club A3000

The user club for the Archimedes

CONTENTS

Summer 1991 : Issue Number 2

Your Club A3000 membership number:

Club A3000 : 48 Michleham Down, London, N12 7JN

a word from the ed.

Firstly from Mr. T:

It's finally here. After a barrage of phone calls from Club members wanting to know where the magazine's got to, the first official Club A3000 magazine's finally arrived! The leaflet jobbe you got a few months ago was a freebe introduction to the wondrous literature that would be gracing your letterbox, should you decide to join. Well, you obviously did the right thing and parted with your wod, and this magazine's one of the things you'll be getting to show for it.

The reason that this first magazine is so late is that the Club has experienced some pretty major teething troubles in getting set up; in writing to zillions of companies to see about such niceties as Club discounts (cor, the things we do for our members!), and basically in getting organised. People who have written to us would have already sussed this one out, as a reply didn't reach you until about 2 months after writing the letter. However, this is all fixed now, so you can write to us safe in the knowledge that you will get a reply within about a week (or so...).

We are pleased to report that many companies have offered Club A3000 members discounts, although we have not finalised exact details with a lot of companies yet. 4th Dimension have said that Club A3000 members are entitled to a £3 discount per game ordered directly from them. Just quote your membership number. Please note that this offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers that they may be running at the time.

And now from Mr. B:

One of the aims of Club A3000 is to try and get as many people as possible involved in some way with helping other users, and we are very grateful for all of the feedback and offers of help which we have had since the Spring newsletter. More and more membership applications keep arriving, so if you know anyone who is still sitting on the fence, tell them it's never too late! Several well known companies have generously offered discounts to Club members, including EMR and Atomwide, so you may well recoup the membership cost in savings on software.

One important point arising from the Spring Newsletter is that we agree with Mr Mike Williams, editor of RISC User magazine, that a few inaccuracies appeared in the newsletter concerning Beebug, and we would like to apologise for this. In particular it was wrong to suggest that Beebug might intentionally be misleading customers by their advertisements for high density discs. Also the article about Archive magazine was only using RISC User as a basis for comparison, since so many of us already subscribe to RISC User, and so know what it is all about. It was not a comprehensive review of RISC User, so we hope that it was not understood as such.

Please feel free to send in comments on anything said in this magazine. We are also very grateful for material for inclusion in the magazine. If you have some software which you think is good, then how about writing a brief review of it for us? (Do please let us know before you write the review, in case it duplicates one which we have already received).

Don't forget that your local Club contact has the names and addresses of other members in your area, and we recommend that you get in touch with some of them. New members are always welcome, so if you know of any Archimedes / A3000 owners who have not had one of our information packs, please suggest that they send an S.A.E. to the Club address, and we will send them full details about enrolling.

Rene Barreto . . . . *Coordinator*
Simon Burrows . . . . *Co-Editor*
Andrew Thacker . . . . *Co-Editor, Design & Layout*
 . . . . *Layabout, Coffee Maker and General Dogsbody*
Maria Barreto . . . . *Finance*
Paul James . . . . *Technical Assistant*
Dr. Nick Evans . . . . *Database Manager*
Bruce Dixon . . . . *Exhibitions*
Ronnie Barker . . . . *Bulletin Board*
DataStream PD . . . . *Public Domain*

Please send all correspondence c/o Rene Barreto, who will forward it to the relevant person (please indicate who the letter is for). For a list of Club members and contacts in your area, write to Rene at the Club address. As we're not made of money, please send an S.A.E. (that's 'Stamped Addressed Envelope' for those with negative I.Q.s) with your correspondence.

credits etc.
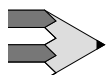
MAGAZINE DISCS

by Simon Burrows

The Archimedes World cover disc is heavily compacted, and contains a wide variety of different software, most specially written for the magazine because they advertise such generous prices paid for good software. There is usually something of interest for everyone, and free space is filled up with some useful Public Domain software.

Most people seem to subscribe to at least one of the five Archimedes-related magazines, and recently the magazines have tried to encourage us to buy the associated magazine discs by offering them at very low prices - indeed Archimedes World comes with its disc on the cover. But are these discs worth the money, and what are the differences?

The Archive disc varies from month to month. It contains material to accompany articles in the magazine, as well as any programs listed, and space is filled up with any interesting PD software.

The BBC Acorn User disc is currently changing. In the past it only contained the programs from the "Yellow Pages" in the magazine, which only occupied a fraction of the free space. They have however started to include some extra items, such as PD to fill up 100's of kilobytes of free space on the disc.

