



# Postcode News 91

## AFD celebrates 35 YEARS!

2018 marks the 35th anniversary of AFD's humble beginnings in a small Scottish village. In this edition of Postcode News, we take a look at the AFD story – growing from a home-based business into the leading data validation solution provider in the UK.

Interviews with some of the longest-serving staff give insight into what has kept them here and the reasons why they believe AFD has seen continued growth.

We also talk to customers who have benefited from our solutions over the last two decades.

Read this and more inside.



# The AFD Journey

Starting in 1983 as a home-based business in Scotland, AFD began life providing office and computer equipment and maintaining charity databases – especially their mailing lists. This naturally progressed into the supply of both computer systems and computer training to the charity sector in 1985. AFD MailCode (since renamed MailSaver), a solution that sorts mailing data to achieve maximum discounts on postage, was launched in 1988.

Having built up considerable expertise in addressing, AFD Postcode (which offered street level address entry and validation) was launched in late 1994, and in 1995 AFD Software Ltd was incorporated to focus on the new aspect of the AFD business. Costing a fraction of comparable products, AFD Postcode brought rapid addressing within reach of smaller organisations – and, even more importantly, allowed it to be closely integrated into a wide range of everyday applications that used addresses.

Following rapid expansion (still in the house where AFD began) the business needed a new base from which to expand and grow, so relocated to Ramsey in the Isle of Man in 1997. That growth and development has continued, always paralleled by investment in high-quality infrastructure, including new buildings purchased in 1998 and again in 2005. More recently, 2015 saw the move to the current head office, situated at the 25-acre Mountain View Innovation Centre site owned and developed by the AFD Group, located just outside of Ramsey.

Today, AFD Software serves some of the UK's largest (and smallest) organisations across every sector with a host of solutions that validate Name, Address, Email, Phone and Bank data within business-critical systems and applications.

Despite both growth and success, AFD Software still retains its culture and identity. Staff feel they are part of a family and customers are served and supported rather than sold to and forgotten – evidenced in a number of very long-standing customer relationships.



## Long-standing customer relationships

AFD's data validation solutions allow organisations to better serve their customers, donors, members or other contacts with speed, accuracy, a truly professional image and quality customer experience.

In an age of instability, where loyalty and reliability have become a rarity, AFD has demonstrated that long-term business relationships are hugely beneficial for customer and supplier – building trust and eliminating the enormous costs of change.

Over **2800** AFD customers have been using AFD solutions **for over 5 years.**



Over **1800** customers **for over 10 years**  
Over **750** customers **for over 15 years**  
Over **200** customers **for over 20 years**

## Why customers continue to use AFD

Damart UK is a major mail-order firm with a £100M+ annual turnover; they have been an AFD customer for the past 22 years. Discussing the relationship with AFD, Ian Auker, Network, Communications and Service Delivery Manager commented: "With various systems throughout the organisation that all require accurate data, we have multiple uses of AFD solutions that facilitate this including: a UNIX-based version of AFD Postcode Plus for our contact centre and mail order data entry systems; an XML-based web service version of AFD Postcode Plus; and WorldAddress for our USA and website systems.

AFD Software has always allowed us - and continues to allow us - to better serve our customers by making technical transitions happen - **reliably.**"

Parkdean Holiday Parks, now Parkdean Resorts, have been an AFD customer for the last 17 years. Claire Phipps, Contact Centre Manager at Parkdean, describes her key target for calls and how AFD Software helps them to achieve it: "When taking customer calls our goal is a 5-minute conversation, with all essential contact information captured in just 10 seconds, leaving the rest of the time to talk about the holiday.

Without AFD's solution validating the contact data, call duration would go up, I'd risk losing calls, increase the risk of duplicating customer records, waiting times would be longer and customers would be disappointed. We would also have to decipher place names like Merthyr Tydfil!

There is a cost when the customer waits – frustrated callers are simply less likely to buy – with AFD we serve customers faster and better."

[www.parkdeanresorts.co.uk](http://www.parkdeanresorts.co.uk)

[www.damart.co.uk](http://www.damart.co.uk)

[www.afd.co.uk/products/postcode-plus](http://www.afd.co.uk/products/postcode-plus)

[www.afd.co.uk/products/worldaddress](http://www.afd.co.uk/products/worldaddress)

## Collective Experience

If you add up the collective Address Management experience in the AFD team it is well north of four hundred years - over 430 in fact. To go back in time 430 years would take us to the 1580's – the decade in which chocolate was commercially introduced to Europe!

## Staff Longevity



**Peter Denton, Research and Development Team; 19 years at AFD**

"I believe there are a number of reasons for AFD's continued growth and retention of customers. We understand addresses and have built quality products which serve customers well. We have a team that build strong relationships with customers.

We provide support which often goes above and beyond to assist customers in their own environments. We have committed staff across all areas of the business from developing and testing products to selling, supporting, administrating and maintaining the cash-flow that any business needs to survive.

We work together to be strong in all we do to allow innovation while ensuring that's backed up with good administration and realistic expectations. I also believe we have God's favour on AFD as a business as David and Alison (Directors) and others seek to put God first and invest in His kingdom and other projects wisely."



**Helen Torr, Administration Team; 20 years at AFD**

"Being here as long as I have, I have watched the company grow and evolve into the success it is today. In the early days we only sold standard, out-of-the-box products but now we also offer more bespoke, tailor-made solutions and all of our staff are specialists within their own departments when delivering these solutions to our customers. We have a fantastic working environment with great on-site facilities (I'm looking forward to the opening of the gym!)."



**David Willis, Customer Support Team; 20 years at AFD**

"After first starting work with AFD back in Ayrshire, I chose to work for AFD because I like helping people, and I enjoy being able to research technologies and products that help our customers and internal staff to do specific jobs.

