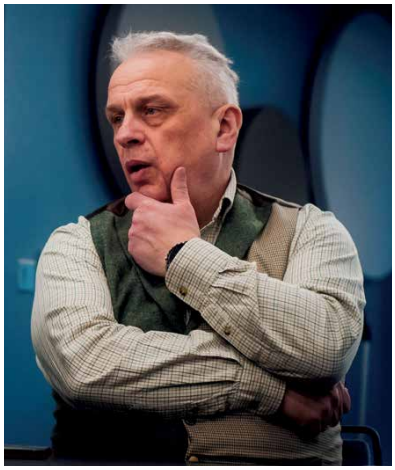
LETTERS FROM THE PIT



John is Lift Industry News' very own agony uncle and is here to support you when your vertical transportation relationship is going through a bad patch.
WISH TO ASK JOHN A QUESTION »
www.liftindustrynews.com/dearjohn or scan the QR code.

"WHY IS 25 SECONDS A REASONABLE WAIT TIME?"

Sheila, a consultant, working for a major Mechanical & Electrical company in London, challenges perceived wisdom.

DEAR JOHN

Why is a 25 second waiting time deemed a reasonable target time to wait for a lift to arrive in my company's HQ when I now work from home three days a week and rarely arrive at my office before 9.30 am?

JOHN SAYS

Firstly, for our Northern readers, let me explain that London is a large city in the South of England which you will hear a lot about from lift industry 'professionals'.

It's an excellent question Sheila, and one I have pondered for some time. Anecdotally I believe the 25s rule may go back to Dr Barney's original research resulting in the famed RTT (round trip time) formula, which many of us know so well. However, I concede I am probably wrong in my assumptions. My understanding is that the waiting time might have been linked to the loss of productive time (£'s per minute) of officers waiting for lifts in HM government buildings. The design rule attempted to reduce such wanton wastage in the latter part of the 20th century. Skip through to 2022 when many of us waste time queuing for over-priced dishwater in tax dodging coffee outlets or stood in airport queues, or simply watching a whirling circle on a computer screen, we all wait for something many times a day. Is a 25s waiting time for a lift realistic in today's world?

The point I am attempting to make is that the 25s at Morning Uppeak rule results in more lifts in buildings. A revised waiting time of 40s throughout the whole working day of a building (which may now be 8.00am to 8.00pm) should result in fewer lifts. The reduced core size could allow for larger lobbies and reduce crowding (should it ever occur for events etc.). Could BCO/CIBSE revise their recommendations? Fewer lifts assist not only in reducing overall power usage for the finished lift system but also contribute to reducing the whole production process and delivery's carbon footprint, up to and including future disposals and replacement.

Given the fundamental global changes in work patterns, building design, staffing levels and an emerging working from home culture, should we not open up the debate and modernise our approach to what amounts to a genuine first world problem? I propose 40s any time of the day is long enough and short enough to keep everyone happy. It may also increase short rise stair usage which in turn makes for a healthier lifestyle; the benefits are endless!