

didn't even have that much information.

Now, such information, and more, is available at the click of a mouse by freight staff who can be connected round the clock to the industry via mobiles, PDAs, wifi terminals and RFID. Which means that time-critical handling staff are never out of reach.

This is where we are; but where are we going?

I suggest that a continued focus on supply chain security will be priority number one.

Trade patterns are most likely to continue to evolve as they have done over the last 40 years in response to the ongoing emergence of strong new production centres and markets in both Asia and South America.

There will be ongoing efforts to reduce barriers to trade. Technology will continue to evolve. All of these things will keep BIFA members on their toes, requiring significant investment and exercising their skills as they go about their daily business, oiling the wheels of international trade.

But the focus will be on security. The global supply chain that satisfies the world's demand for goods and cargo will continue to be a target for terrorists. The ability to deliver freight to destinations worldwide in a very efficient manner is our industry's biggest challenge in regards to security.

In the 1970s, while we were mainly concerned to stop theft and hijacking of individual loads, aircraft hijacking was beginning to rear its ugly head.

Now, as this 40th anniversary edition is being produced, the range of threats has risen hundred-fold.

Despite all the challenges, the actions taken today will, I believe, address these concerns and freight forwarders will continue to maintain their pivotal role in managing the movement of international trade in a safe, timely and cost-effective manner.

*Peter Quantrell is Chairman of the British International Freight Association*

The global supply chain that satisfies the world's demand for goods and cargo will continue to be a target for terrorists

## BIFA's Number-one is celebrating too

January is often the low point of the year – Christmas festivities over, we may feel that we have nothing to look forward to except cuts, industrial action and even colder weather.

So it's a good time to concentrate on the positive, and to remember that if growth is indeed going to be exported, that can only be a good thing for freight forwarders. Most freight forwarders are small businesses, and one of these which has good reason to celebrate this year is RW Freight Services.

Started by Ron Willis in January 1971, the company's development is a microcosm of how business practice has changed over the 40 years of its life.

From the frantic noise of telex machines typing out the manifests on a Friday night, to the automatic transfer of data to our agents over the Internet.

From working late to working smart. From constant telephone calls of a more or less excitable tempo, to the quiet immediacy of email.

From telesales to web enquiries – the office has become a much quieter place.



The marketing strategy has had to change, too – conceived as an almost entirely Scandinavian/Nordic niche operator, our scope has had to broaden to include other parts of the world, acting as a general forwarder.

Our aim is to do what the customer wants, not to do what we want for the customer. And we do try to have a broad spread of different types of client, not to rely heavily on a few key accounts.

So far, it's working – and we are delighted that the company which Ron started 40 years ago is still owned and run by his two sons, Peter and Stephen.

Continuity of ownership and change in methods; that just about sums it up for RW Freight Services, Registered Member No 1 of BIFA.