operations, things have been very different. “We have never operated that way. Now people are paid well so wouldn't jeopardise their position by accepting bribes. After 20 years in the business we have really tight connections to the authorities so we know how to handle these things without resorting to bribery.” Victoria explained that as the company is primarily in the corporate business IWM is required to comply with anti-bribery policy. “So it's out of the question for us anyway.”

Welcome to Havana

In 2015 IWM became the first commercial moving company in Cuba. The company's focus there is on the movement of diplomatic goods and household effects for foreign employees moving to and from Cuba. Victoria pointed out that there are many similarities between Cuba now and Russia. “When we started in Russia nobody other than diplomats moved anywhere and we are starting in Cuba in the same way. We see the same picture that we had 20 years ago in Moscow: a government-run, closed country where it doesn't matter what you know, it matters who you know. It's a model we understand and know how to manage.”

IWM has been successful in Russia, especially in the face of some stiff competition. But as Victoria points out, it's their country, they know how it works. “We know how to get things done,” she said. “We all have the same background and the same mentality. They are our people and we talk the same language – we understand each other. That's why, when serving our customers and international agents, we can find a solution to anything.”

Prepare for GDPR regardless of Brexit

Experts say don't give up on data reforms just because the UK is quitting Europe. John Culkin, Director of Information Management for Crown Records Management, explains why.

As the UK prepares to push ahead with Brexit in 2017, businesses across all sectors are being told to think twice before cancelling or delaying preparations for the forthcoming EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Business managers across the country have been studying implications of the new Regulation, due to be in force in May 2018, which aims to create a 'one-stop shop' for data protection across the European Union. Some of the key aspects of the bill include huge fines for data breaches, new rules around the collection of personal data and new rights for European citizens to ask for data to be deleted or edited. Many businesses will also be required to appoint a data protection officer.

However, the Brexit vote opens up the likelihood that the UK will have started the process of leaving the EU by the time it comes into force. In fact Prime Minister Theresa May seems focussed on triggering Article 50 as early as March 2017.

So what does this mean for businesses in the UK currently preparing for new regulation and updating their policies and processes?

1 Would the EU General Data Regulation still apply to UK businesses after Brexit?

It is tempting for businesses to think that because the UK intends to leave the EU this regulation will not apply. In fact, that isn't the case. Although an independent Britain will not be part of the Regulation, in reality it will still be impossible to avoid its implications.

The Regulation governs the personal data of all European citizens, providing them with greater control and more rights over information held about them. So any company holding identifiable information of an EU citizen, no matter where it is based, needs to be aware.

The same applies to data breaches involving the personal data of European citizens. So it will still be vital to have a watertight information management system in place which allows businesses to know what information they have, where it is, how it can be edited and who is responsible for it.

2 Why should businesses push ahead with data reforms regardless of the Brexit vote?

Businesses should be thinking about the benefits of good information governance rather than hesitating because of what could happen in the future.

There is no point putting in place systems that ignore privacy no matter what happens when the UK goes independent. The same is true of measures to protect a business from data breaches, which have reputational as well as financial implications – no matter who imposes the fine.

As for personal data, citizens in the UK are only going to be more demanding about how their data is collected, stored and edited in future – the genie is out of the bottle and it's not sensible to think that leaving the EU will change it. Preparing for a modern data world is not only about the GDPR.



3 What regulations will affect UK business once Brexit has been completed?

Even though the UK has voted to leave the EU, data in Great Britain and Northern Ireland will continue to be regulated by the current Data Protection Act, which was passed in 1998. It will remain in place after exit, at least until Parliament decides to introduce a new law or amend it.

It's worth noting that the UK's data protection laws precede EU legislation by more than a decade, and go beyond the current requirements set out by the EU. So if businesses think that leaving the EU is suddenly going to change the agenda it is a dangerous stance to take. Failing to prepare for the Regulation could leave businesses open to fines, loss of reputation and – just as importantly – see them miss out on a chance to make the most of their data.

John Culkin

John is responsible for the full suite of Information Management services at Crown Records Management, including professional, advisory and digital services. He is a regular commentator in the media and has authored a white paper setting out how companies can prepare for the EU GDPR.





It's pretty hard to see data regulation in the UK varying much from the essence of the EU GDPR ...

4 How will UK data regulation differ in future from those in Europe?

It's pretty hard to see data regulation in the UK varying much from the essence of the EU GDPR which, after all, we have been heavily involved in drafting over the last few years. Having clear laws with safeguards in place is more important than ever in the modern world with a growing digital economy that relies on the safe sharing of data. If anything we may expect regulations to become even tighter in the UK in future - providing an opportunity to bill the UK as the safest place in the world for data.