The Micro User cover disc contains the programs from the magazine, but the main feature is the archive of Public Domain software included every month, which always seems to contain a number of new and previously unseen items, which I look forward to every month! This one is definately recommended value for money.

However the disc which has the most effort put into it is certainly the RISC User disc, although it is the most expensive. Every month it contains a number of specially written desktop applications, and a number of files to accompany series in the magazine, such as the series on Programming in C and Mastering the WIMP, and sample output from packages reviewed. It always contains several items of interest, and sometimes some PD is included.

Overall, my favourite is the RISC User disc, despite it costing £5 plus.
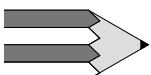
tHE aLL-nEW aRCHIMEDES VIRUS cOLLECTION

Simon Burrows talks about those nasty pieces of software written by spotty little individuals who have nothing better to do than ruin someone's day!

Every month the Archimedes magazines seem to contain something about Archimedes viruses, and you might be forgiven for thinking that they are a big problem at the moment - luckily they are not, and providing you are relatively careful, viruses should not cause you any loss of sleep.

The most common Archimedes virus (and now the most publicised) is the 'Extend' virus, a module which copies itself into any application which you use, but does not really cause any problems, except for being very annoying, and extremely easy to spread (as I found out to my cost when I caught it a year ago!).

Two other viruses that I have encountered, and therefore know well are the 'Icon' (or 'Icon Filer' or 'Extra') virus and 'Datadqm', both of which are written in BASIC, but nevertheless need guarding against. Both propagate themselves in a similar manner to the Extend virus, but are more annoying. Datadqm, which claims to be the copyright of Paul Vigay (did he really write it?) checks the time and day of the week, and causes some transient effects (eg screen wibbling), but otherwise causes no serious problems.

The Icon virus is settyped as a sprite, and gives away its presence by causing silly errors to occur, such as "Rattle and hum detected in disc drive", "ASCII characters clogging lead", "WARNING: squeaky mouse", "WARNING: dangerous dongle dangle", "Virus detected - please reformat all discs", "Data Stream polluted", "Dead bug found on disc head" : in fact it chooses randomly from a list of eighty such silly errors!

Various virus killing programs are now available in the Public Domain, and RISC User has made a large contribution to virus blasting with its Watchdog, Virus Scan and Virus Alert programs.

The different programs deal with different viruses, since the different authors have not encountered them all; they all cope with the Extend virus, but the most comprehensive which I have yet seen is !VKiller by Richard K Lloyd. The problems which existed with this application have been solved in the latest version, and it now copes with many different viruses. New viruses keep appearing, and since they all work in different ways, new versions of virus killers keep appearing, so it's a good idea to try to get hold of the latest versions.

Other viruses around are rather nastier. The CeBit virus is a module which works in a similar way to the Extend virus, but on every 16th infection it executes a "*WIPE $.path.file*" which luckily is bound to fail on most people's systems. The Thanatos virus apparently hides away in files called RISCOSext and TASKALLOC and periodically corrupts floppy and hard discs as well as the CMOS RAM. This is nasty, so watch out for it.

Basically, if you are careful about accepting discs from other people, and take the necessary precautions when accessing their discs or using their machines, you should have nothing to worry about. Get to know your machine, and look out for strange things happening. In particular, regularly check in your most commonly used application directories to see if mysterious files have appeared, and look out for rogue modules in your RMA, as well as tasks with strange names or no names at all.
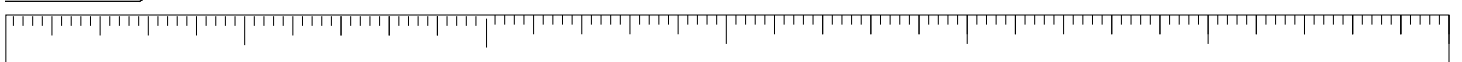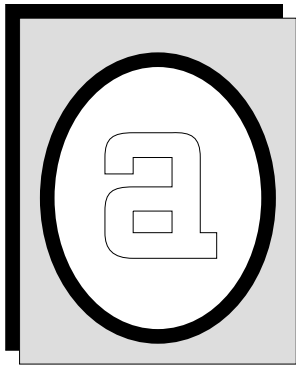
ndrew Fergason has been busy producing the first in a series of disc-based magazines. Produced six times a year, it will cover the different sectors of the Public Domain software available on the Archimedes.

