

# Meet the installer

Security life with Jeremy Ewen of WLS in South East London

## What would be a typical project for you?

As a sub-contractor on a new build site we would normally be responsible for installing the access control, door entry, fire and CCTV systems. In this respect, we have extensive experience of working closely with construction companies, consulting engineers and M&E contractors and we have established a reputation for a 'no problem' approach to the logistical and time demands of working in new build environments.

## Do you have any 'go to' technology?

Most of our projects involve a tender process and the systems to be installed have been pre-specified. When we do have the opportunity to work directly with an end-user, we always take into account the client's operational requirements before offering objective advice on the best combination of products to meet their specific needs. As you would expect from an independent system, we are 'device agnostic' when it comes to recommending products. We are nevertheless pleased to be approved installers for BPT door entry, BFT and FAAC gate solutions, Honeywell Gent fire systems and for the Genetec Security Centre software platform which we put to good use when we are involved in large scale integrated security projects.

## What is the best thing about working in security?

Working with like-minded people who share my passion for creating safe space. In addition to all the highly professional people within the supply chain who I interact with, I am extremely proud of the 50 plus strong team we have built at WLS. Every member of the team appreciates the key to success is to offer our clients the highest possible



**Name:** Jeremy Ewen

**Job title:** Managing Director

**Time in security/fire:** 40+ years

**Company:** WLS

**Location:** South East London

**Areas of expertise:** Fire, CCTV, access control, gates, barriers and bollards

**Accreditations:** NSI Gold approved, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, BAFE, Safe Contractor

levels of pre and post-sales support and I get great satisfaction from customers regularly telling me that it's our people which sets us apart from our competitors.

## Is third party accreditation beneficial?

Yes. We are NSI Gold approved for Fire & Security, which opens doors, excuse the pun! We are also accredited by various organisations relating to the construction industry.

## Do you think there is a skills shortage in the industry?

Recruiting top-flight gate automation engineers has proved to be difficult. Otherwise, I feel currently we have the best team we have ever had. I have a policy of only recruiting engineers and technicians of the highest calibre and I also put maximum effort into creating a motivating and rewarding environment for them to work within. This result has been that I have rarely had to replace anyone.

## Are there any common requests from customers that give you problems?

Over the last 37 years, I think I have had to deal ➔

*"In addition to all the highly professional people within the supply chain who I interact with, I am extremely proud of the 50 plus strong team we have built at WLS"*



## WLS

Creating safe space

*"I am confident that as a team we can cope with virtually anything the world can throw at us"*

*(continued from previous page)*

with every potential problem which could delay or hinder the successful completion of a project and I am confident therefore that as a team we can cope with virtually anything the world can throw at us. COVID-19 is a very good example of this. However, it still remains a challenge for us when a number of projects are close to being completed at the same time and different customers expect our engineers to be on site on the same day.

### **What is the industry's biggest myth?**

That home automation is an easy extension to a security company's portfolio. It isn't.

### **What impact has smart/home automation had on your business?**

Very little. It is very much a case of 'horses for courses' and we leave home automation to the home automation experts.

### **What would make your job easier?**

Having an all-embracing piece of software to run every function of the business.

### **What is your ultimate/fantasy electronic security/fire product?**

A 50,000 volt, live, electric fence linked to a facial recognition system.

### **What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself?**

Go and learn the industry at someone else's expense! Apart from that tongue in cheek advice, I would recommend they should definitely look to progress a career within the electronic security industry. Like those involved with births and deaths, we will always be necessary as there is no sign that the criminal fraternity is planning to retire within the near future. It is also a very exciting time for our industry with advances in technology allowing us to help customers achieve much more from their security systems.

### **Will England ever win the football World Cup again?**

Yes, definitely. If only I knew when!

### **If you won £25,000 what would you do with the money?**

Buy a classic motorbike.