

May 2010 Number 430 £4.00 www.bar.co.uk

Removals & Storage



Magazine of the
British Association
of Removers

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THE
Editor's
COLUMN

Another bumper issue of the R&S this month with something, I hope, for everyone. This issue goes out around the time of the conference: if you are reading it in your hotel room I trust you won't be distracted too much from the packed programme.

As I write this the sun is shining brightly outside, the election is only a few days away and the air is full of expectancy – and a little volcanic dust. Most people I speak to report brisker trading since last year so, just perhaps, the 'R' word will have finally drifted out of our vocabulary for the time being. During the darker days we always tried to bring you good news when we could find it in an effort to lift spirits, build optimism and, hopefully, help avoid the industry talking itself into even deeper holes. I hope we made a positive contribution. Now the sun is out again how about sharing a few of your 'good news' stories to help us keep up the momentum.

Special thanks this month to James Falkner, BAR Company Secretary for a frank and interesting interview. Well done to all at the New Met Area for yet another interesting mini conference Area meeting featured here in this issue. Congratulations also to the Young Movers for providing me with a few photo opportunities at their Murder Mystery day.

If you look carefully in these pages (page 11) you'll find a request for comment on the time-worn subject of vehicle weights. The subject seems to be exercising many people's minds right now so I thought we should join in the debate. 7.5 tonne vans seem to be the main culprits, I'd appreciate your comments and experiences.

If you pick up a copy of this issue at the conference, I hope you have a great time. Don't forget to smile for the camera!

Steve Jordan

Foreign lorry focus for safer roads and fairer market

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report into the regulation of commercial vehicles will provide a welcome focus on the issue of unsafe overseas lorries and driving practices.



Jo Tanner, the FTA's Director of Communications said: "The Public Accounts Committee is quite right to be concerned about the number of overseas trucks on UK roads, and their poor safety record. Tired drivers operating vehicles in poor mechanical condition are accidents waiting to happen. VOSA has done a good job in clamping down on non-compliant foreign lorries at the roadside but because there is no meaningful monitoring of these vehicles, authorities have no idea who is on our roads or where they are travelling to or from." Overseas trucks tend to fill

their tanks with diesel bought outside the UK, where fuel duty is far lower, so not only do they avoid contributing to the UK economy at the pumps they also put domestic truckers at a massive commercial disadvantage. Jo Tanner concluded: "Overseas operators effectively drive on the UK's roads for free, as they contribute nothing to Treasury coffers while the British taxpayer picks up the tab for the damage they cause. This isn't the first report to highlight the inadequacies of taxation on these overseas vehicles, and sadly it probably won't be the last. What we need now is action."

UVB raise money for Help the Heroes

Unique Van Bodies and James Removals were involved in raising funds for Help the Heroes at the recent Movers and Storers Show.

UVB built a 1/14 scale remote control Scania Tractor unit with trailer painted and lettered to James Removals' specification. Participants were challenged to race against the clock around a

25ft by 25ft obstacle course including bridges, tunnels and cones using the James Removals remote-controlled articulated lorry. At £5 a go all money raised went to Help the Heroes, the official charity of The Movers and Storers Show. Nearly £500 was raised.

James de-Machen of James Removals said, "We thought the race would be a bit of fun for people at the show and it got quite competitive! It was a great day and we were happy to do our bit for Help the Heroes."

The winning time was 35 seconds with the driver, Barry Kynaston, winning a prize lorry painted in his company colours.



James de-Machen Jr trying to beat the record