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Issue 075 June 2017 www.themover.co.uk

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SOLAS ONE YEAR ON

What was all the fuss about? Page 28

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TheMover

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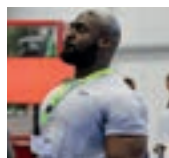
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LEADER

The end is nigh for social media

.....
Steve Jordan, Editor



I write this in the shadow of the terrorist attack in Manchester. Within minutes of the attack there were postings on Facebook with false reports of missing children and other seemingly-intentional hoaxes. Disgusting!

With the rise of social media, the truth seems to be of no importance. With Facebook itself being designated a 'platform' not a publisher, it claims to have no more responsibility for the content than does a paper manufacturer have for words written on its product. Other social media outlets would think the same I presume.

As well as publishing *The Mover*, I have been a PR man for 25 years. If I submit something to a magazine for publishing I had better make sure it's right. If not, the publisher, the client and I could all be for the high jump if the lawyers spot it. As the publisher of *The Mover*, I have a responsibility to print the truth. I don't have the resources to check everything, so I have to rely on contributors' honesty to some extent, but I am still responsible. People can publish any old rubbish on Facebook without fear of reprisal. That's not really fair competition is it?

Many companies use social media as part of their promotional activity. It's a very good way of getting messages to a large number of people very quickly. Some even prefer to spend money promoting through social media rather than through more traditional channels. But the falsehoods and nonsense peddled on social media are destroying its credibility and, with it, the brand values of those organisations that use it to promote their wares. The owners of Facebook too, must wince every time their 'platform' is implicated in portraying yet another work of malicious fiction with the aim of personal gain. I predict that these very owners, terrified of the damage the bad publicity will do to their hard-earned brands, will soon be looking to invest elsewhere. In my opinion we have seen the peak of social media and, in ten years from now, it won't exist – not as we know it today anyway. It'll be too late for me, but maybe then the old-fashioned PR man might get his job back.

And before I put my soap box away, a word to the terrorists: your actions make us stronger not weaker. If the Luftwaffe could not break our spirit in 1941, you certainly won't do it now. You need to think of some new tactics. May I suggest dialogue.

Steve Jordan



● Martin Budd (left) and Pat Hughes.

Pickfords relocates Covent Garden Flower Market

Pickfords Business Solutions recently worked with Covent Garden Flower Market to transport tens of thousands of plants, flowers and sundries to a new location in Nine Elms.

Covent Garden Flower Market is the largest wholesale fruit, vegetable and flower market in the UK and supplies 75% of London's florists with an extensive range of products for resale.

Following a number of recent, successful collaborations with the leading facilities management company, VINCI Facilities, Pickfords was appointed to manage this challenging relocation project.

A detailed six-week planning process was created to ensure minimum disruption to the commercial businesses during the transition. Pickfords created and executed a move plan to transfer each of the 40 wholesalers' units on a precise time and date to ensure completion ahead of the new market opening.

VINCI engaged Pat Hughes from Pickfords Business Solutions to create the methodology and move plan to move racking, equipment and stock to the new market location over a three-day period. Pat ensured that his highest priority was understanding the individual concerns and business practices of each of the wholesalers. He held weekly meetings with the wholesalers to construct a plan

My thanks to our project team, VINCI and the Flower Market for all their hard work, ensuring this project was a complete success."

Martin Budd

.....
 to ensure that disruption was minimised.

Up to 110 Pickfords' crew members and 17 vehicles worked on-site each day to ensure a successful relocation.

Tailored move plans were created for plants of unusual size or shape to protect against damage, including the use of specially made trolleys for certain exotic species.

Martin Budd, Head of Business Solutions at Pickfords said, "It was a pleasure to be part of the relocation of the market and to be there to hear them ring the bell to close the market for the last time after 40 years. My thanks to our project team, VINCI and the Flower Market for all their hard work, ensuring this project was a complete success."

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NOT JUST
ANY BODY.



UK warehouse shortage

According to warehouse broker Bis Henderson Space, the market for warehousing in the United Kingdom is, if not in crisis, certainly facing some major challenges.



● Causes of the shortage can be traced back to the 2009 financial crisis.

The company says there are a combination of factors that are creating a perfect storm, significantly impairing the ability of businesses to secure the space they need, at the specification they require, in the locations they desire and on terms that make commercial sense.

A lack of investment by developers is currently and fashionably blamed on uncertainties over 'Brexit' but in fact it extends back for many years to the 2009 financial crisis, and reflects far wider commercial uncertainties. Restrictions on the availability of sites, especially as government policy favours housing

over commercial use, is a particular problem. It is already effectively impossible to find a new site within London's M25 and in similar positions around other major conurbations. Where sites are available, developers may be reluctant to commit unless they can secure one or more 'anchor tenants' – big name companies that will commit over ten years or more, and thereby bring confidence for other potential tenants. Unfortunately, such long-term commitment is increasingly hard to find.

Where sites are available, developers may be reluctant to commit unless they can secure one or more 'anchor tenants'

An October 2016 report by property agent Savills, looking at premises above 100,000ft², finds that the available amount of warehouse space has fallen by 71% since 2009. And critically, the UK Warehousing Association suggests that 20% of available warehousing is 'not fit for purpose' for modern industries.



● Calvin Tickner with his medal.

Calvin Tickner runs the London Marathon

Eurogroup International Movers' GRMS Division Manager, Calvin Tickner, joined thousands of other determined runners to take part in this year's London Marathon on 28 March.

This was the first time Calvin had run a marathon, but it was something that he'd wanted to do for quite some time.

"Over the years, watching marathons on the box and hearing stories of those who have taken part, it's always had a certain appeal," said Calvin. "It was this challenge that caused the marathon to be added to my 'bucket list'."

Calvin admits that he started training for the event a little late, but despite having less than 10 weeks to prepare he managed to post a respectable time of 4 hours 39 minutes 57 seconds, raising over two thousand pounds for his chosen charities.

"To date I've managed to raise £2,289.76 (£2,537.26 with GiftAid) for Macmillan Cancer Support and BLESMA, the limbless veterans' charity, which I'm very proud of," he said. "I'm still taking donations and my page will remain open for a few more weeks should anyone wish to donate to such worthy causes."

Asked if he would ever do it again, Calvin said: "We'll see!" ● www.virginmoneygiving.com/CalvinTickner.

HCR receives cyber award

In February 2016, HCR from Basingstoke was awarded the Cyber Essentials certification for the security of its IT network. More recently the company has received an additional award - Cyber Essentials Plus - which further proves its compliance to the scheme.

Cyber Essentials helps prevent cyber attacks. Even a simple virus or piece of malware could result in loss of company and client data, disrupt cashflow and take up staff time. An attack could also put off customers, stop a company from trading and damage its hard-

earned reputation. Loss of data could breach the Data Protection Act and lead to fines or prosecution.

Since October 2014, Cyber Essentials has been mandatory for suppliers of government contracts which involve handling personal information and providing some ICT products and services. Holding a Cyber Essentials badge enables companies to bid for these contracts.

Cyber attacks cost organisations thousands of pounds and cause lengthy periods of disruption. Cyber criminals don't just attack banks and large companies - they



can target any organisation that isn't properly protected, even small businesses. Most cyber attacks exploit basic weaknesses in IT systems and software. Cyber Essentials is a regulated body that shows you how to address those basics and prevent the most common attacks.



• The models were carried a distance of 300 metres and did not require crating.

Bishop's Move Edinburgh moves model ships to Dundee's McManus Gallery

Bishop's Move Edinburgh has once again been contracted by Dundee's McManus Gallery to reinstate its collection of historic model ships from their temporary home in Camper Down House where they were kept during the gallery's extensive restoration.

The model ship collection comprises over 20 models, all built by local shipbuilders, each with their own story to tell. This is the third occasion on which the Edinburgh branch has undertaken moves of this nature for the gallery.

The model ships were moved from the gallery's collection unit into The McManus Gallery & Museum, a distance of roughly 300 metres. At the gallery's request - due to the size of the models and the short distance involved - the ships were not required to be crated or export wrapped, although some of the more fragile models were protected using a combination of cloth

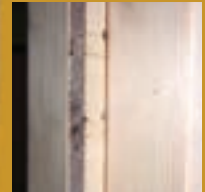
"The branch is delighted to be supporting the McManus Galleries with the relocation of the models for a third occasion."

David Mills

blankets and specialist 'furniguard' wrap material.

David Mills, Bishop's Move's Scotland General Manager said, "The branch is delighted to be supporting the McManus Galleries with the relocation of the models for a third occasion. We greatly enjoy moving them as they are unique and something very different from the day-to-day relocations normally undertaken."

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CRIME: DRONES AND DROIDS

Stand and deliver!

Why parcel drones and droids could trigger the return of the highwayman.

Back in the 18th century, highwaymen such as Dick Turpin regularly robbed mail coaches; now the online parcel broker ParcelHero is warning a new generation of highwayman is likely to appear, spurred on by the arrival of automated delivery droids (robots), drones and driverless vans.

force these devices to 'Stand and Deliver' your deliveries!"

David continued, "UK Internet retail sales are now worth over £133bn a year. If these deliveries become largely automated and just 1% of items are waylaid using new technology, that's over £1bn of goods stolen a year. The traditional highwayman

developed and that it was easy to envisage EMI jammers cutting off signals as the delivery machine passes, causing it to stop in its tracks or drop out of the sky. Likewise, signals that re-programme deliveries – taking advantage of existing technology currently used to divert a courier whilst it is en route to another destination or a neighbour – are also likely to be developed. By diverting delivery drones into Faraday cage-style boxes, the modern-day highwayman will be able to block tracking signals and web cam pictures indicating where the delivery has been taken.

Some experts are even claiming we could see 'pirate' drones designed to bring down parcel delivery drones from the sky. The cleverer technology becomes, the cleverer criminals become in taking advantage of the latest advances.

"Highwaymen once enjoyed a kind of popular glamour; especially those who went to the gallows laughing and joking: that's why we still know of the exploits of Dick Turpin," said David. "But I don't think today's public will find anything admirable in the theft of their eagerly anticipated parcels. It's vital that Amazon, and the various couriers and tech companies designing autonomous delivery machines, plan for such attempted thefts and build robust defences and safeguards into them."

"As couriers and posties are replaced by automated machines the prospect of being able to remotely take over or capture a drone, droid or autonomous van, carrying valuable items, is bound to create a new type of crime."

David Jinks

ParcelHero's Head of Consumer Research, David Jinks MILT said, "Autonomous deliveries are already happening. Amazon drones have delivered parcels in Cambridgeshire, droids have carried food and goods in London, and driverless vans are operating in Greenwich. But as technology takes over, a new generation of cyber-criminals will be bent on stealing from these automated machines. While the last recorded traditional highwayman rode into the sunset in 1831, it's likely 21st century highwaymen will soon be attempting to

was reliant on a speedy horse to intercept the mail coach; but today *Black Bess* will be replaced by scrambling and jamming equipment aimed at intercepting or diverting deliveries. As couriers and posties are replaced by automated machines the prospect of being able to remotely take over or capture a drone, droid or autonomous van, carrying valuable items, is bound to create a new type of crime."