5 Is there anything we could be missing out on by leaving the EU?

The political debate has its own arena and that is for people to make up their own minds on. But in terms of the GDPR this is a regulation designed to make things easier for businesses which work with the personal data of EU citizens. A one-stop shop for data protection, for instance, is long overdue. Trying to regulate a rapidly-evolving digital world with legislation dating from 20 years ago does not make sense. Any regulation which encourages businesses to have strong and robust information management systems in place should be a good thing.

6 What could be the benefits of being outside the EU GDPR?

There are certain requirements of the GDPR which may no longer apply, such as a requirement to appoint a data protection officer for some companies. So, there could be cost savings in the short term. The reality, however, is that the general principles of the Regulation are pretty universal and likely to influence legislation and best practice in other areas of the world.

The best advice for businesses is to embrace those principles and prepare accordingly. Undertaking a data audit in 2017 and re-assessing data protection and information management processes will help prepare for all eventualities - whether that is strengthening data protection compliance, building confidence for their brand or making the most of data assets.

NEWS: PRODUCT



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Trailerlock is a new device that protects the rear doors of trailers and LCVs to prevent intruders from breaking into vehicles, either while moving or while at rest in parking areas. Trailerlock comprises a case, anchoring bolt, secret nut and a wrench, plus back-up wrench to anchor the locking mechanism to the frame of the trailer.

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● Would-be clandestines attempting to break in to a trailer.

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● The National Living Wage rises to £7.50 per hour in April.

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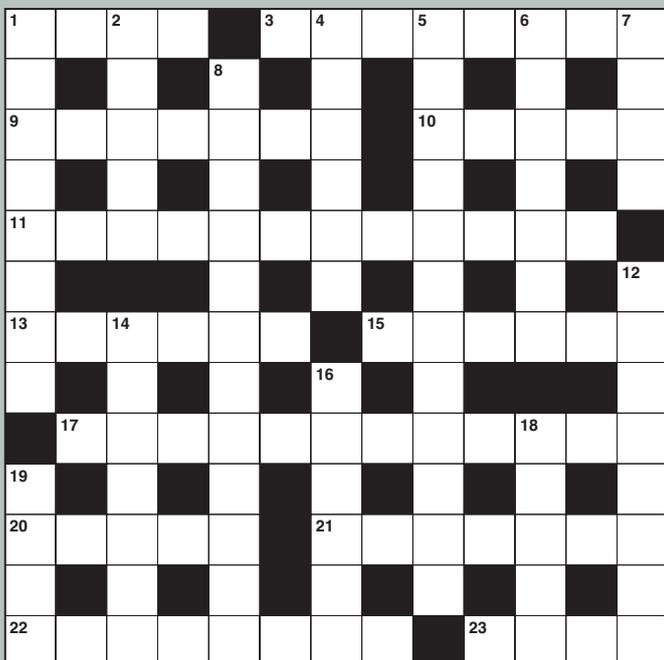
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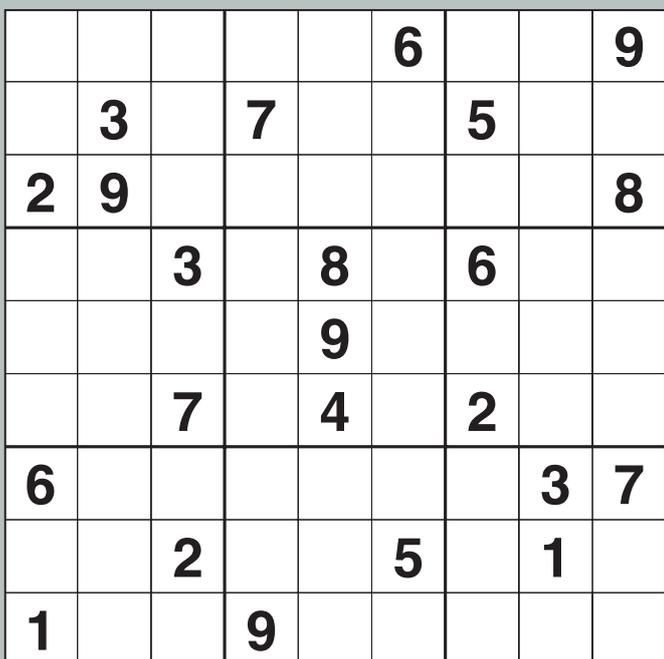
The White & Co Mystery Mover

Well done to Paul Felton from Momentous who spotted Louis Le Roux from Stuttards having a go at the Tango in Buenos Aires (where else) in around 1997. This month you need to identify the dashing young man enjoying a glass of wine. If you can, you stand a chance of being this month's winner of the White and Company Red and Black watch. Answers please to editor@themover.co.uk.

