

We've come a long, long, way together



Richard Townsend

As we turn 50, Sales Office Manager, Richard Townsend (one of our longest-serving members of staff) looks back to a time when both he and the company were just starting out. "Most of you will be aware that I have worked at Sealmaster for a few years now. In fact, in 1987, the article I wrote for the 25th Anniversary newsletter began 'Long, long, ago in a galaxy far away I came to Sealmaster'.

I started here straight from school aged 19, on a 2 year 'gap' before going to college. My plan was to work for a year, save some money and then go travelling for a year. But, during the first year I got engaged and decided that if I wanted to survive to old age, I had better change my travel plans! So instead, I booked a world cruise that lasted 9 weeks and cost £400. Before I left, the boss, Mr Dixon, said there would always be a job for me. When I came back, I decided not to go to college and returned to work in November 1973. The current factory was not yet built and we were in what is now the FireWise warehouse – formerly a stable block of the old brewery which looked like a large shed with a pan tile roof.



Only Sealmaster and SK Bearings were in business at that time. One part of Sealmaster which was very busy each winter was our mail order division. We advertised in magazines like the Radio Times and sent out brochures from which people could order door seal kits. These were cut to enable them to be posted. Some days there were over 100 parcels to be collected by the Post Office. Strange that this type of business went on long before Amazon. We old Fogies may have some useful ideas!

The 'new' factory was completed in 1975 and when I came back after getting married, I found myself in a building that was 90% empty. Things have certainly changed. At the end of the piece I wrote for the 25th anniversary, I reflected on how much the company had expanded since I started in 1972, concluding that 'at this rate I'll still be here to celebrate Sealmaster's Golden Jubilee'. Well, here I am! But, whilst I am sure Sealmaster will still be here in another 25 years, I still intend to take that gap year."

Shape your News

This newsletter is one initiative designed to share information between staff. We would very much welcome your thoughts and suggestions on any improvements for future issues. We'd like to cover significant achievements in or out of work and gain an insight into life outside the company. Whether you are getting married, having a baby, taking part in a charity fund raiser etc. we'd like to hear. Please email your stories or ideas to Melanie (mmb@dig.co.uk).

Competition

We are on the look-out for a catchy and inspiring name for future issues of this Newsletter. It doesn't need to include the company name - just to capture interest and sum up the purpose. We have a prize of £25 worth of Marks & Spencer Vouchers for the winner. Please send suggestions to Melanie (mmb@dig.co.uk) by Friday, 26th July 2013. Thank you!

MMXIII



The Burj Khalifa, Dubai
ISL Intumescent Seals

The Shard, London.
ISL Glazing Seals

Dixon International Group Staff News

Our first 50 years.



Bernard Dixon. Founder.

It took just six years for Sealmaster to establish a national reputation for quality, innovation and design excellence when in 1968 we won a Design Council Award for innovative draught, weather and acoustic seals. We introduced the world's first intumescent fire and smoke seals in 1975.

From two builders working part-time in a former stable and a mail order operation run from Cross Keys House, London - few would have imagined that the Group would evolve from Sealmaster and SK to include ISL, FireWise, CFR and other ventures - winning us an international reputation.

Despite the challenges of global economics, Sealmaster has maintained a reputation for top quality products - which is why we are often asked to solve technical challenges others are unable to tackle. Our ability to innovate was recognised again in 1999 by the British Design Council with no fewer than four Millennium Product Awards and exhibition space at the Dome. FireFace was chosen by the Design Council. The British Council and the Conran Design Group as one of the UK's top 120 products and displayed on a tour of international trade fairs. But that is only part of the story...

Food, fun - and a bungee run!



Sean Travers our tree hugging, 'Hairless Biker'.

Please make a date in your diary for 2 pm on Friday, 19th July and join us for a company BBQ to celebrate our first 50 years. It will be in the 'Hidden Garden' at Pampisford.

We'll have a hog roast (as well as vegetarian options) a bungee run and Sean Travers will be head chef. (We anticipate good weather but have a marquee just in case.) It will also be an opportunity for us to mark the retirement of Paul Moss and Grey Lucas.

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Fond farewells



Grey Lucas



No fewer than 38 years ago, **Grey Lucas** started work in the factory and has always been ready to lend a hand. Grey introduced a simplified form of sign language to communicate with colleagues and we salute him for the tremendous contribution he has made. He enjoys a pint & holidaying. We wish him our very best for his retirement.