David said that devices that alter the drone or droid's instructions, or simply stop them dead, will inevitably be



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PREVIEW: THE MOVERS & STORERS SHOW 2017



● The seminar theatre.



● Winner of last year's Strongest Removalist competition.



● Faye Jordan.



● Packer of the Year competition.

Britain's Strongest Removalist contest returns for The Movers and Storers Show 2017

It's time to put Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 November in your diary so you can spend a little time at The Movers & Storers Show to be held again at Hangar 42, Bruntingthorpe.

Last year was a great success with many people saying it was the best ever. The trade show is attended by trusted suppliers to the industry so, if you are in the business and want to know about the latest technology, the newest trucks, the most advanced equipment and the most efficient services for your customers, this is the place to be.

As last year, the seminar theatre will be sponsored and facilitated by *The Mover* magazine. There will be a wide range of speakers discussing the topics that are making the news in the business right now. You'll have the chance to challenge industry experts, voice your opinions or just sit back and drink in the latest information.

The Packer of the Year competition (POTY) has been revised by the adjudicators, Britannia Reeves, to make it even more challenging. The same company has won the event for the last three years

so, maybe 2017 will be the year for a new wearer of the crown. Could it be your company?

The Britain's Strongest Removalist competition will also return, giving individuals the opportunity to flex their muscles and prove who really is the toughest of them all and win a generous cash prize as well. As last year, the competition will be overseen by Faye Jordan, who will be making sure the event runs like clockwork and that safety procedures are observed. Faye is only a slip of a girl, at first sight, but don't be deceived. She is: two-time British Powerlifting Champion; three-time British Bench Press Champion; she won a bronze medal for Great Britain at the Western European Powerlifting Championships in 2016; and will be fresh back from representing Great Britain at the powerlifting world championships in Lithuania. She's also the organiser of

the Britain's Strongest Woman event so she really knows what she's doing and, if pushed, could give any of the chaps a run for their money. Best not to push!

Is there anyone at your company, male or female, who's up to the challenge? Or maybe you fancy having a go yourself. If you think you could compete at the dead lift, the sack carry (a bit like the Atlas stones on *Britain's Strongest Man*) and the truck pull, contact the organisers now and get your name down.

The idea of the Strongest Removalist contest is to get publicity for the industry, but the show organisers can only approach the media and invite them to attend and report on the event if they have plenty of entries. So remember, in this case, it really is about taking part and not about winning!

● For more information or to enter either of the competitions e-mail: info@themoversandstorersshow.co.uk or call 02392 736539.

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● The course covers warehouse operations, leadership and management as well as customer service skills.

New online course for warehouse supervisors and team leaders

The United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA), in collaboration with Logistics Learning Alliance, has developed a Warehouse Supervisor Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

The new Warehouse Supervisor CPC is equivalent to Level 3 of the Regulated Qualification Framework and is considered an ideal programme for supervisors and team leaders working in the warehouse sector.

The course covers warehouse operations, leadership and management as well as customer service skills. Total, online learning time is likely to be around 140 hours

- although a fast-track, face-to-face programme is also available.

UKWA's CEO, Peter Ward said, "Following the successful introduction of our Warehouse Manager CPC programme last year, it became apparent that there is a need for a lower level programme pitched at those working at supervisor or team leader level in the warehouse sector."

He added, "This new distance

learning course has been structured to meet the needs of the industry in a focussed and relevant way and covers the key skills that supervisors need to build on their technical competence in warehouse operations, leadership and management by developing their knowledge, awareness and ability to manage the activities of their teams."

● Visit www.ukwa.org.uk for further details.

FTA signs five-year contract extension with the AA

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has signed a five-year contract extension with the AA fleet and SME division for the provision of breakdown and recovery services to 2,000 FTA Recovery members.

The fully comprehensive contract means the AA will continue to provide services to cars, vans and HGVs.

Stuart Thomas, Head of Fleet and SME services at the AA said, "In the next five years we will continue to provide a stellar service to the FTA, backed by heavy investment planned by the AA across 2017/18. We provide our fleet and SME customers with the best service possible and do this by becoming their partners rather than just another supplier."

Pippa Shepherd, FTA Director of Membership said, "Our partnership with the AA is an important reinforcement of our commitment to ensuring members' vehicles are back on the road swiftly when problems occur. FTA members can access these services without an annual subscription fee, and benefit from a reduced call-out rate and easy sign-up procedure. We are delighted to continue this partnership and offer our members the best possible recovery service to keep their vehicles moving."

Bishop's Move teams up with national disability charity Sense

Bishop's Move in Crawley has teamed up with Sense, a national charity that supports people who are deafblind, have sensory impairments or complex needs, to help them enjoy more independent lives.

Bishop's Move has a long tradition of supporting both national and local charities that actively benefit the communities they work within. The company's 'De-clutter & Donate' scheme allows Bishop's Move to provide support through donations received from customers that are distributed direct to the respective charities.

Paul Hale, Donation Stock Manager for Sense in Crawley, said: "The Bishop's Move team in Crawley have given invaluable



● Bishop's Move London Branch Manager Kevin Crockford (left) and Paul Hale from Sense.

support to Sense, through regular donations of furniture and other items for resale in our charity shops. These sizeable donations include almost ten tons of brand new children's books from which we were able to raise very significant funds for the charity."

Darron Day, Branch Manager at Bishop's Move Crawley said: "We are so proud to be able to support such a dedicated charity which strives to meet equally wonderful objectives by providing such invaluable active care and support services within the local communities."



● Pippa Shepherd.

Annette Harris to head-up new shipping service for removals industry

Manchester-based freight forwarding specialist EMS Cargo Ltd has appointed Annette Harris to head up its new international division for the removals industry.

Annette will be well known to many in the international removals industry having previously worked for several major companies, including John Mason International and latterly Anglo Pacific during her 33 years in the business. She was also BAR North West Area Secretary for eight years from January 2008 to 2016.

Annette was keen to point out that although the new EMS division will be called EMS Removals Ltd, the company will not undertake removals directly and will limit its activities to providing shipping and destination services to other removal companies as a third-party supplier.

"I think what we're doing is unusual, if not unique," said Annette. "I know from previous experience that some removal companies are reluctant to give forwarding work to firms that may be competing with them for the move, so the fact that EMS does not offer a removals service will appeal to a lot of companies."

EMS also offers a nationwide collection service for international cargo. "Everyone wants to use their vehicles and crews as efficiently as possible, so using an expensive vehicle just to deliver to a forwarding agent doesn't make commercial sense," said Annette. "We can collect from practically anywhere in the UK, so our customers don't have to tie-up vehicles and crews that could be making money elsewhere."

EMS is also unusual in that its drivers have all been cleared to carry out air cargo security checks. Every consignment travelling by air is examined carefully by the driver and scanned using special equipment on the vehicle. Although this is not yet a requirement for goods



"We can collect from practically anywhere in the UK, so our customers don't have to tie-up vehicles and crews that could be making money elsewhere."

Annette Harris

travelling by sea, Annette believes it is only a matter of time before similar checks will be introduced at sea ports.

As well as forwarding household effects from the UK, EMS Removals will also be offering import services to overseas removal companies moving customers to the UK.

As well as its headquarters in Manchester, EMS Removals has offices in London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Carlisle.

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Britain's most affordable and

According to research by online estate agent HouseSimple.com, Kingston-upon-Hull is the most affordable city in Britain with 92% (91.9%) of properties currently for sale at prices less than the UK's average house price.

Only three other towns (with more than 150 properties listed for sale) have more than 90% of properties for sale, at asking prices below the UK average: Birkenhead (91.8%), Kilmarnock (91.8%) and Middlesbrough (90.2%).

The first table shows the most affordable UK towns and cities ranked in order of the number of properties for sale that are below the average house price in the UK.

At the other end of the affordability chart, London, not surprisingly, is the least affordable city in the UK. But there

are five other locations where under 10% of properties currently for sale are listed at less than the average UK house price. In Bath, just 6.8% of properties being marketed are priced lower than the UK average.

The second table shows the least affordable UK towns and cities, ranked in order of the number of properties for sale that are below the average house price in the UK.

Alex Gosling, CEO of HouseSimple.com said, "The lack of affordable properties in the UK has become a recurring theme as

SURVEY: AFFORDABLE AND UNAFFORDABLE HOUSES

TOWN/CITY	REGION	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES FOR SALE	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES BELOW £100K	% BELOW £100K	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES BELOW UK AVERAGE	% BELOW AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE
Hull	Yorkshire	1,063	530	50.0%	977	91.9%
Birkenhead	North West	268	147	54.9%	246	91.8%
Kilmarnock	Scotland	202	106	54.6%	182	90.1%
Middlesbrough	North East	662	320	48.3%v	596	90.0%
Burnley	North West	589	291	49.4%	524	89.0%
Grimsby	Yorkshire	295	169	57.3%	261	88.5%
Bradford	Yorkshire	1,383	625	45.2%	1,220	88.2%
Wigan	North West	437	159	36.4%	384	87.9%
Neath	Wales	754	318	42.2%	656	87.0%
Blackpool	North West	1,328	515	38.8%	1,155	87.0%
Stoke	West Midlands	1,327	583	43.9%	1,144	86.2%
Sunderland	North East	622	312	50.2%	530	85.2%
Merthyr Tydfil	Wales	256	146	57.0%	216	84.4%
Darlington	North East	488	239	40.0%	410	84.0%
Doncaster	Yorkshire	857	306	35.7%	720	84.0%
Scunthorpe	Yorkshire	335	111	33.1%	281	83.9%

TOWN/CITY	REGION	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES FOR SALE	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES BELOW £100K	% BELOW £100K	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES BELOW UK AVERAGE	% BELOW AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE
London	London	25,000+	151	0.6%	1,037	4.2%
Bath	South West	381	5	1.3%	26	6.8%
Guildford	South East	271	1	0.4%	19	7.0%
Crawley	South East	362	1	0.3%v	32	8.8%
Tunbridge Wells	South East	299	3	1.0%	27	9.0%
Brighton	South East	632	4	0.6%	60	9.5%

unaffordable houses

house prices have continued to rise. So it will probably come as a surprise to many people that there are still major towns and cities where almost every property for sale is below the UK average house price."

Average salaries in these areas may still restrict people from buying a property but at least there's a pool of properties that someone with a small deposit could afford. And towns such as Hull and Grimsby offer hope to the many first-time buyers trying to climb on the property ladder, with more than half of the current stock on the market below £100,000.

