

# Forget the techno babble...

## Eric Barton meets up with Roger White, Managing Director of Severnside Software (SSL)



Since the dawn of code breaking at Bletchley Park during WW2 and the 'colossus' computer that was designed by the brilliant mathematician Alan Turing, it seems that computers have taken over the world. We don't need alien invasions anymore to make us feel threatened. Just think back to the last time your system or emails crashed and you couldn't do any work.

The screens go dull, the hard drive stops whizzing and we all scratch our heads. It's extinction as we know it.

Roger White and the team at SSL are in a class of their own, providing the IT programming and support we all need.

SSL has come a long way since 1989 when Roger White was a programmer working out of his kitchen in Dursley. Roger White says, 'at one point I had over 200 computers in boxes stacked up to the ceiling. It was mayhem, but good mayhem. I had to get some staff and they also ended up working out of my cottage'. One of Roger's first customers was the famous Moody Yacht company down in Howard's Way country (and incidentally a customer he kept for over twenty years). These days it's very easy to slip into the techno babble that some folks use when it comes to computers. Roger White further comments, 'I hate over-complicated technical jargon. It's all very well in its place, but our customers need to understand what's actually going on with their systems in plain simple language'.

The eleven staff at SSL provides a host of programming and support

services that enable the customer to get on with some real work. Roger simply says, 'we provide a one-stop service that's uncomplicated, represents real value for money and is I believe the best IT package around'. In this World nobody wants a financial headache that's prone to offloading the odd unplanned migraine. The 'technical aspirin' to this is the fixed price support that SSL offer. Great for spreading the cost of your IT needs. Roger goes on to comment, 'the fixed price option is at the very heart of what we do here. It enables customers to function properly and worry free, knowing that we're just a phone call away'. A good example of this are Bruton Knowles who have seven offices with over 150 computer users who are all being supported by SSL. Community involvement is also high on the agenda when it comes to Roger Whites business ethos. SSL has been actively supporting Gloucester Rugby and The Pied Piper Appeal. Roger further explains, 'in the future we will continue to provide recession-busting IT solutions and packages for our customers. The local economy is in very good shape. Our future is very rosy and we are expanding'. Roger White finally says, 'I'm convinced keyboards will disappear completely and voice recognition will take over. The possibilities are endless and at SSL we aim to be at the forefront of any change and developments, supporting our customers with the best value service we can'.

## Mark Tyler, Programming Manager

Being the key that unlocks the door to problems is paramount in software development. Ask any programmer worth his 'chip' and he'll tell you the same. It's about seeing light out of dark. It's the endgame and the functionality that's paramount. I.e. does it work and do the job that you want it to do?

Mark Tyler, joined SSL seven years ago and hasn't looked back. He says, 'I wanted to get into development. I love the actual creation of software'. I guess it's like being fit for purpose to the uninitiated amongst us. Mark Tyler further comments, 'I like developing solutions that are fast and really address the task. It's all about problem solving'. Mark goes on to say, 'it's a

very relaxed atmosphere here and the office has a very happy vibe to it'. As I look around it was like being immersed in a technical monastery; the quiet contemplative hum of minds and machines working in perfect harmony. Mark continues, 'I really get a buzz from working here and going to work first thing on Monday morning isn't a chore'. Outside work Mark Tyler is a real family man with one daughter and a home life that seems to take up most of his spare time. He further says, 'the new technology that's abounding every month does stretch you, but keeping ahead of the game is what we do here'. Wonder if he gets onto the computer at home? Bet he does.



## Kevin Tombs, Technical Director

It's not often you meet someone who gets so much job satisfaction that they stay with the same company straight from college. When Kevin Tombs joined SSL as a junior programmer little did he know he'd still be there fourteen years later? I doubt anybody other than doctors, lawyers or the remnants of some RBS staff can claim the same accolade. Kevin Tombs comments, 'it was as if a light came on inside me. The variety of work here is unsurpassed for a company of this size, or even bigger. The interface with clients is always refreshing and the support management we give here is second to none'. Kevin goes on to further say, 'the office environment here is exceptional. We have some very creative and talented people who give 100% to everything they do. It's hectic at times, but I know that all the staff wouldn't have it any other way'. As I've mooted before the technical landscape for IT and computers is ever-changing and it's down to

companies like SSL to keep abreast of this gene pool of change. Kevin goes on to further say, 'keeping up with continual change is what we do here. It's all about delivery to the customer in a non-babble way that keeps our clients happy and satisfied with the service we provide'. He also says, 'the office here has no politics and the atmosphere is conducive to providing great support to our clients'. There is life outside work though and Kevin admits to mountain biking - not a crime of course... unless you're Lance Armstrong. I can almost hear the rattling of the chain on Kevin's bike as the cogs of his mind whirl to unravel the next set of support problems.

So you see it's not all techno babble. It's about dedicated, enthusiastic people who can get to grips with the minutia of computer software and the innards of inanimate objects to deliver a top notch, no nonsense service... and perhaps save the World before they go home for their tea. ☺



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