



## **25 YEARS OF RELOCATION**

### **Nick Beaumont**

In 1986 I realised it was time for a career change. However my one O'level didn't work in my favour. It was obvious that I would have to start my own business. I had found houses for friends and came up with what I thought was the revolutionary idea of searching for property in London and the Home Counties for yuppies and old ladies.

I still have a copy of The Times from February 1987 in which my late partner Geoffrey Whitestone spotted an article on relocation and the ARA. It was reassuring to know there were other revolutionaries out there.

Geoffrey applied for membership and on May 5<sup>th</sup> of that year Keith Ladbrooke wrote welcoming Moving On to the ARA.

We placed a couple of ads in the glossy magazines and waited for the two second hand car phones, for which we paid a total of £1,300.00, to ring. And ring they did. Our first client was a young Norwegian man and twenty four years and six houses later I am still working for him.

The biggest changes in the intervening years have been the price of property, the wonderful technology and the dreadful jargon. A senior banker who should have known better recently asked, in all seriousness, if Moving On offered a *Concierge Service* or a *Life Style Service*. "Neither. Just good service" I replied.

The smallest change has been the cost of the annual subscription which, for a one man band such as mine, has risen from £120 to just £265 in the 24 years I have been a member. Tad has always been brilliant with the finances and in the early days he ran the ARA on a miniscule shoe string. On his trips from the Edinburgh office to London he would often sleep on my sofa to save costs. I think it is fair to say that without Tad the ARA would not have survived.

I have been extraordinarily lucky and it never really feels like work. The yuppies disappeared at the start of the nineties which was a bit of a disaster and an old lady every ten years is more than enough. I soon discovered that buyers for properties in the Home Counties and I were not, in general, mutually compatible and so I have concentrated on finding flats and houses for people I like in Central London.

There is no web site and all my clients come via word of mouth. I still haven't got round to drawing up a contract for them to sign and I don't take any money up front. I have turned down the dubious offer of fronting a TV series. And the even more dubious offer of finding a house for an arms dealer. I have seen and heard all sorts of things and like a good Swiss hotel keeper have kept my mouth firmly shut.

I plan to go on working for as long as I can but don't expect to be doing so when the ARP celebrates its golden jubilee.