The picture is very different in the south of England, and Bath and Brighton are classic examples. Both are extremely popular cities, particularly for Londoners wanting to move out and enjoy a better quality of life. But prices have rocketed as a result and moved away from many buyers. Less than 10% of properties in these cities are below the average UK property price, and properties under £100k are almost extinct. First-time buyers, unless they have help from parents, are facing the prospect of holding off buying until well into their 30s, if at all.

"... there are still major towns and cities where almost every property for sale is below the UK average house price."

Alex Gosling

NEWS: INTERNATIONAL



● Container shipping lines' service has deteriorated in the last twelve months.

Customers rate service quality of ocean carriers 'poor to average'

According to a survey of exporters, importers and freight forwarders conducted jointly by Drewry and the European Shippers' Council (ESC), the service provided by container shipping lines is rated as poor to average and has deteriorated in the past year.

The ESC and Drewry contacted several hundred shippers and forwarders from all over the world in March 2017 and asked them how satisfied they were with 16 price and non-price related attributes of the services provided by ocean carriers. The survey also looked at areas most in need of improvement and how quality varies by type of carrier.

The survey showed that on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), customers on average did not rate carriers higher than 3.3 for any of the 16 service attributes.

The three areas of service or price in which shippers and forwarders were the most dissatisfied with were carrier financial stability, quality of customer service and reliability of booking/cargo shipped as booked.

At the other end of the spectrum, the three areas where they were the most satisfied were price of service, accurate documentation and quality of equipment (containers).

"We see that shippers want to be treated not only as customers, but also as partners, when discussing their container transport requirements."

Fabien Becquelin

Fabien Becquelin, Maritime Policy Manager at ESC said, "We see that shippers want to be treated not only as customers, but also as partners, when discussing their container transport requirements. In times when supply chains are becoming more and more complex, partnership is of key importance and unfortunately it is missing."

Philip Damas, head of the logistics practice of Drewry commented, "Shippers and forwarders clearly see the necessity for the carrier industry to invest in IT and to balance the needs for cost competitiveness and for more predictability and reliability."

The ESC and Drewry plan to run the shipper and forwarder satisfaction survey regularly and invite interested shippers and forwarders to contact them, should they wish to be included in next year's survey, to give their views and be kept informed of carrier performance assessments.

E-mail enquiries@drewry.co.uk.

Time to say thanks

Michele Preshaw from Irishrelo in Belfast was the lucky winner of the White and Company Red and Black watch last month. In all the years The Mover has run the competition it's very rare for a winner to send a picture of the watch in action. Actually, trawling through the archives, it seems it's only happened once before. But another 'thank you' photo has flooded in. On such a red-letter day the team at *The Mover* thought it deserved its own special corner of the magazine.

"I am delighted to have received my White and Company watch this morning," said Michele.

"Please see attached worn with pride. It's even better because it has a very clear face and I can actually see the time now."

Thanks Michele. It looks great. No excuse for being late now.

"It's even better because it has a very clear face and I can actually see the time now."

Michele Preshaw



● Michele proudly sporting the White & Co watch.

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FIDI CONFERENCE: DENSITY PANEL



THE DENSITY DILEMMA

FIDI discusses the relevance of the 6.5 density factor for household goods in the modern world

At the FIDI conference in Dubai, six panellists – including Jesse van Sas from FIDI as facilitator – tried to get to grips with the tricky subject of density. The panellists all looked at the problem from their own perspectives: Gordon Bell from Asian Tigers represented the large corporate movers; Derrek Young from BGRS represented the Relocation Management Company's (RMC) position; Geoff Watson from Doree Bonner is a private and domestic mover based in the UK; Derek Duffy from Armstrong in Canada gave the North American perspective; and Phil Wells from JK Moving in Washington DC focussed on the problem as a US government mover.

By way of introduction, Jesse explained that the recent changes in the SOLAS regulations and the rise in the influence of RMCs had disrupted the status quo for



The problem, however, is for companies that tender for contracts. These companies need to have a basis on which to quote and, in the USA, this has always been on weight; elsewhere, volume has been preferred. Americans prefer to use weight as access to weigh bridges is easy and weight cannot easily be disguised: the weight is the weight. Although volume is more relevant to the pricing of the job, if a company were being paid on the packed volume it would be easy to misrepresent it by overpacking.

The six panellists debated the problem which has been highlighted, largely, by accountants who are employed by RMCs to identify any anomalies. It is they who are taking an ever-increasing share of the business and are making the rules.

Derek Duffy said that the nature of the business had changed with people no longer having heavy furniture, record collections or libraries of books in their shipments. It was understandable, therefore, that the density of shipments had reduced. Gordon Bell was, however, nervous about making a general change in the density factor as this would require all rates to change and might spark off a series of new RFPs (Requests for Proposal) from corporations.

There was some discussion about teaching surveyors to estimate actual weight, not volume. Although this was possible, it would not work as the overall cost of the job would not change and the problem related specifically to shipments that were quoted in advance by fixed tender. The volume of the shipment had always to be assessed anyway as it had to fit within the confines of the container.

Derek Duffy said that every region needs to agree its own density based on the local shipment characteristics. "Every industry has pressures on profits," he said. "There are pricing pressures on every industry. Are we clever enough to adjust and be flexible or are we going to stay the way it is and moan about costing and volume? The landscape is changing and we have a choice to make." The aim, of course, is to reduce the discrepancy between the

"There are pricing pressures on every industry. Are we clever enough to adjust and be flexible or are we going to stay the way it is and moan about costing and volume?"

Derek Duffy

quoted rate, which takes into account the costs of sale and the actual verified weight on which invoices are paid. The lower the density factor, the higher the rate/100lbs needs to be. Take it too low and it's unlikely that RMC auditors will be willing to pay extra.

From the audience, Dale Collins from Graebel asked if the panel thought technology could help. He said that if we could use technology to cost every job separately, it would do away with the need to have a rate schedule. Phil Wells said he didn't know if the idea was practical. Gordon Bell said the idea of handing over the responsibility for assessing volumes to the customer, through the use of technology, "scared the hell" out of him. Derrek Young said that anything that provided greater transparency to the industry was a good thing.

The panel did not come to a conclusion but, in fairness, it was unlikely to. Derrek Young said that the American industry would continue to weigh shipments whatever happened. The discussion did, however, start the debate. Clearly the practice of quoting rates based on a misnomer, knowing that they will be checked, is nonsense. However, trying to agree upon an industry standard, and rolling it out worldwide in a way that does not cause total confusion, will be very hard to achieve.

movers. For years, the world had used a constructed weight of 6.5 lbs/ft³ for household goods shipments; now that every shipment has to be weighed to produce a Verified Gross Mass (VGM), and RMC accountants were checking for any anomalies, discrepancies were obvious. Clients were only prepared to pay for the actual weight, yet original costings had been done by the origin agent based on a higher expected figure.

In a recent survey conducted by FIDI with movers, the average density came out at 5.9lbs/ft³. This, in effect, reduces the chargeable weight by around 10%, a figure that most companies would be unable to absorb.

Geoff Watson said that in his business he didn't have a problem. Every job was quoted individually and based upon the volume and the complexity of the move. It was not fair to charge on the weight.

NEWS: INTERNATIONAL

European Commission publishes settlement decision on truck cartel case

On 6 April, the European Commission published its non-confidential version of the settlement decision in the EU truck cartel case.



● Iveco (above) along with MAN, Daimler, Volvo/Renault and DAF all settled in clear and unequivocal terms with the European Commission.

The decision provides key details about how the European truck manufacturers organised the cartel and the way in which they colluded anti-competitively. Below are some of the key points from a summary by Backhouse Jones solicitors; the full summary can be read on *The Mover* website.

The main points in the settlement decision:

The truck manufacturers which settled with the European Commission (MAN, Daimler, Iveco, Volvo/Renault, and DAF) did so in clear and unequivocal terms, confirming their liability for infringing EU competition rules in relation to the main facts and their

legal qualification, including the role and duration of the truck manufacturers' participation in the infringement.

The infringement comprised (a) collusive arrangements on pricing and gross price increases in the EEA for medium and heavy trucks; and (b) the timing and (c) passing on of costs for the introduction of emission technologies for medium and heavy trucks required by EURO III to VI. The infringement covered the entire EEA and lasted from 17 January, 1997 until 18 January, 2011.

From 1997 to the end of 2004, the meetings involved senior managers from the headquarters of all the truck manufacturers. The meetings took place several times a year at venues

of industry associations, at trade fairs and product demonstrations by manufacturers, as well as at competitor meetings organised specifically for purposes of the cartel. In addition to the meetings, there were regular exchanges of competitively sensitive information by phone and e-mail. From at least August 2002 onwards, discussions took place via German subsidiaries which to varying degrees reported to their headquarters.

All the cartel members exchanged gross price lists and information on gross prices and most of them engaged in exchanging computer-based truck configurators.

Over time, truck configurators, containing detailed gross prices for

all models and options, replaced the traditional gross list prices. This facilitated the calculation of the gross price for each possible truck configuration. The exchange happened on a multilateral and bilateral level. Spreadsheets were exchanged split by truck standard model for each producer. The exchange of configurators helped the comparison of own offers with those of competitors and increased transparency of the market. In particular, it helped the truck manufacturers to understand which extras would be compatible with which trucks and which options would be part of the standard or an extra.

Occasionally, the cartel members, including senior representatives from HQs, discussed net prices to hauliers for some countries. In addition to agreements on the levels of price increases, the participants regularly informed each other of their planned gross price increases.

The truck manufacturers also exchanged their respective delivery periods and their country-specific market forecasts, subdivided by countries and truck categories.

The truck manufacturers agreed on the timing of the introduction of, and on the additional charge to be applied to, the emissions technology complying with EURO emissions standards.

To read the full text from Backhouse Jones go to www.themover.co.uk.

● **The Road Haulage Association (RHA) is applying to represent the haulage industry in seeking to reclaim the overpayment transport firms made for their vehicles during the period the cartel operated – from 1997 to 2011 and potentially beyond. If you believe you have been affected by the cartel, please contact the RHA.**

US\$600,000 contract for La Rosa Del Monte

La Rosa Del Monte in Puerto Rico has recently landed a US\$600,000 contract to provide the complete relocation of the US Court House Ron de LUGO Federal Building in St Thomas, US Virgin Islands. This will involve 26 months of relocation work while the court house is remodelled inside and out.

"A specialist crew of over 15 people will be working on this project directly on the island," said Neftaly Rodriguez, Manager of Business Development & Logistics for La Rosa Del Monte. "We also hope to seek local collaboration from other moving companies on the island to make this a team effort so it's beneficial for everybody."



● La Rosa Del Monte, Puerto Rico.



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THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL MOBILITY

Peggy Smith, President and CEO of Worldwide ERC, hosted a panel discussion at the FIDI conference to look at the future of global mobility.