Puzzles



- ACROSS**
- 1 Boring (4)
 - 3 Spherical (8)
 - 9 Eg primrose and lemon (7)
 - 10 Threescore (5)
 - 11 Ineptness (12)
 - 13 Shout down; harass (6)
 - 15 Basic metrical unit in a poem (6)
 - 17 Nationally (12)
 - 20 Enlighten; educate morally (5)
 - 21 Object used in the kitchen (7)
 - 22 Early period of human culture (5,3)
 - 23 Correct; accurate (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Illumination from the sun (8)
 - 2 Sweet-scented shrub (5)
 - 4 Diminish (6)
 - 5 Wearing glasses (12)
 - 6 Vocabulary of a person (7)
 - 7 Light beams (4)
 - 8 Pungent gas used as a preservative (12)
 - 12 Dark colour that is virtually black (4,4)
 - 14 Spicy Spanish sausage (7)
 - 16 Grunts (anag) (6)
 - 18 Intense light beam (5)
 - 19 Low value snooker balls (4)



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The Commercial Vehicle Show 2017

25 – 27 April, 2017, NEC, Birmingham, UK

EuRA Conference

25 – 28 April, 2017, Warsaw, Poland

Young Movers Conference

11 – 13 May, 2017, Riga, Latvia

Self Storage Expo Asia

16 – 18 May, 2017, Hong Kong

BAR Conference

18 – 20 May, 2017, Cardiff, Wales, UK

EUROMOVERS International Conference

25 – 28 May, 2017, Edinburgh, UK

MöLo International Trade Fair

14 – 16 September, 2017, Kassel, Germany

IAM 55th Annual Meeting

9 – 12 October, 2017, Long Beach, California, USA

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Tony Allen: And finally ...



Just my luck!

There are two types of people in this world, there are those who are constantly lucky and ... crikey my kitchen's on fire!

Heredity is a fascinating process. During one of my recent moments of contemplation - to coin a phrase - it struck me that the reason I am here today is essentially because my parents survived the Second World War - poignantly so in my case; more later - and their parents survived the First World War and so on down the generations through further wars, great plagues, the black death, famines, and every other life threatening disaster and catastrophe known to man from time immemorial. In fact you don't have to go back through many generations to realise that the mere act of surviving at all was once quite a bonus.

It's a fascinating subject because it begs the question: what is that special quality that we in particular have inherited which has ensured an unbroken line leading us to where we are today? And I do mean every single living one of us. At the risk of overstressing the point; the only reason that we exist today is because one of our distant ancestors was able to find a way of somehow keeping warm and fed during the Great Ice Age, when all about them were falling like flies.

Is our continued survival just simply a question of intelligence, common sense or resourcefulness? Maybe it is; but I would suggest that probably it's also more a question of luck: and I do mean good or bad. Not getting what you want (bad luck) can often turn out to be to one's advantage (good luck) and whichever way you look at it, survival is very much a question of chance.

At this stage I think it's worth reminding ourselves of the quote, variously attributed to, amongst others, Thomas Jefferson and Sam Goldwyn, which states: "I'm a great believer in luck. The harder I work the more of it I seem to have." This makes a very good point, for if you spent your life living in a padded cell (I know some people who should!), would there really be many opportunities for luck to play a part? Probably not, although I doubt that you would find yourself getting knocked down by a bus either! Anyway, apart from flippant comments like this (what ... me flippant?); to actually experience good luck you first need to make sure that you are experiencing life.

It's often said that people make their own luck, and I suppose that what this really means is that we should seek to place ourselves in as many circumstances as possible whereby luck is able to strike.

Although of course, there is a trade-off here because, as previously mentioned, there is good luck as well as bad luck.

It's worth observing that 'luck' as a concept really only took root during the 14th century - when I would imagine that at least one of my ancestors was successfully fighting off the black death - for prior to this, people believed that their existence was governed by 'fate'. Which is to say that lives were considered to be subject to events predetermined by a supernatural power. In those days, however, if you actually believed in luck you would be considered to be heretic and likely to be burnt at the stake. The modern equivalent of this punishment being social media.

And I could never quite work out why people selling 'lucky white heather' were forced to sell 'lucky white heather' in order to make ends meet.

There are many definitions on the subject of luck and the one which I particularly like says: Without luck how could you explain the success of people that you don't like? Even now many people believe in lucky charms. I'm not quite sure where the idea of carrying a rabbit's paw came from but it couldn't have been all that lucky for the rabbit! And I could never quite work out why people selling 'lucky white heather' were forced to sell 'lucky white heather' in order to make ends meet.

So maybe life is just simply the aggregate of all of our good and bad luck. Which brings me to my father's story, which originally had to be dragged out of him. During World War Two his battalion was serving in Alexandria and was due to be shipped to Italy. A request was made as to whether anybody had dock experience and was therefore prepared to stay behind to man the docks, even though they were subject to serious bombing. My father and his best friend who, both coming from East London, did have a modicum of dock experience decided to give it a go. The upshot was that on its way to Italy the battalion's vessel was torpedoed with the loss of many lives. Was he lucky? Not in his terms for he always felt guilty. But it does go to prove how our lives can turn on the flimsiest of lucky choices and how, more often than not, good luck and bad luck often go hand in hand.

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