

Prize bond winner

LIMERICK held prize bond number AC459220 was a £1,000 winner at the weekend.

The lucky winner first purchased the bond in 1984.

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Jim O'Brien, manager, Jurys Hotel, Limerick, presents the Jurys Hotel/Limerick Leader Achievement Award to Gary Carroll, managing director, Blackbird data Systems, Plassey Technological Park.



ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

We the undersigned wish to propose the following for
The Jurys Hotel / Limerick Leader Achievement Award

for the Month of _____ 19 _____

Nomination :

Address :

Telephone No. :
(if known)

Reason for Nomination :

Proposed by: Seconded by:

Plassey firm boss receives Jurys award

By PADDY MORONEY

GARY Carroll, managing director of Blackbird Data Systems Ltd, Plassey, is the latest monthly winner of the Jurys Hotel/Limerick Leader Achievement Awards.

The award was presented at the company's premises by Jim O'Brien, general manager of Jurys Hotel, Limerick. The Limerick Leader was also represented.

Mr Carroll, who was also one of the co-founders of the company, received the award for endeavour in founding and building up a company which is making a significant contribution to industry nationally, and which is an example to many other small industries in how to expand and export.

The company employs 26 people, and though in existence for only nine years, already has a base in Manchester with its own staff and serving the British market.

"Your example in endeavour, achieving the highest possible standards in a most difficult market, is a spur to others."

"The market is one of fierce international competition, and to break into that successfully is proof, if that were needed, of the quality and competitiveness of your product, and that those same attributes are the key to success in a international field," said Mr O'Brien.

Mr Carroll, expressing his thanks for selection for an award, said that he would like to thank Shannon Development, which owns the National Technological Park at Plassey as a subsidiary.

to say that they have loads of common-sense," he said.

Blackbird Data Systems Ltd was co-founded in 1986 by Mr Carroll and two other colleagues, Noel Clarke and Paddy Coleman.

"It was started here in Ireland, in Limerick, and we now have a subsidiary in the UK," said Mr Carroll. "There are about, in total in the company, between 35 and 40 — in this location, it is 26."

"We describe our business as the supply of shop floor management systems."

"An example would be warehousing management system where we handle receiving, putting away and dispatching of goods — it enables you to keep track of goods."

One way the system works is to have a radio on a fork-lift truck which tells the operator where to stack the goods.

Mr Carroll, who is originally from outside Kildare town, is an electronics engineer by profession, and graduated from UCD in 1976.

In his first year in industry, he gained valuable experience in working on a development project, researching an anti-skid braking system.

"For four years after that, I worked with a Japanese company, Nippon Electronic (NEC), and I happened to be the first Irish engineer there," he continued.

"I moved to Limerick at that stage, in 1981, and was first employed by MAC, the Micro-electronics Application Centre, which originally was in this building. Then I worked for a couple of years with Analog Devices, and then I met my two colleagues, Noel Clarke and Paddy Coleman, and then the three of us set up this company."

"Since then, it has been growth every year since we started. The UK subsidiary

here, being an extension of the company into the UK market."

Asked why the name Blackbird had been chosen for the company, Mr Carroll replied simply that it was because it had nothing to do with the more common company names with a tech or electronics in them.

The company supplies to large international companies mostly.

It offers a total system including the computer system, specialised equipment, the network, etc.

"All of the software we write ourselves," he said, adding that all of the engineering services which go with the package is a very big part of what the company works at.

"Production tracking, materials tracking, people tracking, would be part of

what we do," he explained. "We do all our own software, but we deliver all the hardware too."

While a good part of the business is in Ireland, the activity outside Ireland is growing fast.

He said: "We put in a large system in Spain last year, and we are currently bidding for work in the United States."

Asked for the secret of success, Mr Carroll responded: "We entered a new market area and we had to develop the skills for that particular market. The skills we have not only related to software but also to manufacturing. It is not easy to get those two together."

Mr Carroll, lives in Lisnagry, and is married to Dr Pauline Burke, and they have two children, Brendan (9) and Grainne (7).

How to enter awards scheme

EACH month, the Jurys Hotel/Limerick Leader Achievement Awards honour individuals, groups or companies who have contributed to the region, through commerce, industry, sport or community enterprise.

The award can be for something specifically achieved during the month or for ongoing activity.

An overall Supreme Award winner will be chosen at a gala event next February for the previous 12 monthly winners.

The monthly winners are chosen by an independent adjudicating panel which includes Jim O'Brien, general manager, Jurys Hotel Limerick; Brendan Halligan, editor, Limerick Leader; Brendan Woods, chief executive, Limerick Chamber of Commerce;

Museum.

The public can nominate their own choice.

Nomination boxes and forms are on display in Jurys Hotel, on the Ennis Road, Limerick, and the Limerick Leader and the Limerick Chamber of Commerce offices on O'Connell Street.

Completed nomination forms will be presented to the adjudicating committee each month for consideration.

"We are delighted to be involved in this awards scheme with the Limerick Leader," said Jim O'Brien, general manager of Jurys Hotel, Limerick.

"As a business supported by this region, this is our opportunity to give something back to those who are succeeding in their chosen fields, highlighting the