Who is driving the mobility business? What demands are being put on movers now and what will they be in the future? How can movers thrive in a rapidly changing marketplace? These were some of the questions Peggy set out to answer with the aid of Steve Lewis, Voerman; Marcel Jörg, Packimpex; Mark Burchell, Suddath; and Neil Bothams, Santa Fe.

Asked to sum up the current position, Steve Lewis said that Relocation Management Companies (RMCs) had taken a large market share, companies still worked directly for corporations and the private element was being expanded by the trend for 'lump summing' where

corporations give an assignee a fixed payment to cover relocation expenses making them, in practice, a private client. In the future, he expected volumes to continue decreasing, there to be more short-term contracts and for technology to play an increasing role.

Marcel Jörg predicted that in five years all assignees from multinational corporations will go through RMCs but, intriguingly, in ten years those same RMCs will have been replaced by companies outside the industry that will use successful digital models to control the whole process, using technology to reduce the workforce and the cost dramatically. "The RMCs are in a challenging space at the moment to

replace their human capital with artificial intelligence," he said. "It could be that there is a total shift of customer over the mid- to long-term with big players entering the market that we don't even know now."

Mark Burchell said that the market is very fluid. "In the digital age, customers will come in different ways for different reasons," he said. "I don't think you can look much beyond 12 months. It's very exciting."

Neil Bothams agreed. "We can't afford to be complacent," he said. "We need to look at the technologies ourselves and be very open minded. Some customers are realising that the service they are getting isn't what they signed up for and it's destroying value and causing problems

with their employees.” Neil also said that the location of customers is changing, with greater strength in Asia.

Marcel made a chilling observation. He said that the power of technology doubles every 18 months yet the way the moving industry serves RMCs hasn’t changed in the last 15 years. He said that we had stood still and, if anything, there were greater inefficiencies now than in the past. “I think there will be a major disruption in this industry, it’s just a matter of when and what it will be.”

HR trends

The panel then turned its attention to HR. Neil referenced a recent survey that showed that most CEOs rate the importance of engagement, diversity, leadership and the building of a global pool of talent at 60%; yet they rated their HR departments’ effectiveness at delivering those key requirements at just 15%. A different survey by Santa Fe showed that 60% of CEOs were dissatisfied with their mobility departments’ ability to deliver against the strategic aims of the business. He said that if clients were prepared to be more collaborative then there was more opportunity for mobility companies to use their expertise to help.

According to Marcel there is still a shortage of talent and corporations are having a battle between reducing their budgets and the need to motivate young members of staff who demand global opportunities. Peggy said that this was accentuated by the gig economy, in which young people choose to be self-employed but still want the benefits of working with a global organisation. Neil said that technology has put a lot more power in their hands. “The individual will drive the mobility story much more,” he said. “As more people enjoy that lifestyle we might see the relationship between us and them becoming more important.” In future, it will be necessary to target highly mobile professionals, not the large companies for whom they work.

Mark looked at the opposite end of the age range. He said that many retirees were coming back and accepting international assignments because their experience was valued. “Young people want to go to specific places such as Singapore and Dubai,” he said. “Postings in the oil and gas industry might be to more remote places that are not attractive. We have to be very fluid. The more we try to put customers into boxes the more of a dinosaur the industry will become.”

If this comes about, compliance will become an issue. Risk and compliance is high on the agenda of all corporations but, when the assignee is doing all the



work themselves, probably online, how can they protect their position and their reputations? “Corporations can’t give up their duty of care to the transferee yet as they force the decision making down to the transferee and the family unit, that becomes very fluid,” said Mark. “How does the balance in compliance fit in an increasingly flexibility driven approach?”

Steve Lewis agreed, adding that this might give mobility companies an opportunity to help corporations by “walking them through” the processes and ensure that assignees, who are handling their own affairs, don’t contravene compliance requirements. This might, for example, include providing a tracking service to make sure people on working visas do not overstay in their host country.

Imminent mobility policy trends

Peggy finally asked the panel what policy trends they foresaw in the next 12-18 months. Neil said that mobility policies would need to cover a much more diverse range of people and recognise the power of the individual; Mark expected to see more policies that were specific to different industries; Marcel expected budgets to tighten while corporations would require even greater flexibility; and Steve said that the trend to minimise and reduce was not always practical and mobility companies would find it necessary to provide additional services that would help to make individuals more comfortable.

Will it ever be possible for a relocation to be carried out digitally, without any human contact? Neil said that technically it was already possible, however Mark thought that the more complex areas of the process would still require a human element. Steve said that, despite the digital opportunities, it would always be important to keep the quality of the service in mind.

As a final thought, and in view of the importance of the subject for so many in the industry, Neil expressed his surprise that there were not more people in the audience. “Are people not more concerned about this?” he asked. “If people are not in the room, perhaps they haven’t woken up to the fact that the future of mobility is going to be very different from today.”



“In the digital age, customers will come in different ways for different reasons. I don’t think you can look much beyond 12 months.”

Mark Burchell

NEWS: INTERNATIONAL



● Left to right: Jürgen Steinmeyer, DKV; Mirka Dworschak, T-Systems International; Tom Schneider, Daimler. Photo: Unger.

Toll4Europe to become a single source for European tolls

T-Systems International GmbH, Daimler AG and DKV EURO SERVICE GmbH + Co KG have founded a joint venture company for the development and provision of the European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) for vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes. All responsible competition authorities had

previously given their approval for the joint venture.

The joint venture operates under the name Toll4Europe GmbH. The objective of Toll4Europe is to reduce the complexity between national toll chargers and service providers. The Toll4Europe platform will enable service providers of all sizes to offer their customers an EETS

service as a sales partner.

T-Systems owns 55% of Toll4Europe, Daimler 30% and DKV 15%. Toll4Europe will therefore be governed by T-Systems, a company that brings over 14 years of toll experience into the joint venture and is responsible for the technology as well as the sales partner management. Daimler contributes its expertise for the future integration of the on-board unit into the vehicle. DKV's contribution is 25 years' experience in the toll business and the know-how gained from billing 30 European tolls to, currently, 140,000 customers.

The new company creates the necessary conditions to technically implement the planned toll box throughout European tolling systems; it will be introduced in 2018. At first, the box is intended to cover Belgium, Germany, France, Austria and Poland. The plan is to integrate Italy, Portugal, Spain and Hungary right from the start as well, or very soon afterwards. In the medium term, the aim is for all present and future road, bridge and tunnel tolls to be collected using the same, single device.

FIDI Excellence award for Arpin

For the fourth year in a row, Arpin International Group has earned the FIDI Commitment to Excellence Gold Award for driving and promoting industry knowledge among its employees.

Arpin was selected for having its employees worldwide complete industry training offered through the FIDI Academy, obtaining their Foundations of International Moving (FIM) diploma. Arpin requires all employees involved in pricing or moving shipments to be FIDI certified.

Arpin has also reported that its offices in China and Germany have successfully obtained their first FIDI certification.

Cartus top of the RMCs

The Cartus Corporation has earned the rank of No. 1 for overall satisfaction among large relocation management companies in the 2017 International Managers Survey, conducted by Trippel Survey & Research, LLC.

Cartus was ranked top in five of the nine individual categories that comprised the overall satisfaction ranking: responsiveness, supplier management, value for money, cost management and country coverage. In addition, the company's Intercultural and Language

Solutions practice was ranked No. 1 in Language Training and No. 2 in Cross Cultural training.

The survey of International Relocation Managers is conducted annually by Alan Trippel, an industry consultant. It ranked a total of 17 relocation providers, five of whom, including Cartus, are in the large provider category.

Cartus President and CEO Kevin Kelleher pointed to the company's singular focus on

customer service, its unique organisational structure and the energy and dedication of its employees as factors in the results. "Our company is completely dedicated to using our leverage, scope and experience to develop customised, flexible solutions for our clients and their transferring employees," Kelleher said. "These rankings are a direct reflection of the spirit embodied in our new campaign, which showcases the 'Have Done, Will Do' attitude of our employees around the world."



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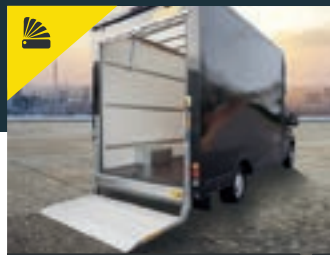
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SOLAS: WHAT HAPPENED?

Picture courtesy of the Port of Felixstowe.



What was all the fuss about SOLAS?

The new SOLAS regulations came into force in July 2016, so have they caused the uproar in the industry that was prophesied?

From the end of 2015 through to the implementation of the new SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) regulations, *The Mover* published story after story about the impending doom that would come from the requirement to weigh containers before they were loaded on the vessels. Indeed the FIDI conference held a panel discussion on the very subject. But since its introduction, nearly a year ago, it's all gone quiet. What's happened?

Well, it didn't go away, as some probably hoped it would. Whether it has proved to be the predicted nightmare, or a total

non-event, differs depending on a company's location and the type of business it conducts. The long-term effect, however, is more likely to be related to costing rather than practical operations. To find out more, *The Mover* did a trawl of opinions from around the world to find out where it's working and where it's causing real grief.

In Europe

In Germany, for example, Matthias Tischer from Carl Hartmann, said that the implementation went much easier than expected. He said that most export

containers transit through the rail/truck combined system and nearly all rail terminals immediately installed facilities to weigh the containers. "We bill an average of €150 for weighing the container plus a SOLAS administration fee of €15 which were accepted by customers. Out of around 5,000 – 6,000 containers shipped we have only had two or three picked for re-weighing."

James Broggi, from Global Corporate Relocations in Spain, also said that the containers are weighed at the port, but it was "... just another headache in what is already a very complicated process." He



“Just before the start date last year, the ports got their acts together and all of them geared up to weighing within the port ...”

Stephen Denning

said that it comes with heavy consequences if not done properly so he now has to be even more careful with new recruits just starting off their careers in the moving industry.

James also said that he didn't trust the weights from the ports. “The weights are always spot on perfect - 1,850 kilos, 1,700 kilos - perhaps they are just rounding up, though I am waiting to get a dispute from the US at any time for an incorrect weight declaration.” The weighing costs around €60 which James builds into his quotations “... rather than adding more complicated jargon into quotations and

confusing clients.”

George Naumann from Swiss Moving Service said that he has not heard any negative reports about the handling of traffic in Switzerland. He said that the cranes at the inland terminals, that load the containers in Switzerland on trains, barge or trucks for transit to the port of departure, all have accurate weighing scales.

Stephen Denning from Fox Moving and Storage was instrumental in alerting the UK industry to the change in the regulations and took a very active role

continues over

SOLAS: WHAT HAPPENED?



