



NEWS DIGEST DECEMBER '08

Annie Panton



It's now December and coming up to the shortest day in the year while nature continues its own consistent pattern, dark days have given us all something other than nature to think about lately. When I started to write this piece, I came across more and more statistical evidence of gloom and doom and vowed I would avoid all this by being a little light-hearted instead!

The industry has held several events during the autumn – the ARP Annual Conference in Oxford – a new venue for us which gave everyone a chance to hold forth on the State of the Industry – very interactive and positive, I thought. It also encouraged newer faces into the arena, speaking publicly about their businesses and how they are managing mobility.

EuRA also had a very successful Members' Day in Lille at the end of November and managed to combine Quality Seal training with some Fundamentals; a great speaker from Oxford Brookes University talking about the challenge of cultural leadership and Sally Godsell (see her article in P2P) encouraging European small businesses to look carefully at cost control at this tricky time. We all felt the time in Lille had been very well spent. ARP members can become EuRA members too and take advantage of these invaluable meeting points.



Myself, Dom Tidey and Dr Kate Gilbert at the EuRA Members' Day

Then we had our annual lunch in London – a lovely social occasion with lots of networking opportunities which extended far beyond lunchtime!

So back to basics – I've just read a note from the Home Buying and Selling Team at www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk claiming that the Government is about to simplify the packs contents! Do read what they have to say – it seemed to me that all they've done so far is to set up more committees to 'make life easier' for people buying and selling! We shall see, no doubt. One interesting point is that the Home Information Pack website will be moving over to the Business Link website at the end of this month.

Estate Agents face an OFT review over concerns about low customer satisfaction and regulation of online agencies. They are apparently going to look at the process of buying and selling homes (not again!). The group appointed will be talking to businesses, Government (oh dear!) and consumer groups before the launch of the study in 2009. Peter Bolton King has commented that the NAEA has long called for regulation of the market, so he hopes something may come out of it.

I do hope they approach some of us in the mobility industry as we constantly battle with agents who don't always provide us with the service we need. What do you guys think about this? Do email me with any good stories – I'd be delighted to pass them on and get involved.

December's issue of Management Today included a league table of Britain's most admired companies and as I'm sure you work with some of them I thought I'd list the top ten as a reminder of how lucky we are to have such great organisations in the UK:



Diageo
Johnson Matthey
Unilever
BSKYB
Tesco
Stagecoach
Rolls Royce
Man Group
Kingspan
3i

The criteria used to measure success included the following:

- Quality of Management
- Financial Soundness
- Ability to attract, develop and retain talent
- Quality of Goods & Services
- Value as a long-term investment
- Use of corporate assets
- Quality of Marketing
- Community & Environmental responsibility
- Capacity to Innovate

Do take a look at – www.totallyexpat.com. Its philosophy is to try to embrace the whole mobility 'world' under a new umbrella. I hope you like it. I did! I shall keep an eye on the site and report its progress in due course.

Finally, I thought I'd end on a high note. As an optimist myself and hopeful of the future, I loved these two quotes:

"The basis of optimism is sheer terror." – Oscar Wilde

"For myself, I am an optimist. It doesn't seem much use to be anything else." – Winston Churchill

Happy Christmas everyone – don't over indulge yourselves - either financially or in terms of weight gain!!

Annie