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President
Gerry Fleming IEng CEnv FSOE FIRTE

Executive Director
Ian Chisholm BA IEng FSOE FIRTE FCILT
MCMi MIMi

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Registered Office
22 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1PR
Tel: 020 7630 1111
Fax: 020 7630 6677
Email: soe@soe.org.uk
www.soe.org.uk

Editor
Brian Tingham BSc CEng MInstMC FSOE
FIPlantE FIRTE
Email: btinham@findlay.co.uk

Contributing Editors
Brian Weatherley,
John Challen, Ian Norwell, Laura Cork,
Steve Banner, Toby Clark

Art Editors
Martin Cherry, Neil Young

Production Manager
Nicki McKenna
Email: nmckenna@findlay.co.uk

Advertisement Manager
Craig Molloy
Email: cmolloy@findlay.co.uk
Tel: 01322 221144

Publisher
Peter Knutton

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The CV Show 2015: driving industry growth

With spring finally upon us, and the green shoots of Britain's recovery plain for most to see, the NEC, Birmingham, is ready to open for the Commercial Vehicle Show (14-16 April), the UK's greatest road transport event of the year.

According to the CV Show management team at IRTE Services, this is the biggest event since 2008, with exhibitor space sold out and visitor numbers expected to exceed 18,000. They will be drawn by big names including Citroen, DAF Trucks, Fiat, Ford, Fuso Canter, Isuzu Truck, Iveco, Mercedes-Benz, Renault and Vauxhall - and the largest contingent of trailer and tanker manufacturers ever.

The show comes at an interesting time. On the one hand, latest vehicle registration figures from the SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders) reveal a picture of growth, with even the hard hit heavy-duty sector showing signs of operators back buying. On the other, driver shortages are reaching crisis point, leaving the industry worrying just who is going to man its new trucks?

Yes, fuel prices remain low, helped by the chancellor's widely anticipated ongoing freeze on fuel duty - although not the industry's preferred 3p cut. But keeping costs down doesn't cut the mustard if vehicles are left standing idle. That said, few believe it will happen. George Osborne's hint in last month's budget that the government intends to work with road haulage firms on an "industry-led solution" holds out more than a glimmer of hope for funding support.

For transport industry leaders, though, the net result is nothing changes. It's still all about increasing business efficiency and profitability, but also compliance - particularly with CLOCS now going nationwide - in a bid to reset the bar on competitiveness.

The CV Show is your first big opportunity to find out how. The IRTE Conference (17 September) is the second. See you there.

Brian Tingham BSc CEng MInstMC FSOE FIPlantE FIRTE
Editor