

Farewell to a true gentlemen



SECRETARY-GENERAL OF BITA **JAMES CLARK** PAYS TRIBUTE TO CHAS DAY, RETIRING TECHNICAL MANAGER OF CONSOLIDATED FORK TRUCK SERVICES (CFTS), AND ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN FIGURES IN THE INDUSTRY.

“To establish the CFTS and see it grow into not just a network of colleagues, but of friends, has been an absolute pleasure”



By the time you read this Chas Day will be close to stepping down as the technical manager of CFTS – and

what a legacy he leaves to our industry. In this column I'd like to pay tribute to him and take a look back at his career and his achievements.

Chas began his engineering career in the mid-1960s with Sir George Godfrey and Partners, where he served a five-year apprenticeship. Based near Heathrow, the company specialised in aircraft engineering and it was in this area that Chas developed his skills. As was often the system in those days, at the end of his apprenticeship he left to work for Aston Martin. Here he was a development engineer working closely with Stirling Moss and driving the car in which this legendary driver won Le Mans.

After this it was back to the world of aerospace, spending 25 years working for BOAC, which became British Airways. Working on the fleet for five years, he then moved on to become a licensed aircraft engineer, where he worked on many iconic aircraft of the time such as the DC10, TriStar, VC10, the 747 'jumbo jet', and most famous of all, Concorde, on which he worked and flew many times.

He developed and designed the first automated cargo handling system for Heathrow and ended his career at British Airways as the chief engineer with responsibility for all of BA's ground support equipment worldwide. In 1990 Chas joined Commercial Union insurance where he was a senior manager with a team of 30 engineers and surveyors inspecting everything from tractors to cranes. This was followed by two years with the Ministry of Defence working on the Tornado aircraft programme.

Chas joined BITA as technical manager towards the end of 1999 and soon made his mark. He, along with BITA members, produced the GN28 Guidance Note around forklift inspection which led to the CFTS Quality Assurance procedural code. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) then asked BITA to take this forward.

THOROUGH EXAMINATION

As a result, in 2004 he amongst others was instrumental in founding CFTS, a joint initiative between BITA and the Fork Lift Truck Association (FLTA) which developed what became the Thorough Examination system, the 'MoT' for fork lift trucks. Prior to this the inspection regime for fork lift trucks varied hugely, with rival garages deciding for themselves what to check and consequently how much to charge. PUWER and LOLER regulations legally required all lift trucks to have a valid Certificate of Thorough Examination, but there was no consistency and no common standards.

Thanks to Chas' role in bringing together the two key industry bodies to create the CFTS and working closely with the HSE, common standards were agreed and implemented. The CFTS now has over 400 member companies. As he commented to me: "To establish the CFTS and see it grow into not just a network of colleagues, but of friends, has been an absolute pleasure and I am proud to pass on a robust organisation in good health." The organisation and the standards it has developed stand as his greatest achievement and legacy during his time with BITA.

WELL-DESERVED RETIREMENT

So what a career! But what does retirement hold? Chas has always been a great sportsman; indeed he passed up the possibility of playing professional football with Queens Park Rangers in favour of engineering, as it was the era of the maximum wage for footballers – a far cry from the multi-million-pound deals of today. Consequently you won't be surprised to hear sport will continue to play a big role in his life.

At the age of 70 he still loves golf, cycling and plays as well as coaches tennis in the Camberley area where he lives. Take all these active interests, and mix in more time with friends and some travel plans and retirement looks a pretty busy proposition!

Anyone who has met Chas will agree he is one of the industry's gentlemen, and wish him all the very best for the future. He will be sorely missed. ■

www.bita.org.uk

CHAS DAY – A REMARKABLE CAREER

- BEGAN AS AN APPRENTICE WITH SIR GEORGE GODFREY AND PARTNERS
- DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER WITH ASTON MARTIN, WORKING CLOSELY WITH STIRLING MOSS
- 25 YEARS WITH BOAC/ BRITISH AIRWAYS, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRST THE FIRST AUTOMATED CARGO HANDLING SYSTEM AT HEATHROW
- COMMERCIAL UNION INSURANCE HEADING A TEAM OF 30 ENGINEERS AND SURVEYORS, AND THE MOD WORKING ON THE TORNADO AIRCRAFT PROGRAMME
- JOINS BITA IN 1999 WHERE HE PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN FORMING THE CFTS, CREATING AGREED STANDARDS FOR THOROUGH EXAMINATION AND BUILDING THE CFTS INTO AN ORGANISATION OF OVER 400 MEMBER COMPANIES