As an organisation, we have both grown the customer base and been able to retain customers due to good products, at good prices - supported by good support, administration and sales teams."

## Infrastructure

Five separate high bandwidth internet connections across two major telecommunications suppliers, in addition to two 4G cellular telephone aerials on site, ensure internet connectivity at MVIC.

Power provision is equally well secured with two separate connections to the National Grid, linked to the on-site sub-station and transformer gear. Our three-phase 128 Kw self-start emergency generator (pictured below) has enough fuel to run for a week and protects our power supply through a dedicated control room – with separate feeds to the data centre, as well as all points of the site.

In short, we have invested in the present and future of AFD Software and applied as many failsafes as feasibly possible to keep all systems operational, at all times.



## Born in the 80's

AFD wasn't the only notable tech-based creation in the 1980s, with the IBM PC, CDs, VCRs, Personal Camcorders and Space Invaders all notable mentions. Discussing the past and looking to the future, Group Managing Director David Dorricott says :

**"For thirty-five years AFD has been committed to helping businesses, not-for-profits and public-sector organisations to manage address data. We have built up enormous expertise and experience across all computing platforms and system sizes – and are the "go-to" resource for all organisations who want efficient, reliable address data at the core of their systems.**

**The business is currently investing heavily in human talent, physical infrastructure and digital resources to allow it to further expand and consolidate its position as the world leading specialists on UK addressing. As other organisations lose their identity through merger or acquisition, AFD is determined to keep its identity and culture and, as God allows, remains committed to its wide customer base for the next thirty-five years."**

## Equipped for the 2020's ...and beyond...



Between January and March 2018 there were significant updates to data on the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). These included 15 new localities; 10,577 new postcodes; 105,752 new delivery points and 21,851 delivery point changes.

### New Localities

Postcode	Double Dependant Locality	Dependant Locality	Post Town
BA2 3		SPRING WHARF	BATH
DE4 4	HOPTON	WIRKSWORTH	MATLOCK
GL10 3		GREAT OLDBURY	STONEHOUSE
HU12 9		SUNK ISLAND	HULL
ME16 9		ALLINGTON	MAIDSTONE
NE20 0	MEDBURN PARK	MEDBURN	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
OX25 2		BICESTER GATEWAY	BICESTER
PE1 5		NEWARK EAST	PETERBOROUGH
PE21 7		FRAMPTON	BOSTON
PL22 0		GREAT WESTERN VILLAGE	LOSTWITHIEL
S60 5	ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK	CATCLIFFE	ROTHERHAM
SM4 4		LOWER MORDEN	MORDEN
TD15 1		HALIDON HILL	BERWICK-UPON-TWEED
TD15 1		RAMPARTS BUSINESS PARK	BERWICK-UPON-TWEED
WF11 9		SUTTON	KNOTTINGLEY

The most up-to-date PAF data is available now in our latest Q.2/18 update. You can order updates for any AFD Software solution by calling **01624 811711** or email [postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk)



**Bob Gokani**  
Regional Sales Manager

Continuing with the theme of milestones and celebrations, Bob celebrated his 50th birthday last month and this year marks his 19th year of service at AFD Software.

Bob found his way to AFD having worked for some small IT companies. "The initial attraction was an organisation that offered

customers the best advice, best products with the best prices. To this day this is still what our customers expect and what we help to deliver every day. Understanding customers' pains or problems and being able to solve them with the best solutions that genuinely meet a customer need has been really rewarding."

When he's not working, one of Bob's favourite things to do is travel. Asked his favourite destination, Bob says: "Throughout my travels, the most majestic of all places has been the Taj Mahal. Understanding the story of how love helped create such an amazing masterpiece is simply astonishing".

Next on the bucket list is snowboarding with his two sons. "Now that the boys are old enough, I would like to take them snowboarding, though not too sure I could get on the board once again!" [Watch out for those knees, Bob! Editor.]

Bob really values the many long-term customer relationships he manages, and celebrates their success as they grow and flourish. "For example, 13 years ago I first got to know Matt Potashnick who at that time was the IT Director of a small insurance company called GB Insurance. Today, Matt is the CIO for AXA Group in the UK & Ireland and still remains a highly valued AFD customer".

### AFD Software Ltd

Mountain View Innovation Centre  
Jurby Road  
Lezayre, Ramsey  
ISLE OF MAN  
IM7 2DZ



[www.afd.co.uk](http://www.afd.co.uk)

01624 811711 (Sales)  
01624 811712 (Support)  
01624 811714 (Accounts)  
0800 083 8424 (FREEPHONE Registration)  
[postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk)

Postcode News is printed on Cocoon 50 premium woodfree coated paper. Produced using a high percentage of recovered fibres, delivering superb environmental credentials without compromising quality. Manufactured with 50% recycled fibre and 50% virgin fibre, this paper is FSC® Mix certified.



'AFD', 'AFD BANKFINDER', 'CENSATION', 'DATA EVOLUTION', 'AFD MAILSAVER', 'AFD NAMES & NUMBERS', 'AFD POSTCODE', 'POSTCODE-EVERYWHERE', 'POSTCODE EVOLUTION', 'AFD REFINER', 'ROBOT', 'SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL', 'TRACEMASTER', 'AFD WORLD ADDRESS', 'ZIPADDRESS', the AFD WorldAddress and the Flying Envelope devices are Registered Trade Marks of ZipAddress Ltd. 'ROBOT' Technology is protected by Patent No GB2369699, other patents applied for.

All other trade marks acknowledged.

©2018 AFD Computers, ©2018 AFD Software Ltd and ©2018 ZipAddress Ltd.