The first issue, April 1991, covers graphics available on the PD market. Example graphic pictures are included on the disc in case you have never ordered any from a Public Domain software house. The programs Translator, MakeGIFF and MakeTIFF are also included, as these provide excellent means of porting piccies over from other computers, and making Archimedes screens compatible with other computers. A mandlebrot program is also included as a bonus item.

Also on disc are the catalogues of well known Public Domain houses. I would imagine that these will be updated with every new issue of the disc.

The entire magazine was creating using Magpie, the hypermedia package from Logoman Logotron. The Public Domain browser is included on disc for those who have not got Magpie. The text is rendered in the Trinity outline font, which cannot be included on the disc for copyright reasons. Most people have this font, and even if you do not have it you can still read it in the system font.

Andrew invites readers to submit articles for publication in future issues of the magazine. He will be doing specific discs on demos, music, clipart and other groups of PD.

To obtain the compressed disc (!SparkPlug included to de-compress the PD) then send a floppy disc formatted to 800k, a SAE and £1 to Andrew Fergason, 7/528 West Green Road, Turnpike Lane, London, N15 3BU.

Andrew Thacker
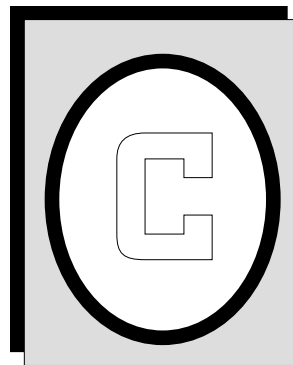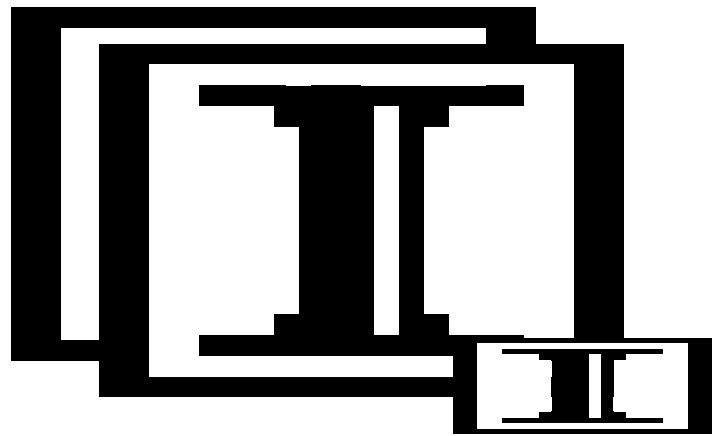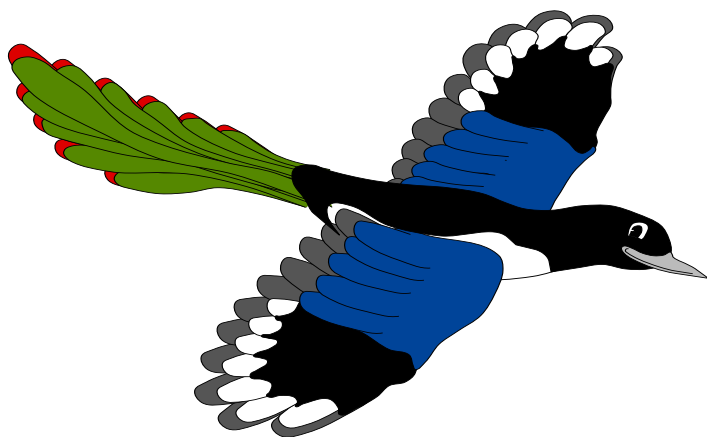
omputer Concepts have been true to form and have continued improving on their Impression Document Processing package, despite the fact that they could have stopped work on it 18 months ago (apart from bug fixes), and yet still continue to bring out enhanced versions and do not charge customers for upgrades - that is what I call dedication and professional customer service!

The first change becomes obvious upon loading Impression 2.13, as a large picture of Gaddesden Place appears on screen along with a copyright notice. You might think this would appear tacky, but I think it's wonderful, particularly on a multisync monitor (I have been known to load Impression just to see the picture!!!).

Using the new version, it becomes apparent that a number of the well-known bugs have been fixed, although I have to say that while editing this section I have found a couple of bugs. Impression now has the ability to mail-merge in combination with a suitable mail merge program (CC sell their own), and it also has some table producing facilities. One very useful addition is an auto-save facility, and you can choose what time period (if any) you want between saves.