● One of the stories published by *The Mover* in the run-up to the implementation of SOLAS in July last year.

continued from previous page

running up to the launch date. But he said that the effect has proved to be insignificant – even though the solution didn't emerge until the eleventh hour. "Just before the start date last year, the ports got their acts together and all of them geared up to weighing within the port," he said. "We got involved with Destin8 and NCS who are responsible for the port communication systems across all the UK ports and they set up the ability to notify ports at the point of booking in the container, as to whether the container needed to be weighed, or whether it had a VGM already."

Stephen said that it's turned out to be "... a very easy and modestly-costed service which has caused the industry very few issues since its inception." He added though that the ports were adamant that they would not provide the service until close to the date, when they suddenly advised that they had the ability to do it and at reasonable cost. "It seemed outrageous when it was blatantly obvious that they couldn't avoid it and that they

happen," he said. "The shipping lines were publicly washing their hands of it, leaving the onus with the port operators and the transport industry to take the lead. Then, with just weeks to go, we learnt that the port operators planned to provide a weighing service for loaded containers prior to shipment. Applications were rapidly completed and sent to the two main port community network system operators. Once approved, we waited for the live start date on 1 July, 2016. It came and went, and, apart from a few initial teething problems with some of the shipping lines getting to grips with recording data provided to them, it went without a hitch and quickly became routine for our staff. The relatively low costs mean that we have been able to absorb these inside our rate structure."

USA and elsewhere

Outside Europe the SOLAS regulations seem to have been accepted and implemented without much of a flicker. In Australia it seems to have been accepted as a 'non-event'. Terry Head from IAM said that it had had "little effect from an operations point of view in the USA." Ed Wickman, from Wickman Worldwide Services in Indiana agreed that the implementation of SOLAS in the USA was more of an inconvenience with another step in the process rather than a physical obstacle. "Many of the larger agents have truck scales at their facility and, if not, are within easy access at any of a number of truck stops." Patrick Ohara from GINTER in Brazil agreed that it had not affected his operations as they were already required to weigh containers.

In India, however, the transition wasn't so straightforward. Rohington Kasad from the Writer Corporation said that his

company had started work on meeting the SOLAS requirements in April 2016. "After doing the trial runs for a period of one month we became aware of the problems, especially for weighing of loaded FCL containers. This was overcome and complete training, right down to the executive at the warehouse, was conducted. Implementing SOLAS requirements has increased the workload at the warehouse/port and the documentation to be submitted." His company weighs both the empty vehicle and the full vehicle at calibrated weighbridges then adds the net figure to the container tare weight to achieve the VGM (Verified Gross Mass) required by SOLAS. He said that although it is a lot of work it is worthwhile, considering the objective of SOLAS is to protect the lives of the ship's crew.

The density problem

Many outside the US thought this was going to be an operational disaster, however the more long-lasting effect is likely to be related to costing, not operations. The cost of packing and shipping household goods is directly related to the volume, however, the USA has always used weight as the preferred unit of measurement as it is considered to be more reliable (you can't fake a weight). To bring the dichotomy together, and make it easier when quoting for contracts, the industry has always used a density factor of 6.5lbs/ft³ (or the metric equivalent). This would mean, for example, that a full TEU would be billed at around 6,500lbs. Now that the containers are physically weighed it has emerged that this density is higher than today's average and corporate customers are not prepared to pay the higher figure.

Terry Head said that this has caused some questions and changes in billing and audit procedures. "I have had a number of enquiries from both commercial and government freight audit companies trying to understand the SOLAS policy and procedures," he said. "I think we will likely see some changes in contract language going forward."

James Broggi was also concerned. "We are now having to bill based on the weight shown on the VGM/BOL, which often goes in their favour rather than ours ... we have to bill on the lower bracket, even though the packing material and labour was exactly the same. Perhaps IKEA will start making their furniture with heavier materials!"

"The shipping lines were publicly washing their hands of it, leaving the onus with the port operators and the transport industry to take the lead."

Stephen Denning

were at the only viable point in the process that it could be carried out."

Kirk Dugard from Simpsons in the UK agreed. "With just a few months to go before it was implemented, SOLAS and the verification of gross mass (VGM), appeared to be an accident waiting to

● At the FIDI conference in Dubai a panel of experts debated this very subject. To read their conclusions take a look at page 18.

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MADE IN BRITAIN

FTA calls for national scrappage scheme ahead of air quality plan announcement



● FTA's head of National and Regional Policy, Christopher Snelling.

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) says improvements to UK air quality should be assisted through a national scrappage scheme ahead of the government's anticipated Air Quality Plan announcement. FTA believes that national level fiscal measures should be announced to enable small business and vehicle owners to meet the costs of operating in new Clean Air Zones (CAZs).

According to FTA, a national scrappage scheme would support efforts to achieve air quality improvements whilst preventing an unsustainable burden falling on small businesses who fail to comply with CAZs, especially small and medium-sized operators and those utilising vans or specialist HGVs. The FTA's research suggests that the additional cost of compliance could be in excess of 150% of annual turnover for some SMEs.

FTA's Head of National and Regional Policy, Christopher Snelling said, "There is no question that we all have to continue to improve air quality – but it should be recognised that our air is getting cleaner all the time. The government should be pursuing measures that will provide the most health benefits for the least economic disruption. The proposed CAZs pose a serious risk to the viability of many small businesses based in these zones, and a real risk to jobs and local prosperity. When the CAZs are introduced, there will only be five years' worth of compliant HGVs in the national fleet, meaning specialist operators and small businesses who tend to purchase second-hand will face a massive cost burden if they are to upgrade vehicles automatically."

"The situation will be even worse for vans, where only two and a half years' worth of compliant vehicles will be available," he added. "This is not long enough for a second-hand market in compliant vehicles to have come into existence, and thus requires an immediate

"The proposed CAZs pose a serious risk to the viability of many small businesses based in these zones ..."

Christopher Snelling

purchase of a new vehicle, again threatening the way of life of many small businesses."

Mr Snelling concluded, "FTA's membership believes that the government should take some responsibility for the financial impact that the new legislation and zones will create. Air quality is a national problem and there should be national measures to help solve it. Tax breaks or a scrappage scheme funded by the government could help business and diesel car drivers cope with the changes and reduce the need for local restrictions."

Preferred route for a new Lower Thames Crossing announced

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced on 12 April the preferred route for a new Lower Thames Crossing. The new crossing will create a link between the A2 and the M25 and reduce the burden on the busy Dartford Crossing. The Lower Thames Crossing is expected to carry 4.5 million heavy goods vehicles in its first year.

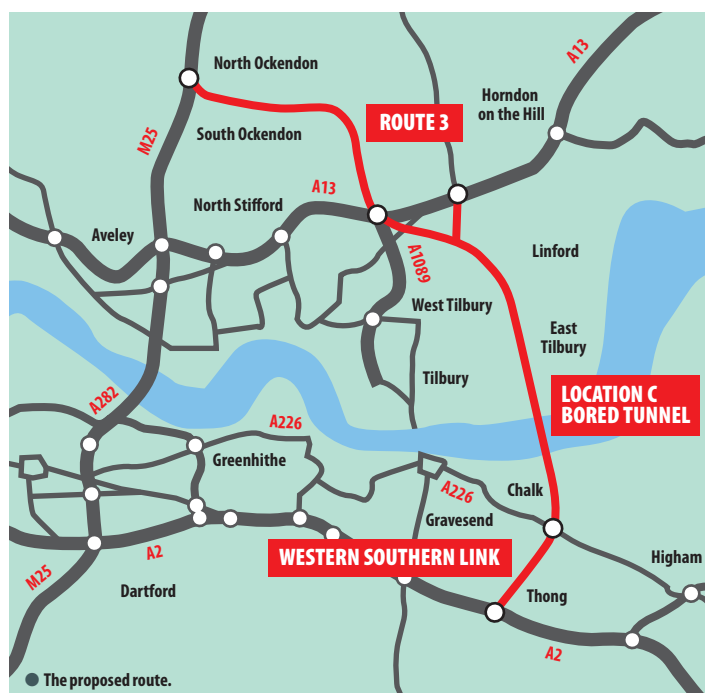
The planned route will run from the M25 near North Ockendon, cross the A13 at Orsett before crossing under the Thames east of Tilbury and Gravesend. A new link road will then take traffic to the A2 near Shorne, close to where the route becomes the M2.

The route was identified by the majority of nearly 47,000 respondents to a consultation on the best solution for reducing traffic and congestion at the Dartford Crossing and for boosting

the economy by improving links to London and the Channel ports.

In addition, £10 million will be used to improve traffic flow at and around the existing crossing, as well as studying ways to further tackle congestion. This will include a wide-ranging investigation into options to cut 'rat-running' through Dartford and Thurrock.

Chris Grayling said, "We are making the big decisions for Britain. The new Lower Thames Crossing, and other improvements in and around Dartford and Thurrock announced today, will further strengthen our economy while also creating thousands of jobs. The schemes announced today not only show we are taking decisions, we are planning upgrades and we are completing roads – making the lives of millions of motorists better."





● Formula 3 hopeful Jamie Chadwick during the tests.

Satnavs are the deadliest distraction for drivers

Road safety charity IAM RoadSmart and motoring magazine *Auto Express* teamed up to find out which are the deadliest behind-the-wheel distractions and found programming a satnav to be the worst.

Auto Express Consumer Editor Joe Finnerty was put to the test alongside British Formula 3 hopeful Jamie Chadwick in a professional racing simulator at Base Performance Simulators in Banbury. They were both assessed to see how they coped with the most common distracting tasks on UK roads, while completing timed laps and braking at a specific point. On hand was IAM RoadSmart's Head of Technical Policy, Tim Shallcross, to monitor the findings.

The results proved shocking, with a massive difference in performance between distractions. Entering a postcode into a satnav app proved to be the worst, followed by sending a text message. Other tasks carried out included eating, drinking, making a phone call and talking to a passenger.

Tim Shallcross said, "There was still a significant speed reduction for Joe when using a satnav, and even the ultra-focussed Jamie completely missed the stop line. The moral? Those warning screens about not entering details on the move are there for a reason – don't ignore them."

On texting Tim said, "Joe would have been a menace to other road

users; the car was more or less out of control. Jamie's caution reduced the distraction in critical zones, but a sudden incident would have left her unable to take avoiding action."

The least distracting task for lap time was talking to a passenger, but it still ranked very poorly for the braking test. Tim said, "It was the least distracting of all in terms of lap times, but interestingly, both drivers failed to brake accurately at the target line. Their ability to drive normally confirms the difference between the extra distraction of a phone conversation and the natural act of talking to a passenger, but still shows that any distraction reduces attention, and in an emergency, it might be critical."

Steve Fowler, *Auto Express'* Editor-in-Chief, said, "These results highlight just how important it is that drivers give their full attention to the road ahead. We've seen the staggering numbers of people who are still using phones at the wheel and these tests show how dangerous they can be – whether it's texting, calling or programming the satnav. More work needs to be done to target those who still think it's acceptable to use a phone while driving."

