



CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF RELOCATION IN THE UK; Movers and Shakers Annie Panton

We felt that the 25 years of the ARP (previously the ARA) should be celebrated by writing about several people who have contributed extensively to the relocation industry and who have influenced growth and innovation over this period of time and two others whose more recent contributions are worth reading about in the 21st century.

I was privileged to be able to go and interview Ian Payne, John Carolan and Helmut Berg, all of whom have been in the industry all this time – and well before the advent of the ARA (as it was then), in the case of John Carolan! I also met with the new President of EuRA, Åse Lofgren-Gunsten and the current Chairman of the ARP, Alison van Dalen, both of whom have interesting histories. May I take this opportunity to thank them for their time.

We should, however, start with a separate summary of Tad's background and contribution over a long period of time in the relocation industry – here it is:

Tad Zurlinden



Tad started his career as a private acquisitions specialist in East Anglia, sourcing homes for a number of well known Londoners looking for a bucolic bolthole. He read about the formation of the first association for relocation agents (as the term was then) and joined the ARA as a founder member. Having been headhunted to a relocation company in Edinburgh, Tad was approached by the fledgling organisation to head up a formal administration, and the ARA was born. In the past twenty five years, Tad

has taken the model for representation and regulation into Europe as CEO of the European Relocation Association (EuRA) and in so doing has worked on a two-fold approach for getting EU recognition of relocation as a designated profession. Through individual training programmes and the world's first company-wide certification audit system, the ARP and EuRA are at the heart of the future direction of our industry and Tad - after 25 years - is still as passionate as ever about its place in the corporate world. His quote below sums up his feelings:-

"Relocation isn't just a product that can be bought. It is a professional service that involves psychology, excellent language and communication skills, cultural sensitivity, the art of being a nurse, social worker, property expert, 'Norland nanny', life coach and friend. Dealing with families and individuals in what is a huge life change for them, is an extremely sensitive place to be and this is why the relocation professionals' job is so vital. The corporate world has recognised the moral duty it has when moving people around the globe and our members have risen to that challenge and represent the very best in relocation services. It's my privilege to continue to work in this industry."

John Carolan

My conversations covered a long period of time beginning when John Carolan reminded me that he came into the industry not long after a home search company was set up in New York to help employees of the cosmetic company Avon, who then moved some of their staff into Brussels and London where Metropolitan Relocation Associates based themselves. This was back in the early 1970's and John set up home search when they had a total of 8 consultants, having advertised for them in the Estates Gazette (a popular property rag). Their client base grew and the subsequent result was the beginning of PHH Car Leasing and Relocation Services. The demands came from American companies who expected the same services as they had in the US. John described these markets as 'horizontal' – and mentioned Oil companies and Banks in particular who were driving global business into the UK at that time. He was a forerunner to a lot of things that happened subsequently in the relocation market place.



It is interesting to note that Ian Payne was also involved with PHH some time later. Incidentally, I, myself, worked for John in 1978 and 1979 and then retreated to become a mother! John's legacy is that he moved from PHH to Black Horse Relocation as Operations Director. BHRS was an off-shoot of Lloyds Bank who also had Black Horse Agencies (Estate Agents) under their control when Black Horse Relocation came into being in the mid 1980's. Together with Stuart Mitchell, who had set up a home finding business in Milton Keynes in the early 1980's, their reputation enhanced the UK market-place greatly and they were market leaders alongside PHH/Cendant. John mentioned that Black Horse Relocation was consciously UK-centric over this period of time but he had the vision to create a series of teams within the business that included communications who handled a lot of project management work and he then subsequently added a division that handled group moves throughout the UK at a time when the Government were moving out of the South East to elsewhere in the UK. There was also an expansion into the international market-place during the mid 1990's which again placed Black Horse Relocation in a strong position within the UK. As part of relocation history in the UK, BHRS was sold to Bradford & Bingley in 1998 and then they sold it to what was then Cendant in 2001.

