Brian Long's
Back To Basics with Delphi
Masterclass in Upavon, Wiltshire
on Wednesday September 20th

This Masterclass is aimed at the many of you who have been busily working with Delphi over the years, getting code written, meeting deadlines and doing normal work, but who haven't had time to keep up with all the new fangled notions, technology and features available to the Delphi programmer.

We take a few steps back and look at what the new breed of Delphi IDE brings to the table, and then set off on a trail that covers a number of useful (and long standing) technologies that members have indicated they missed out on getting to grips with.

This Masterclass is for you if you never quite cottoned on to interfaces, didn't jump on the actions bandwagon, couldn't work out what VFI was all about, had trouble debugging down to the VCL code or wondered how multi-threaded programs worked. During the adventure you'll bump into various tips and tricks that help you get more out of the IDE (and perhaps out of Windows) and you should walk away with those gaps in your Delphi knowledge neatly filled in.

Bring along those questions you were too embarrassed to ask before and we'll see what we can do about helping out with them.

Agenda

10:00 Coping with the new IDE

We start the day by looking at how to adjust to the new IDE for those still using Delphi 7 or earlier, seeing what's changed, what's new, and what we need to be aware of. We also look into optimising the performance of your IDE and go through some handy features and some useful keystrokes that work in all versions from this century.

11:00 Visual Form Inheritance and Frames

These handy techniques had a bad name for a time as being unreliable, but these days their usefulness has been proven by the amount of usage they get out in the field. We brush up on what they are and how they can make your development projects streamlined and less repetitive.

11:30 Break

11:50 User Interface Management

Keeping a UI all in sync when there are toolbars and menus and other ways for the user to do things is a tricky business and often yields clumsy solutions. Actions are designed specifically to help with this problem and also help separate logic from validation code. This section looks at actions and the more recent action manager, which helps build up menu bars and toolbars (both at design-time and at runtime) and also addresses how to have applications minimise to the taskbar notification area.

13:00 Lunch

14:15 UI Management (continued)

14:30 Debugging

All-round coverage of general debugging techniques and common problems therein, including stepping through the VCL code, debugging DLLs. We also look at various lesser known approaches to working through problems.

15:30 Break

15:45 A Primer on Interfaces

Interfaces can be useful in various ways, for example they abstract functionality from arbitrary objects and also help simplify lifetime management, but many Delphi programmers never got the hang of them. Here we see how they can be useful, how they behave and what they do.

16:45   Break

17:00   **Introduction to Multi-Threading**

Multi-threading can be beneficial at times, but it also offers a number of colourful ways to come a cropper. We focus on how to set up additional execution threads, what the rules of engagement are, what the pitfalls can be, and how they may be avoided.

18:00   Close: after a hard day, this is the time to wend our way home.

Where, when, what and how much

o   The masterclass is being held at the Village Hall (Parish Reading Room), Andover Road (A342), Upavon, Wiltshire SN9 6EB.

o   The class runs from 10 a.m. with a morning break, lunch, and two afternoon breaks. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided during the breaks, with lunch at the Ship Inn (buy your own beer!). Please note that you are out of telephone contact during the course of the classes (and that mobile reception can be patchy here).

o   The class is not geared to hands-on participation. If you do elect to bring a laptop, please be aware that power points in the hall are very limited so don't rely on mains power to top up your battery. Material from the session will be available from Brian's web site afterwards, and we'll provide you with notebooks and pens to take notes.

o   Street parking is available near the village hall or the pub. The nearest railway station is at Pewsey (not very frequent trains on the Paddington-Penzance line) or Andover (trains Waterloo-Salisbury line about every half hour) and we'd have to arrange taxis from/to the stations. Accommodation is available at Upavon Manor (isabelbgreen@hotmail.com or 01980 635115) and the Antelope Inn (01980 630206), and in neighbouring villages.

o   The cost of the class is £150 + VAT, payable in advance. Please contact us on bug@richplum.co.uk or 01980 630032 as quickly as you possibly can if you think you may be attending, and ensure that we have firm bookings and payment by Wednesday September 13th at the very latest. Members subscribing at Premier, Dual or Corporate rate are eligible for free attendance but still need to book in advance.