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INTERVIEW: ED WICKMAN

THE RISK THAT PAID OFF

Steve Jordan talked to Ed Wickman of Wickman Worldwide Services in Fishers, Indiana, as the company celebrated its 20th anniversary.

I am always impressed by people who take a risk. To some extent, everyone who runs a business has had to stick their neck out at some time; running a business is not a safe place to be. It requires bravery, determination and an unswerving belief that the plan will work. That said, and even by the comparative standards of an elite group of opportunists and entrepreneurs, Ed Wickman's story is unusual.

It was back in April 1997 when Ed learned that his employer, Atlas Van Lines International, was preparing to move from Indiana to Seattle. For family reasons, Ed didn't want to make the move. He didn't want to change industry either having had over 15 years' experience and exposure at two major van line headquarters working with agents and attending conventions. He didn't want to throw all that away. But Evansville, Indiana, wasn't awash with forwarding and moving companies. There wasn't anywhere else to go. "So I saw the opportunity," said Ed. "I decided to go it alone and submitted my resignation to Atlas."

But a new venture needs money, especially a forwarding company that has freight charges to pay. "Nobody trusts the new guy, so I had to pay all freight in advance," said Ed. Two banks rejected his business plan but the third agreed to a loan against collateral. "My wife and I signed away our home, cars, savings and everything we had of any value. Basically, we rode down the lift that day completely bankrupt." Scary stuff.

I asked how making such a commitment made him feel. "It was terrifying. I was scared to death. I'd go to church at lunchtime and light a candle and pray. I never doubted that it would work eventually but I didn't know to what degree, how long it would take or if the finances would hold up long enough."

Ed found a small office to rent and opened for business. "I had a few things in my favour," he explained. "My son, Matt, was working in Texas in a temporary

job. He was very adept with computers so came home to help me get things going. He later left to pursue a Masters Degree, get married and jump into corporate America. Christy (Kozloski), my daughter, was in college and came to the office every afternoon to help us organise things and to start learning what we were doing. It was very frugal. We had no furniture. My desk was an old computer box."

But after a few sleepless nights, things started to come good pretty quickly. The decision of Atlas to move had an unsettling effect on their agency family creating an opportunity for a familiar face and name. Soon the fax machine started ringing more consistently with enquiries (the Internet was still developing globally). The first was a major agent with multiple operations and massive volume. Others followed one after another. The risk had paid off. "My concept was to become more boutique and highly personal," said Ed. "A dedicated following was more important than a high volume. Sometimes companies will do anything they can to get a job, then worry about it after. I didn't think that way. I just wanted everything to be straight: what you see is what you get."

Today, as the company celebrates 20 years in business, there is a solid balance of opportunity from both US and overseas agents. Five years ago, Wickman Worldwide moved to new premises in Indiana where the team, even Ed, still looks after clients. Matt remains involved on the periphery with marketing and IT support. WWS also has a sales office in San Diego run by Frank Reinsch. Between them they generate around several million dollars turnover a year. "It has been an exciting twenty years from that beautiful, sunny May morning in southern Indiana when we first unlocked the office. Now, we look to continue to move forward, and with Christy making critical decisions and running operations we have every reason to be optimistic that WWS will



"It was terrifying. I was scared to death. I'd go to church at lunchtime and light a candle and pray."

Ed Wickman

INTERVIEW: ED WICKMAN



● Left to right: Christy Kozloski, Ed Wickman and Shannon North; below: Ed's office in the very early days; bottom: Ed and Christy celebrating the company's fifth anniversary.



grow and thrive. I never lose sight of the fact we had some luck, timing and support of my understanding wife and bright children to help pull it all together."

I also asked Ed if he had any advice for anyone else planning to take the plunge and risk everything on such a business venture. "Don't do it," was his immediate response. He didn't really mean it, but he did say that it's a very different world now than it was when he started. Today the third-party relocation companies have taken a strong foothold with the global accounts. He explained that they consider payment in 90 days to be very quick.

That has resulted in a ripple effect with the worldwide service providers. "Now, the same guys we might have shared beers and laughs with years ago, will request advance payment. Someone starting out now needs to be mentally and financially prepared to be half forwarder and half banker for their accounts."

Congratulations Ed and team for achieving your 20-year anniversary. Any student of economics knows that wealth is only created when someone does something extraordinary. Looks like WWS passed the test.

PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS FROM ARCHITECT NEGLIGENCE

Designing a new self storage or moving facility can be a testing time and companies usually rely on the services of an architect to draw up plans and obtain planning approval. Abacus Law offers some advice to help you through the process.



DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT COVER?



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If you are looking to start up a brand new business, or are hoping to expand your successful pre-existing facilities, chances are you are going to be looking for the help of an architect.

A new business or expansion means new land, preparation, construction and completion, all of which should be organised to meet legal requirements. The architect you hire can and should be able to support you throughout the entire process. However in some cases, issues and resulting disputes can occur, due to professional negligence from cowboy architects.

There are a number of signs that can indicate architect negligence, which have been listed below by professional negligence solicitors, Abacus Law. Read on to get to grips with what to look out for, so you know when you can and should seek legal action.

Plans and preparation

An architect can help you to draw up plans of your new building. These plans are an imperative part of obtaining planning permission, so it's well worth investing your time and money into finding a reputable architect to do the job for you. Perhaps an architect that has experience in developing self storage or moving facilities should be something to look out for.

Designs and drawings that highlight the layout and architecture of your new business premises should be provided by the architect, along with documentation to support them. If they miss the deadline for these documents, that has been set by you, you should be sure to ask for an update on their status, either by e-mail or letter, for example. If the architect fails to provide you with these documents, either on time or not at all, they could be liable for negligence.

Planning permission

Following on from the planning stage comes the opportunity to be granted planning permission for your new location. This is a vital responsibility for your architect and, by making sure their own designs for your premises meet the requirements, there should be no problem in going ahead with construction.

In some cases, architects are unable to acquire planning permission as a result of poor planning and designs, or little thought for the legal requirements. If your construction is unable to proceed due to this, you may be able to seek legal action against the architect for any costs that you incur as a result.

The architect you hire can and should be able to support you throughout the entire process.

Supervision and completion

If planning permission is granted, fantastic! The next step is the construction itself, which the architect should help to supervise and sign off milestones throughout. Your architect should have the most knowledge and expertise when it comes to the construction of your new premises, as the design is based on their own work. As such, any reputable architect should be overseeing the project and assessing the work being carried out.

This involves ensuring the right materials are being used, as well as sections of the project being completed to the appropriate standard. Regular observation of the work is required by an architect to make sure your new premises will be up and running on time.

All the work carried out should meet the

details stated in the architect's original plans that were signed off by the planning committee. Failure to do so opens up the opportunity for problems to arise, with costs quickly mounting up to rectify them.

If the opening of your business is stalled as a result of poor supervision and certification carried out by the architect, you could be compensated for any time and money lost as a result.

A legal contract between you and the architect

A legally binding contract should always be created and signed by both the architect and yourself, which highlights the agreed terms and conditions between you and the architect. The terms and conditions should include their responsibilities, deadlines, the payment for their services, and the consequences of them failing to meet these conditions. Having a contract drawn up and signed will stand you in good stead for receiving compensation, should the law find your architect to be negligent.

Take the time to protect you and your business, with this helpful guide and a contract between you and your architect. You'll appreciate how quickly your new premises are opened and with as few problems as possible along the way.

Abacus Law

The team of expert solicitors at Abacus Law have specialist experience in professional negligence claims. Their services can help businesses to seek dispute resolution and rectify any wrongdoings that have been made against them. Visit www.abacus-law.co.uk/commercial-property/property-development/ for more information.



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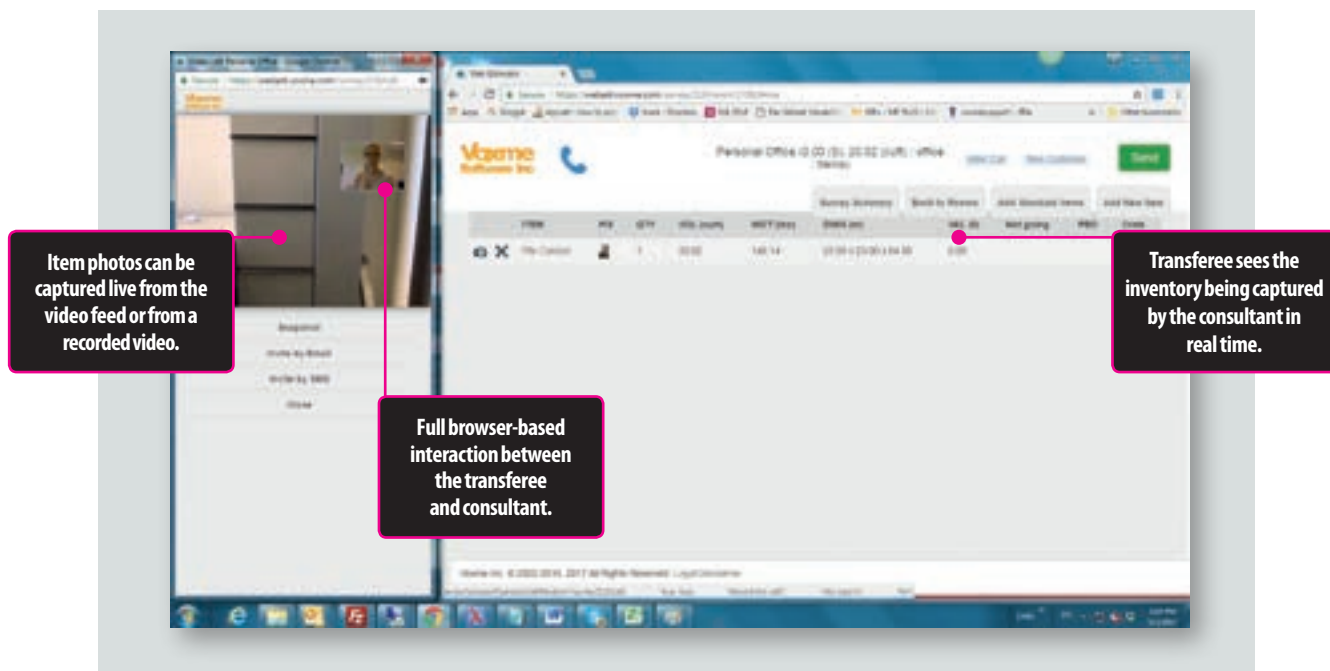
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Voxme Virtual Survey launched

Canadian Technology company Voxme Software Inc has recently launched Voxme V Survey, a cloud-based virtual survey application to help professional surveyors conduct accurate surveys without the need to physically visit the customer's house.



This is an addition to the company's comprehensive suite of mobile and office applications for household goods removals companies.

