

A hard act to follow



THIS MONTH DAVID ROWELL STANDS DOWN AS BITA PRESIDENT, WITH THE HALLMARKS OF HIS TERM IN OFFICE BEING DEDICATION, LOYALTY AND HARD WORK. **JAMES CLARK**, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF BITA, LOOKS AT DAVID'S WORK AND HIS LEGACY.

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This month I have the sad duty of bidding a fond farewell to our president, David Rowell, who stands down having been the only president in our history to serve two consecutive terms, giving him four years in post.

When we first approached David to become president we assured him it would only take up a maximum of two days each month, given his senior role with Hyster-Yale. But such is David's commitment and work ethic this soon expanded!

I know David is very grateful to Hyster-Yale for its support and understanding during his time as president – and David would also be the first to also pay tribute to employers generally whose understanding allows others to play their part in BITA.

KEY ROLE

During his four years in office David has played a key role in so many aspects of BITA's work. He has been central in our relationship with the Fédération Européenne de la Manutention (FEM), the European manufacturers' association of materials handling, lifting and storage equipment. He was very involved when the FEM held its conference in York in 2014 and has ensured that BITA takes its full role at Europe's top table, himself sitting on

their management council for forklifts.

David has also been closely involved with our technical consultant Bob Hine, again ensuring that BITA was at the forefront of technical developments and well placed to influence policy in the UK and Europe, and, of course, advise BITA members of the implications for their businesses.

However, perhaps the bulk of the work he has undertaken – and what will be viewed as the major legacy of his time in office – has been the BITA Academy, the first time there has been a joint body for apprenticeships across the industry.

Working closely with our colleagues in the FLTA and alongside programme training manager Karl Baum, David has been instrumental in ensuring that the BITA Academy sets a new standard for apprenticeships in fork lift truck engineering.

For students, it provides the high-quality training in essential maintenance and repair techniques as well as the skills needed to pursue a career all the way to management level; for forklift manufacturers and service firms, it ensures a steady supply of new engineers to keep the industry running smoothly in the years ahead.

Latterly, statistics have been top of his agenda, working with UK and colleagues on mainland Europe to tighten up procedures and ensure rigour in their compilation, making sure they provide the information needed to plan for the future.

He has also worked tirelessly in the past few months on IMHX 2016, which BITA jointly owns with Informa. IMHX is widely regarded as the materials handling and intralogistics showcase – and the 2016 event, taking place from 13th-16th September at Birmingham's NEC, looks set to be the biggest ever.

But it hasn't all been about the industry as a whole. David has also been a great colleague, and to me personally has been extremely supportive and loyal. Many of you will know David as a proud Scot and a larger-than-life character and will understand when I say he will be greatly missed in many ways. However, something I won't miss is his uncanny knack of phoning me at lunchtime when I have just taken a bite of a sandwich!

But, seriously, although he is stepping down from his formal role, David will remain an active and engaged member of BITA and will be a hard act to follow as president. But we are sure we have a worthy successor lined up, who will be announced shortly.

Also stepping down, and leaving BITA after 27 years' service, is Julie Herbert. As a vital member of the administrative team she began work at BITA's office in Ascot before we moved to our current office and has served under two secretary generals and 14 presidents. Her loyalty, hard work and sense of humour will be missed and we wish her a long and happy retirement. ■



DAVID ROWELL IS THE ONLY BITA PRESIDENT TO SERVE TWO CONSECUTIVE TERMS

HIS WORK ON ESTABLISHING THE BITA ACADEMY MEANS FOR THE FIRST TIME THE INDUSTRY HAS A JOINT BODY FOR APPRENTICESHIPS ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

HE HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN DEVELOPING BITA'S ROLE WITH THE FEM ENSURING ITS INFLUENCE IN EUROPE

HE HAS ASSURED BITA IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND WELL PLACED TO ADVISE MEMBERS