Overall, Impression remains the leader of the pack as far as desktop publishing and word-processing packages are concerned, which is why all the best magazines are produced using it (including this one!). Computer Concepts are to be congratulated not only on producing a first rate product, but also for their superb service and after-care. A technical support help-line is available free by phone to any Impression owners upon quoting your serial number, and things which you say get acted upon when a new version is brought out. Full marks to Computer Concepts!

Simon Burrows
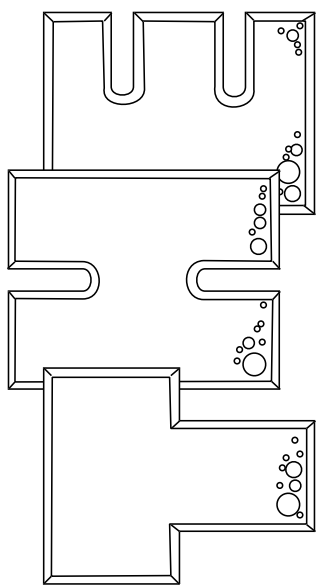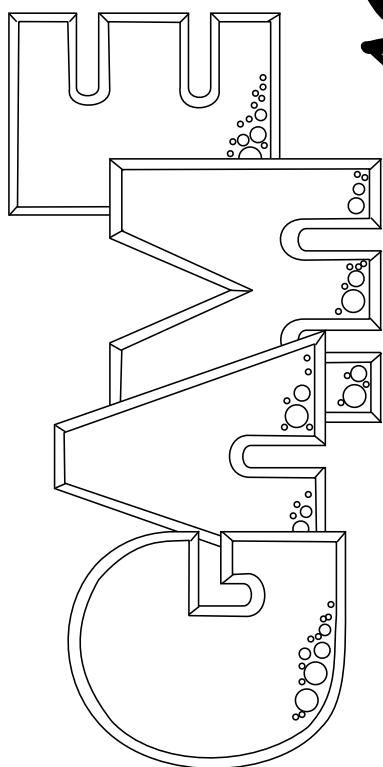
In this games section (which was originally called 'Andrew Thacker ON THE GAME scene' - but was changed as small children may be reading this!) I intend to give you the info on all the latest games (or at least the ones that I get sent!) and also a large section on high scores and game hints/cheats/passwords (you get the idea). So keep sending in all your bits and pieces (so to speak!).

FORTHCOMING GAMES

4th Dimension's next efforts will include Break 147 & Superpool, and Enter the Realm. The former's design was scrapped because they were not pleased with how it was turning out. The re-vamped version will be more realistic (and the square pockets have been corrected as well). Further down the line will see the release of Enter the Realm, programmed by 18 year old Graeme Richardson - the author of the spectacular Nevryon (makes you sick don't it - only 18 and he's making games like this!!) 4-D told me that the game, a large scale arcade adventure, is actually twice as fast as Nevryon! (Cue: 'Gasp!'). This is because Graeme has used Mode 9 instead of Nevryon's Mode 13, resulting in extra speed with the restriction of a 16 colour palette. However, if the screenshots are anything to go by, this hasn't affected the quality of the graphics too much.

One to watch out for in the autumn is Top Cop by a 'famous' commerical software house. Described by Mark Richardson (its author) as a cross between Spy Hunter and Elite, it is an arcade blast with a strong element of trading and missions. I've had an exclusive preview and I must say that I was stunned at the superb quality of the graphics created at this stage in the game's development. I feel obliged to point out that some may consider my opinion a teensy-weensy bit biased considering I am the bloke drawing the game's graphics!!!

Krisalis are not resting on their laurels with Manchester United, that truly spectacular 3D football simulator which used the entire screen (take note 4th Dimension - you were not the first to use the whole screen with Boogie Buggy, like you claim!). We can expect the follow-up, Manchester United European Edition, to be hitting our VDUs very soon now. They will also be porting Hill Street Blues and Lemmings over from the Amiga. For those who haven't seen Lemmings, it is possibly the most addictive game ever created (yes, even more addictive than Tetris), and it involves keeping masses of cute Lemmings out of trouble. Its release has been delayed until December - maybe to maximise sales for Christmas.

Lastly, Micro Power (who served up 3D chess in April) are finalising Zelanites. My favourite genre of game is a shot 'em up, as they involve horrendously whopper amounts of violence and do not require any sort of brain-power at all to play them. If you are like me (heaven forbid) then you are probably looking for-ward to the release of this baby in mid-August. It is basic-ally a space invaders clone, but before you chuck up, rest assured that it leaves the likes of Galaxians and Arcadians (rem-ember that?) far behind. It has so many more features that make it worth buying - in the same way that all breakout fans who had Fireball2 could justify buying Ballarena. There's a simply furious amount of action and hordes of beasties to zap, and the graphics look much more auth-entic than Nevryon's. Full rev-iews in the next issue when I get my mitts on them!