Used with live video chat (with optional recording) and the browser-based interaction with a transferee, Voxme V Survey allows move consultants to capture the inventory using their pre-move survey application or an embedded inventory based on their company's cubesheet with item details and photos. A survey summary is available in PDF and can be uploaded to Voxme MF Cloud or any other move management system for further processing (be it a physical survey or quoting). The application is integrated with Pac Global insurance.

Voxme says that unlike similar products that seem to focus solely on the video chat, Voxme V Survey comes with an embedded pre-move survey functionality, which is very similar to its estimator application that is based on the company's cubesheet, rooms, materials and dictionaries. Item photos can be captured live from the video feed or from a recorded video, which means that the move consultant can get a

feel for the volume and weight during the chat with the transferee and make an educated decision about what to do next with the enquiry (send a surveyor, quote based on what's been shown, or move on to the next enquiry). The survey details can be uploaded to practically all standard move management platforms, as well as all Voxme Estimator and MF Cloud.

"The technology doesn't replace professionals," said Max Kreyenin from Voxme. "It allows them to be the best at what they do while saving their time. That's the guiding principle we've followed since the days of Palm Pilot. At the end of the day, the video is just a complementary utility for the real professional pre-move survey tools and the real professional surveyors and salesmen who can now be themselves even during the remote surveys."

Voxme V Survey allows for full browser-based interaction between the transferee and the consultant, which means that the transferee sees the inventory being captured by the consultant in real time, can add item photos and details such as measurements, notes and insurance value and even add items and rooms. "This is important as often the

residential Internet cuts the video (especially when a transferee starts going to the basement, attic, garage or stepping out to the backyard where there's no WiFi coverage)," explained Max. "Even though the reconnection to the video chat is seamless, the conversation can be continued over the phone and the consultant can simply guide the transferee to add photos of items requiring special handling. Since both parties are looking at the same details (though the transferee doesn't see volume and weight), it establishes the required level of trust between the transferee and the mover."

The transferee can actually start the survey from the mover's website and then call and ask a consultant to join the survey session, open the video chat and take over or instruct on the item entry over the phone. Voxme V Survey is multilingual and customizable to allow each company to have their own brand, languages and terminology.

The basic Voxme V Survey package starts at US\$120/login/year. Survey videos are US\$2/survey (up to 30 minutes) including two months of video storage. Each extra month of video storage is US\$1/survey/month.

"The technology doesn't replace professionals. It allows them to be the best at what they do while saving their time. That's the guiding principle we've followed since the days of Palm Pilot."

Max Kreyenin

● To find out more and set up a trial run contact sales@voxme.com.

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● www.trutac.co.uk/software/trulocation/.

TruLocation combines real-time GPS vehicle tracking, remote tacho downloading, accurate maps, Geo-location, points of interest, harsh breaking and excess speed, all in one easy to use system.

The fully web-based system can be accessed from anywhere and provides a 360-degree view of vehicles, drivers, routes and compliance, 24 hours a day. TruLocation removes the need for drivers and vehicles to return to base to embark on lengthy manual tacho downloads or to log into multiple systems to track routes, analyse driving hours or plan routes.

This innovative addition to the TruTac product suite provides operators true visibility, with tachograph analysis integration as standard. Fleet efficiencies and productivity are optimised at every level with one simple system.

Fully compliant with EU Drivers' Hours and the Working Time Directive, TruLocation highlights when drivers may require breaks with regards to daily and weekly driving limits, giving planners accurate data to plan routes for maximum utilisation.

TruLocation uses fully secure encrypted data transfer with minute by minute updates on vehicle position through graphical displays and maps. Key features such as Geo-fencing and points of interest will trigger automatic alerts when a unit passes into or out of a defined area: for example, when nearing congestion charging zones, or for timed delivery slots or when approaching docks so a load reference can be communicated via the system's built-in driver messaging function. This considerably reduces overtime, fines, penalties and other costs incurred.

TruLocation's fully web-based reporting suite also improves fleet performance monitoring. Users can instantly identify both the driver and vehicle on any given shift via the tachograph and driver card. The unique telemetry features tracks and records speeding and aggressive driving behaviour such as harsh braking, enabling operators to decrease fuel consumption and highlight training needs.

● To find out more visit www.trutac.co.uk/software.

Trucksmith launches Renault Traffic Target drop-side flatbed van

What Van's Converter of the Year 2017, Trucksmith, launched a new product at this year's Commercial Vehicle Show in April.



● The new Renault Traffic Target.

The new Renault Traffic Target is based on the low roof Renault Traffic platform cab and introduces a clever, secure loading space to the traditional drop-side flatbed van.

The upper loading area has 400mm high folding and removable aluminium panels with a 2,850 x 1,890mm top deck. The unique difference is the hidden lower desk where there is a secure and weatherproof load space accessible via a rear tailgate.

The superstructure and load bed subframe are from pressed and welded steel, hot dip galvanized then bonded and mechanically fixed to the vehicle floor pan to form a one-piece monocoque structure. The top desk flooring is resin coated 12mm mesh-faced birch plywood.

The new Trucksmith vehicle comes with a 4-year, 100,000-mile warranty.

GLOBAL MOBILITY: SAVING COSTS



Saving costs in a world of economic uncertainty

Lisa Johnson, Global Practice Leader, Crown World Mobility, explains how to reduce costs in global mobility

Cutting costs is a perennial topic in global mobility but with so much economic uncertainty in 2017, it is rapidly becoming the biggest talking point in the industry this summer. For those running global mobility programmes, however, the question is where to start.

There are always at least two ways to look at cost savings – one relates to focussing on policy and reducing or eliminating employee benefits within a provision; the other is from a strategic perspective and has to do with the company's overall approach to moving employees.

For any cost savings decisions, the question to ask first is: what is the company's attitude to mobility? Does it focus on the employee experience and do employees assume that they will need to move as part of a global organisation, or is it a rare event? Does the business move people to hardship locations? Does

it have an employee population that is internationally experienced or new to mobility?

It will also be important to consider whether there are business needs being supported by mobility that are difficult to meet due to the unique skills required, challenging locations or the candidate pool available.

Here are a few tips to implement cost savings:

- Reserve the traditional home country balance sheet long-term assignment policy for VIP or high-payback assignments and use a host location-based compensation approach for standard moves;
- Require furnished housing to be the default approach where available and use HHG shipments only for exceptions or VIP moves;
- Centralise assignment data gathering so that costs and exceptions can be tracked and analysed. Too often companies approach cost saving exercises without good data or an understanding of the ramifications of proposed changes. Unintended consequences or changes can turn expected savings into higher costs.

For many corporations, mobility programmes have already moved away from the cost-heavy long-term assignment approach in an age when assignees needed big incentives to work away from their home country.

These days millennials see working abroad and experiencing different cultures as a perk of the job and a natural part of their development; and they are quite happy to look after many of the details themselves.

Keeping employees tied to their home country compensation and benefits, for instance, is expensive and does not reflect career paths that are less about 'out and back' and more about following business needs, wherever they are.

Less expensive approaches to policy include:

- Expat lite - a less robust version of the traditional policy;
- Local plus - using host location compensation and benefits as a base and providing a few benefits where living as a local is unrealistic for a temporary assignee;
- Local-to-local - the transfer of an employee from one location to another with relocation support, but not on-going assignment benefits, similar to an international transfer;
- Localisation - often the transition to local status at the end of an assignment in lieu of repatriation or the transfer of an employee to a new location to live as a local, depending on who is defining the term;

These days millennials see working abroad and experiencing different cultures as a perk of the job and a natural part of their development ...

- Core-flex - the most popular of flexible assignment policy approaches, core-flex offers a core set of policy support for all assignees, such as compliance related support (immigration, tax), basic relocation support and some benefits relevant to meeting corporate values (such as cross-cultural training) and then allows for flexible options based on employee needs or some other driver;
- Managed lump sum - while a pure lump of cash is rarely offered in international moves as it leaves too much room for error for the transferring employee, family and the company, a managed lump sum is increasingly popular for early career assignments. The relocation and compliance elements are managed by a relocation company while leaving the employee with a flexible assignment allowance (lump sum) to use as needed for other expenses.

One thing is clear, the world of global mobility is evolving, changing every year to reflect the world we live in and the budgetary restraints that go with modern business. It is unlikely that cost saving will be knocked off the agenda any time soon.



Lisa Johnson

Lisa is Global Practice Leader, Consulting Services, at Crown World Mobility, a global company which helps corporations manage global talent. She has more than 18 years of experience in the industry and has been widely published. Born in Japan, Lisa has also lived and worked in Spain and is now based in New York.

● Visit www.crownworldmobility.com.

For any cost savings ... the question to ask first is: what is the company's attitude to mobility?

NEWS: PEOPLE



● Keith & Irene celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary in September 2006

Sad farewell to Yeovil's Keith Bartlett at age 87

Keith Bartlett, Managing Director of Yeovil's oldest family-run removals and storage business, E & K Bartlett Ltd, died suddenly on Good Friday, 14 April, aged 87. His wife Irene and son Alistair will continue to run the business, which is now in its 85th year.

Keith joined the business - which was started by his father Ernest in the 1930s - back in 1947 when he was 17. He remained with the company all his working life and was still visiting customers' homes to give removal quotes until the end of 2016. Keith was a well-respected

member of BAR and he and Irene regularly attended social events organised by BAR, as well as the Western Area Meetings at Brent Knoll.

He was one of the last surviving members of the Institute of Furniture Warehousing and Removals Industry (IFWRI) which became the British Association of Removers in 1972. Keith was also a former member of the now disbanded Southern Area TMI (The Movers Institute).

Dancing was a major part of Keith's social life, which started with his brother-in-law playing a piano accordion in a band. He and Irene followed Peter around to weekly dances in local villages, particularly Rampisham, Glanvilles Wooten & Evershot in the Dorset area and more recently in Somerset.

As a child, Keith kept rabbits and exhibited them at local shows. He was also interested in cars and commercial vehicles and there were not many on the road that he could not recognise.

His knowledge of the country was on a par with any satnav and he rarely needed to check a location on the map.

Keith's funeral took place at St Johns Church in Yeovil on Tuesday, 2 May 2017.

New Director, Strategic Business Solutions for Cartus

Karen Marlborough, a seasoned sales and business development executive with more than 20 years of experience, has joined Cartus as director, strategic business solutions in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region.

The company says that Karen will focus on providing corporate solutions to companies with relocation programmes in the UK and Europe. She will be based in Richmond, UK and report to Nigel Passingham, Vice President, Strategic Business Solutions EMEA & APAC.



● Karen Marlborough.

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The White & Co Mystery Mover

Congratulations to Ted Prior for spotting Ed Van Bodegraven with Torbin Hollingsworth and Carl Cock-Johnson last month. Ted's been out of the moving industry for a while but is still having a grand time as a toastmaster, red jacket and all. This time we are back to one face: but who's been caught by surprise here? Answers to: editor@themover.co.uk for a chance at winning the White and Company Red and Black watch.

