

Goodbye – and ‘thank you’

The NTDA bade farewell to one of its executive officers and thanked another for his service as Chairman on 15th May at a special lunch held at Waterman's Hall, London, following the Council meeting and AGM.

The two were immediate Past Chairman Stephen Callow, who has agreed to serve as an Executive Officer for the next three years to support the implementation and delivery of the new NTDA Corporate Plan and retiring Honorary Treasurer Peter Gaster. The following articles give more details of Peter's time in office and Stephen's thoughts as the outgoing Chairman.

Current NTDA Chairman Roger Griggs thanked them both for their loyal service to the Association and he presented Stephen with gift vouchers and Peter with a Garmin GPS golf watch, so next time he finds himself in a bunker, he will know exactly where he is!

Peter Gaster retires as Treasurer

In May this year, Peter Gaster stepped down from his position as Honorary Treasurer of the NTDA, a position he held since 2010. In fact, this was Peter's second stint as Treasurer, having previously held the post from 1994 to 2002.



Peter has always been an active and enthusiastic member of the NTDA and has held numerous positions within the Association, including Chairman and Executive Council Representative for the South East Region, NTDA President (1993), Chairman of the Tyre Wholesalers Group (2006), NTDA Chairman (2007 – 2010)

and as a Tyre Industry Federation Board member, including the Chairmanship for three years from 2008 to 2010. All in all, not a bad track record for someone who got into the tyre business by learning to fit tyres when working as a petrol pump attendant in Barnes!

In his 40+ years in the tyre industry, firstly with Greenham Tyre and the formation of King's Road Tyre in 1972, Peter has witnessed many changes; some good, some not so good. One positive change is the attitude of tyre manufacturers towards wholesalers over the years. In the early days, manufacturers dominated the market through their equity chains ("While at Greenham's, I can remember the Dunlop Area Manager arriving in a chauffeur-driven car to pick up the monthly order" Peter recalls) but this began to change with the growth of the European market, with a new

breed of wholesaler seeking out new and competitive suppliers overseas.

And this was not restricted to Western Europe; KRT had exclusive agreements to distribute certain Polish-made tyres in the UK and beyond and Peter made his first business trip to China in 1985, importing tyres from that country in the 90s. Wholesalers were by now an established and vital part of the supply chain and Kings Road Tyres was no exception, becoming a major force in the sector. In 2013, a management buy-out was finalised and Peter retired as owner and CEO of the group. In his final year, KRT turned over £60 million and achieved an EBITDA figure of £1.4 million.

Looking ahead, Peter sees challenging times for tyre wholesalers as distribution costs are increasing and margins are not keeping pace. The rise of the Chinese manufacturers, who have captured a substantial share of world markets and the creation of companies offering on-line tyre sales will also continue to have a significant influence on the UK tyre industry.

So, as he bows out, what are Peter's final thoughts on the industry in which he has spent his working life? He says that the tyre industry has always been cut-throat and competitive and he doubts that this will ever change. He went on: **"Having said that, the industry has given many people business opportunities with good rewards, myself included. It is a truly exciting industry that has taken me around the world, meeting so many different people and wonderful characters and who knows - I might have been one of them!"**

Have you nominated for the Tyre Industry Awards yet?

Nominations are still being received for the Tyre Industry Awards 2014. Don't miss out!
Nominate your business contacts now. **The closing date for nominations is 30th June 2014.**

Categories:

- Tyre Manufacturer of the Year • Tyre Wholesaler of the Year • Tyre and Aftermarket Equipment Supplier of the Year
- Industry Marketing Campaign of the Year • Staff Training and Development Initiative of the Year • Tyre Retail Centre of the Year:

The top five nominees in each category will be announced in July, when the online voting process will start.
The Awards will be presented at the 85th NTDA Annual Dinner on 8th October 2014 at the Hilton Manchester Deansgate.



Thoughts of the Immediate Past Chairman

Stephen Callow has come to the end of his stint as Chairman of the NTDA and we asked him for his comments about his time in office and his thoughts on the past and future of the NTDA at what was a memorable time in the Association's history. Here are Stephen's reflections.

"I was most surprised and flattered to be asked in late 2011 to become the chairman of the NTDA. Being the youngest chairman in the Association's history, my steps were cautious; a lot of damage can be done very quickly, so I had no intention of overseeing major changes.

I was of course guided by the steady pairs of hands of Richard Edy and Peter Gaster; both of whom I thank greatly and wish all the best for the future. I had no idea at that stage, that I, with the other Executive Officers, would be responsible for the biggest change in 25 years with the appointment of a new Director!



My main priority when my term in office began was to improve two key areas; the first of these being tyre safety and its related issues. The condition of many tyres on the road today are horrific – contributory factors include tread depths below the legal minimum, tyre age and of course the diabolical illegal and substandard repairs. Many

of these tyres are sold as part worn tyres, the vast majority of which do not comply with current legal requirements, as our investigations alongside Trading Standards have shown.

The second key area was that I felt the NTDA needed to be dragged into the modern world with its "e" platforms, in particular the introduction of a Mobile App! For both these key areas the synergy that has occurred has been outstanding.

In fairness to Roger Griggs (my successor as Chairman), he has grasped the part worn issue firmly by the horns and achieved great advances in tyre safety. However, the woeful public

awareness of tread limits and tyre age are still issues that need continuing campaigning.

The synergy with the "e" platforms, has come with the appointment of Stefan Hay, our new Director. Although the first Mobile App was produced before his appointment, its launch has been overtaken by a massive overhaul of our website. The two are now to work hand in hand with live updates and iPhone and Android versions will be available. The improvements are multi-dimensional and are impressive and I strongly suggest members use them, alongside other new platforms Stefan has implemented such as our new NTDA group on LinkedIn and our NTDA Twitter feed @TyresNTDA.

We also have a reliable pair of hands on the purse strings in the form of Donald Carmichael - having a skilled Scottish accountant on your team is always a prudent move!

I am delighted with the advancements over the last 12 months and recognition and credit needs to go out to the Executive Officers. I feel we have worked very well with a meeting of minds and will continue to do so for the forthcoming three years.

For those of you who have booked your ticket for the annual dinner in Manchester, you are in for a treat with the new format, where we will preserve the heritage of the Association, but lose some of the traditions in favour of a more dynamic evening. A personal 'thank you' goes to all the generous sponsors for their support in helping us raise the game and our standards.

The fact remains, our industry is a vital part of the nation's success. We do have common ground to work on, raising standards and overcoming problems.

My concluding point is that we must increase the lobbying of the issue of tyre ageing further! We need to stress the importance of this and other, safety-related tyre issues at every opportunity in order to increase public awareness, plus we need to have guidelines, publicity and advisors at MOT level for all vehicles, so that consumers are aware of the part that tyres play in their driving safety and can make informed decisions."

NTDA North West and North Wales Region supports BEN



On the 16th April 2014, representatives of the NTDA's North West and North Wales Region visited Alexandra House in Stockport to present a cheque for £1,500. This money was raised by donations from NTDA members across the region. Alexandra House opened its doors in 1983 and since then has enjoyed a reputation for warmth and friendliness, combined with providing the highest standards of professional care.

The cheque was presented to Matron Jan Habech (centre) by Regional Chair Bridget Urch and Regional Secretary Brian Funnell. NTDA Director Stefan Hay said: "This generous donation by the North West Region further reinforces the NTDA's unwavering support for the Automotive industry's charity BEN. I am delighted by what our members in the North West achieved and even more delighted that this money will assist BEN with its good works."