Ian Payne

When I talked to Ian, he told me that he came into the industry in 1986 when he also worked for PHH, which became Cendant and subsequently Cartus. His legacy from that time is very different to John's. He was an international thinker and as a result of his influence, Cendant became a major player world-wide with offices in strategic parts of the globe. Ian also controlled not just property-related work in the industry internationally, but intercultural and language training (this part of the organisation was probably the first of its kind within the industry) as he had already been on assignments in Turkey, the US, Greece and Croatia. His global reach was substantial and with the US influencing the movement of people globally, made his mark in terms of the way the industry became an important ingredient for corporate growth over a long period of time. The UK, where he was based, was a major influence in view of the fact that the same corporate growth was happening in the UK and in parts of the European Union. There is little doubt that Cartus held the competitive edge worldwide for a long while. The supply chain element of what they delivered remains in place today and he described the present situation as a combination of people and technology together – in order to deliver the industry's services.

So both these people had influence, of that there is no doubt – and they came together in 1993 when the Finance Act in the UK (relating to the taxation of expenses) came into effect and when it was felt that the taxation of relocation expenses, in particular, was not being looked at by the UK Government in the right way. John and Ian worked tirelessly to lobby the right people to take this problem forward to Cabinet level. They both brought a community of spirit to this particular concern and Ian described them both as 'doers.' The ultimate outcome for companies was a comparatively small amount of money that could be claimed as non-taxable - £8,000 – against the reality of the cost of a move *then* which amounted to some £25,000. As a result, volumes collapsed and the major players had to make people redundant at a time of recession in the UK. John also mentioned to me that the lobbying had been exhausting and costly for both he and Ian!

To bring you right up to date, Ian is Managing Director and a Senior Vice President of Cartus EMEA and is still based here in the UK. John Carolan is Managing Director of Connell's Asset Management Group. He remains Chairman of Connells Relocation Services where some of his old team at Black Horse Relocation still help to run this UK business.

Both John and Ian have made amazing contributions to relocation over a long period of time and we should take this 25th Anniversary of the UK Association to salute their business acumen and loyalty to the industry.

Helmut Berg



I was privileged to meet with Helmut at this year's EuRA Conference in Palma when he was just about to retire as President of EuRA. He has held this position for 3 years during which time he has been a very positive leader within the industry in Europe.

His own history started off in 1987 when he was General Manager of PHH in Germany but as PHH divested from the US market some 3 years



later, Helmut decided to set up his own business in Germany – RSB Deutschland. During the subsequent 20 years, he has retained good working relationships with what was Cendant (now Cartus) and has remained one of the prime organisations delivering services within his country of origin (in fact Germany and Austria). He felt that RSB had been a powerful influence because of its organisation capabilities. It retains its staff for lengthy periods because of good management and is a solution-orientated business, as he put it.

I asked him what he felt his contribution has been over this period of time – i.e. some 21 years – and he said that he has acquired a good reputation as someone who sees both sides of the argument and remains loyal to his team. A modest account, I thought.

He went on to say that he felt the small, destination services businesses in Europe had become very proud of their work and that he, as President of EuRA had been of some help in this area. There are, he made clear, no politics on the Council of EuRA and that it exists for the benefit of its members.

His feeling about Europe generally is that all of the member countries can work together successfully and their target should be to continue their independent handling of destination services (within the rules of course). During his three years as President of EuRA, he has led the committee very successfully, making the point that this has only worked as a result of Tad, Dominic and the team in the UK running the office. He mentioned the world-wide problem with the banking community and how this had affected the industry in terms of business. We also discussed quality issues and training – he was highly approving of the creation of standards that apply to all countries – the Quality Seal. There is an intention to create a Standards Committee which he will continue to be involved with later this year.

He's also got a potential project that he'd like to see implemented – which is the creation of a Charter – working together – no opponents but partners with rules and ethics between members using Quality and Self Confidence to be able to sell services effectively and at a price that applies because of the Charter. Then he said he was slowing down – this I can't believe. He has been and will, I feel sure, continue to be a tower of strength in Europe generally.