Silvia Louro elected president of FIDI USA

Silvia Louro, Director of International Operations of Arpin International Group, has been elected president of FIDI USA.

As president, Silvia will represent the USA section of FIDI to voice the views of its members and serve as US delegate during FIDI's general assembly. She will also be responsible for coordinating and leading separate FIDI USA Board meetings and USA Association meetings.

"FIDI has an essential role in raising the bar for professional standards in the international household goods forwarding industry," said David Arpin, President and CEO of Arpin Group. "We are incredibly proud of Silvia's leadership in FIDI over the years. In her new role, representing the interests of USA FIDI members, she will continue the Association's important work of advancing the state of our profession and promoting best practices."



● Silvia Louro.

Silvia has 21 years of experience working in the household goods moving and storage industry. At Arpin International Group she is involved in the strategic development of the company and its subsidiaries.

Roberto Granero dies

The Granero Group in Brazil has advised of the recent death of the company's President, Roberto Granero, following a long battle against cancer.



In a statement the company said: "He was a great man and a great leader for over 50 years, he will be deeply missed but we can assure that his values and commitments will always remain."

Roberto was the son of Pedro Granero who started the moving

company in 1967 in Sao Paolo. He is survived by his wife Sandra, sons Robson and Rafael and daughters Roberta and Raina. Condolences may be sent to the Granero family at international@ginter.com.br. The funeral took place on 1 May in Sao Paulo.

25
YEARS

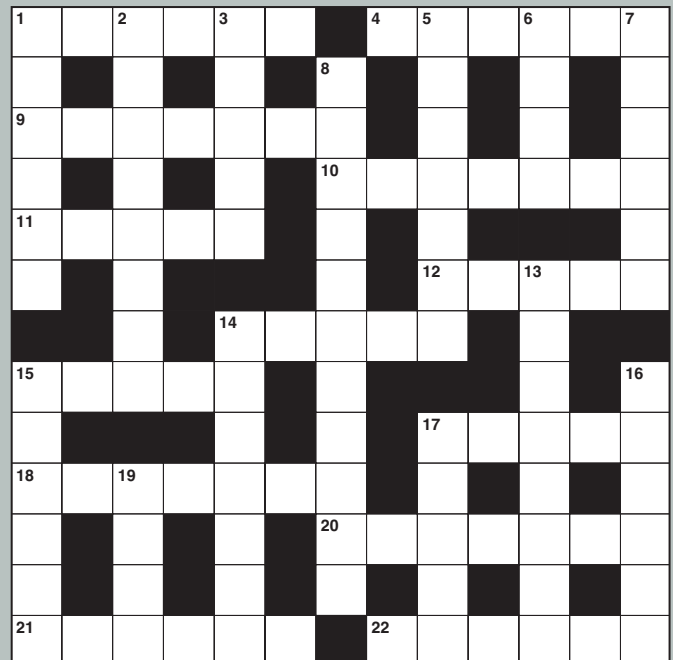
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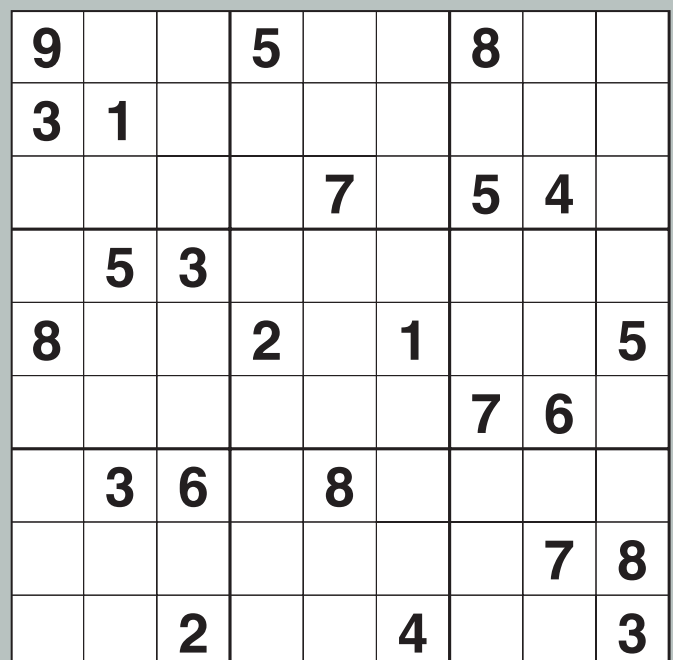
ACROSS

- 1 Abandon (6)
- 4 Gambol (6)
- 9 Italian fast racing car (7)
- 10 Book of the Bible (7)
- 11 Horse sound (5)
- 12 Chris ____ : British radio DJ (5)
- 14 Vaulted (5)
- 15 Vertical part of a step (5)
- 17 Savoury jelly (5)
- 18 Causing difficulty (7)

- 20 Version of a book (7)
- 21 Deceive (6)
- 22 Nastily (6)

DOWN

- 1 State the meaning of (6)
- 2 Shots that start tennis points (8)
- 3 Freshwater fish (5)
- 5 Well balanced (of character) (7)
- 6 Part of a camera (4)
- 7 Produces an effect (6)
- 8 Frivolous (5-6)
- 13 Take up of a practice (8)
- 14 Feared greatly (7)
- 15 Cried out (of a lion) (6)
- 16 Small in quantity (6)
- 17 Not dead (5)
- 19 Flat-bottomed boat (4)



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There is one bit of damage to note, the truck body has a slight kink in the roof on one corner on the OS about half way down, but we have used it like this for three years and it's always been water tight. The truck is 18 ton and the trailer is 18 ton. Please be aware the vehicle is left hand drive. The price is £28,000 plus VAT ovno, but the number plate isn't included. I have never put a removal road train on the road for less than 60k.

If you have any further questions and would like a quick answer please contact me, Matt De-Machen, on my mobile 07977 411644 or e-mail matthew.de-machen@mjr.global



MARKETPLACE/DIARY DATES

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E-mail your Diary Dates to nikki@themover.co.uk

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14 – 16 September, 2017, Kassel, Germany

PAIIMA 33rd Annual Convention

6 – 8 October, 2017, Long Beach, California, USA

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

European Self Storage Conference and Trade Show

16 – 18 October, 2017
Maritim ProArte Hotel, Berlin

FEDESSA European Conference & Trade Show 2017

17 – 18 October, 2017, Berlin

The Movers & Storers Show 2017

8 – 9 November, 2017
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Did you know?

We've dug up a few facts that we thought you may (or may not) find interesting.

The earliest recorded reference to a 'lorry driver' was in 1926.

Four-year-old mice are much rarer than 100-year-old people.

There are Egyptian cave paintings of people doing breaststroke.

The world has lost 3% of its forests since 1990.

Bubblegum was once prescribed as a remedy for polio.

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Tony Allen: And finally ...



Fools rush in ...

Will I never learn?
It's Sunday and I ask the lady wife if we are going to have a roast and at what time. She replies that we are; and it will be ready at about 4 o'clock. I ask why it can't be earlier. I then receive a reply that goes something like: 'Well I haven't got a head chef and a maid you know'. I hear myself responding by saying: 'Yes but I have!'

Madness? Absolutely, and I know that this has probably offended the majority of my female readers, and other genders as well, and I know that you are probably pursing your lips and making a noise similar to a boiling kettle. But it was meant as a joke for goodness sake – although I confess not a very intelligent one.

Anyway, later I was sitting eating my traditional Sunday cheese sandwich when I began to reflect upon the best way to make an abject apology. Fortunately the lady wife has a good sense of humour – go to the back of the class anyone who thought 'well she would have needed it when she decided to marry you!'

Humour is a very personal thing which varies according to the individual. That's why we should be most careful when employing this form of communication, as some will 'get it' and others won't. For example, to include a joke during a speech is something akin to diving off the top board in a swimming pool – should I do it, will it matter if I don't?

In my previous life I was involved with the British Association of Removers and would visit the Areas on an annual basis making essentially the same speech. It never ceased to amaze me how the response to a humorous comment would vary from place to place. It can be most unnerving when the hilarious response you got last time just doesn't happen and you are left trying to give the impression that it wasn't meant to be funny in the first place. So you rapidly change your facial expression and you quickly move on. Incidentally, this predicament is not helped one bit when minutes later a member of the audience suddenly gets your joke and with pointed finger remarks 'Oh yeah!' - I should add that this inevitably occurs just as you have reached the deadly serious part of your speech.

So humour is a two edged sword; and although Woody Allen once said that "laughter was the shortest distance between two people" it isn't always the case. We often don't know the truth of what's going on in somebody's life at any particular moment. Maybe the last thing that they want to do is laugh. But from the other side of the coin, humour can

defuse situations and cause us to stop and think.

I hope that you will indulge me, but sometimes practical jokes can really tickle everyone but the beneficiary – this one I heard recently from a friend of mine really appealed to me for its ingenuity. It might make you laugh; depends on what day you're having!

When my friend was younger he worked for a city accountant, and a new gentleman had joined the company and insisted upon wearing a bowler hat to the office, which the other staff found somewhat pretentious. They noticed that the hat had been purchased from Dunnes who in those days would embroider your name inside free of charge.

Each morning he would arrive at the office and place his hat on the hat rack. They made a note of the size; made an office collection and purchased a hat from Dunnes which was a number of sizes bigger than the original, and they had his name embroidered within. During the course of the day the new hat was substituted for the original. When the new gentleman left he put on his hat and it sunk down almost over his eyes. He looked inside, saw his name and with a somewhat puzzled look he put it back on, and left.

It can be most unnerving when the hilarious response you got last time just doesn't happen and you are left trying to give the impression that it wasn't meant to be funny in the first place.

The next morning he arrived as usual, but whilst he was out of the office they noticed that, in order to make the hat fit, he had stuffed folded newspaper within the hat brim. So they removed the newspaper from the new hat and then placed it within the original. They then returned it to its usual position on the hat rack. As our protagonist left that evening, he took his hat and placed it on his head, where it looked - as my Mother would say - 'like a pimple on a haystack'. He removed his hat, looked inside and saw his name; placed it back on his head and left.

The next day the manager received a call from the gentleman's wife - and you can believe this or not; I like to - who said that he would not be coming in that day as he was going to see his doctor because his head kept shrinking and then swelling again!

Wicked but lovely! Happy days.



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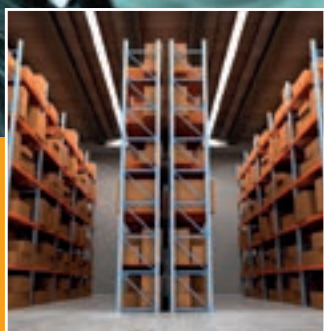


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