Paul Moss

We are equally sorry to say goodbye to **Paul Moss** after 28 years. Paul has been instrumental in winning many key contracts - from propping up the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow to safe-guarding a Norgewian Oil Rig. When he retires, Paul plans to restore his MGB GT, continue his aero modelling - and his sporting interests including badminton, swimming, ice skating & snooker. Like Grey, Paul will be sorely missed.

Warm welcomes



David Holden

David Holden, (M.Sc.) our Research & Development / Business Development Officer, was at Pilkington for 30 years. Based in their R&D Department he managed projects on fire-resistant glazing, the lab, resources and testing for their UK fire team. We have worked with David for the last two years developing seals for Pyroshield 2 and Pyroclear glass. David has got off to a flying start. He enjoys walking, gardening and playing squash and golf. And he's a dab hand at restoring antique clocks.



Ben Britton

Ben Britton, (M.Phil.) joins us as our Sales Development Manager. He is upgrading our databases so we can communicate more effectively with our customers and reach out to new markets at home and abroad. He is also tapping us into social media. Ben speaks several languages including Hindi - ideal for the Indian market and the Middle East where most business is done by Indians. Ben enjoys cricket and travel and adventure biographies.



Derota Wojcik

Derota Wojcik is from Milejow in Poland. She moved to the UK in 2012 and worked for the hotel chain Travelodge before joining her partner Maksym to work with us in the factory. Derota studied tourism and is very keen on travel. She also loves animals and music.



Jack Malcolm-Brown

Also new to the factory is **Jack Malcolm-Brown**. Jack studied Business Studies at Cambridge Regional College and is aiming to learn as much as possible about the business over the next few years. He is learning to drive this summer and is looking forward to trading in his moped for a car.

And on the way...



Paulina & Emma (plus bumps)



We would also like to wish our parents to be, **Paulina** and **Marcin** (who both work for us) and Head of Testing, **Emma** (and her husband **John**), the very best for the birth of their first babies. Emma is already on maternity leave and Paulina will be on leave any time now. We look forward to meeting the new arrivals.



SK Bearings &
Sealmaster Intumescent
Seals

Sealmaster
FireFace

Our golden opportunity to renew the company



Charles Malcolm-Brown

Charles Malcolm-Brown (M.A., FRSA) worked in the factory, SK, R&D, technical sales and export departments in the early '80s before returning to study and building a career as an academic at Essex and Cambridge universities. He returned to DIG in 1995 to strengthen our underlying trading position.

"We all know about the impact of the 'credit crunch' on construction activity here and abroad. This is one reason why I was asked to take on the role of Managing Director from 1st September 2013 - and why I am leading a strategic review. This is a family company and I am third generation so believe me, I take my responsibilities very seriously. I am glad that we have other families in the company. We are not, however, only 'about business' - we are a community and can take pride in our collective social conscience.

As you may know, we have been convening policy Steering Groups to identify problems and solutions. I asked **Chris Minett** and **Melanie Malcolm-Brown** to design and facilitate the review. Their findings will feed into a new business plan to be delivered by a revised management structure. This should mainly be completed by September 2013." In his spare time, Charles runs the Mountain Trust, a registered charity working to improve health, education and human rights in Nepal - supported by Michael Palin and others.

The Strategic Review



Chris Minett

Chris Minett is a retired consultant having spent 12 years advising governments in developing countries, mainly in the health sector. He specialised in organisational development, particularly at a strategic level, and has worked on large programmes in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nigeria. He has also worked in Malawi, Cambodia, Nepal, Botswana, India & Libya. Chris has donated his fees to the Arthur Rank Hospice, Cambridge, in honour of Karen Bell.



Melanie Malcolm-Brown

Melanie Malcolm-Brown first worked for Sealmaster during the '80s whilst studying for her A Levels in the Sales Office (where the factory is now - and when the phones never stopped). Although BD offered her a job, she left to read a degree in English & History.

Following many years in Adult, Older People's and Mental Health Services, and later as Assistant Director of Commissioning for Cambridgeshire she purchased health care for the local population. She was also Chief Executive of a local housing association. Melanie has managed our Public Relations for several years and is playing a pivotal role in the strategic review.