Ase Lofgren-Gunsten

Ase and I met at the EuRA Conference and while she and I have known each other for a



reasonable length of time, I had no idea about her history and I was curious about her own background. She had been an expat herself and in fact told me that her parents had not lived in their home country (Sweden) for a number of years and had in fact met in the Philippines where they had 4 children. She was 17 when they returned to Sweden. Educationally, she is a qualified nurse which gave her a people-focused career and then did a degree in HR when her thesis, funnily enough, was related to Repatriation – appropriate enough as she had been through this herself.

We both agreed that this part of our industry lacked a lot of understanding and that HR needed to train their teams when it came to the whole repatriation process.

She joined SAS Relocation Services in Stockholm as a consultant where she delivered Home Search and Settling-in Services for them. Ase mentioned that the business model was then simply a balance of expatriation and repatriation between Sweden and other countries.

Then in 1994 she decided to start her own business with an interesting ingredient – all the staff were or had been expats. She maintained that academics met expatriate requirements whereas any type of property-related experience came low on her list of priorities – she needed people-oriented, solution providers and has been extremely successful in guiding and steering her business to become one of the three largest in Sweden.

Ase's vision is one of creating partnerships, networking, exchanging information and being aware of the 29 countries in Europe – and the different cultures that make up our European world of relocation. She is very conscious of the need for intercultural exchanges which is probably one of the reasons that she decided to set up Absolute Nordic Relocation which is a group of individual businesses who co-operate to deliver services in Scandinavia generally. She mentioned that while all four countries have different laws and cultures, they can come together with a common purpose and co-operate exceptionally well by their overall marketing



strategy. I was very impressed with how this had been a very successful venture. We went on to discuss our industry relationships with HR – as she was qualified to talk about this – she feels that more research is needed to find out how much HR need to learn about the methods we are using to move people – she also felt that we should hold a conference just for HR people – there might be a case for a school of training – for HR in respect of relocation – and that there was still - as she put it - ‘food for thought.’

She told me she was honoured to have been appointed President of EuRA – she is a team player and looks forward to a future where who knows what will happen but where we need the best business practice for our clients and employees. We both agreed that the whole industry tends to run cyclically and that both partnerships and issues may change over time. An interesting conversation and we should wish Åse well in her term as President of EuRA.

Alison Van Dalen



Alison has been in the Relocation industry for 14 years. She is currently Chairman of the ARP and while I knew her reasonably well, I hadn't had a chance to chat informally about her own history so it was a pleasure to meet her at the EuRA Conference in April. She surprised me when she talked about her background. She was trained as Home Economics Teacher and was married to someone in the oil industry whose posting to Dubai was considered then as a ‘hardship posting’ so she has had experience of being a ‘trailing spouse!’ Setting aside her teaching career, she went to work for Citibank in Dubai in Personnel and then moved on to Bahrain and Abu Dhabi – quite unusual at that time in the mid 1970's.

She returned to the UK in 1985 when she became involved with Karen Deane Relocation as a home search consultant. She then managed the Home Search team there until 2000 under the Karen Deane banner until they were acquired by Prudential (and a subsequent name change to Pricoa 3 years later). She was then operations director and is now running their VIP Home Search division in the UK and part of the same network in EMEA and APAC countries.

One thing she said that I thought was a lovely tribute was that David Deane had been an influence on her early days in the industry here in the UK and that she was determined to follow in his footsteps.

She has spent 4 years on the Council of the ARP and felt that having associate members was a very good thing. She commented on the fact that the Association has been running for 25 years and how important the UK element of the European industry is for its members.

I asked her what she thought her contribution to the industry had been over her period of time within it and she felt that the VIP service she has been instrumental in running still remains very important and that Pricoa is representative world-wide, of a quality organisation delivering excellent services.

She reckoned that the future of the industry meant patterns are likely to change – that everything is cyclical.

She has some future plans for the business and for the ARP which I am sure she will achieve in due course.

A very relaxed conversation with someone who has seen a considerable amount of change in her 14 year relocation history – a far cry from her Home Economics background. I came away feeling more relaxed too!

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