NEVRYON

Nevryon (pronounce it however you want) is one of those rare games that crop up on the Arc that really wouldn't be possible on a more inferior machine. So often on the Arc we get commercial games that would be better suited on the P.D.

In a nutshell, what the boys at 4-D have cooked up for us is a cr*p kicking session on a whopper scale (er...I didn't see any crops when I last played it - ED.) It's a shoot 'em up, and a blinkin' fine one at that. To complement the silky smooth graphics (60 sprites on screen at once and still no flicker) there are many stereo soundtracks. They don't really suit a shoot 'em up, but are pleasant to listen to nevertheless. Fans of strategy games won't like this one, but for the masses who enjoy total alien genocide, dushdi graphics and equally appealing sound, this game must surely be worth a mention on your list to Santa.

The plot (plot - ha ha!) is irrelevant. We don't care! All you need to know is that you travel horizontally, killing everything that moves — and destroying lots of things that don't move (bits of the landscape can even be shot up). On your way you collect spinning discs. They are of two varieties. One type is the instant power-up which gives you extra guns, shields and lasers. On later levels, one single press of the fire button results in multiple bullets/laserbolts flying all over the place. The other variety of power-up allows you to choose from a selection of more deadly weapon. The more power-ups you get, the better the weapon you may select. However, you may only have one of these at any one time. I found that mines were the best weapon to stick with, but others include flame thrower, smart bomb and temporary indestructibility (i.e. nothing new - but still quite a bounteous selection to choose from). I still feel that the likes of Xenon II and R-Type II (on 16 bit machines and arcades) have a wider selection of power-ups, but this is a minor point. Additionally, most of the graphics have a 'cartoon-like' black line surrounding them, removing their authenticity (their wot?). Even so, you will be astounded by the variety, quality and sheer amount of graphics included on the 2 discs.

I wholeheartedly recommend this game as the definite shoot 'em up for the Arc, and it certainly gives shoot 'em ups on other machines a run for their money.

Verdict
Graphics 9
Sound 8
Playability 7
Lastability 7
Value for money 9

Facts 'n' Figures
Nevryon costs £19.95 to non-members, and £16.95 to Club-members. Just quote your membership number. 4th Dimension are at 1 Percy Street, Sheffield, S3 8AU.

DROP SHIP

Remember that classic game, Thrust, on the Beeb? Well, this is a beefed up version along the same lines. You fly your Drop Ship around a series of progressively more difficult levels, blowing up crystal bases in order to release the crystals needed to escape. Pretty run-of-the-mill, huh? It would be, if that was all you needed to do.

Nevryon: always in the thick of the action. You may be wondering why this screenshot appears in the middle of the Drop Ship review. Well, it's because I've got no space for the screenshot on the other side of the page, and I have no Drop Ship screenshots to substitute for the one above!! Question: Can you make out what's going on in the pic?

Unfortunately, gravity has been faithfully reproduced in this game (hence the similarity with Thrust), making flying your ship no easy matter (except if you are a master at game-playing, like myself). Couple this with aliens in all imaginative forms, gun emplacements, gravity generators and power-ups and you have an entertaining, value-for-money blast. The power-ups add an extra attraction, allowing for fuel replenishment, extra bombs, side arms, anti-gravity units etc.

The sound doesn't let the game down either. The title tune is very boppy indeed, but the in-game effects get a little annoying - the sound of your gun is more like a girl's scream.

To sum up, a game that'll keep you hooked on your machine for many a late night with a cup of Hot Chock. If you liked Rotor, Caverns or Thrust, then you'll love this.

Verdict
Graphics 7
Sound 6
Playability 8
Lastability 8
Value for money 8

Facts 'n' Figures
Drop Ship costs £19.95 to non-members, and £16.95 to Club-members. If you want to order by phone then phone 4th Dimension on 0742-700661/769950.

POWERBAND

Fancy a spin 'round 16 international race circuits in a Formula 1, 0-60 in as much time as it takes you to start the stopwatch, racing car? If so, Powerband could just be your cup of herbal tea.

After wading through title page and intro sequence, you are presented with a highly graphical menu system, comprising of your car bouncing around the screen, and 7 icons surrounding this. 3 of them control the choice of game: FUN mode allows you to floor the accelerator like a suicidal maniac without fear of crashing the car - you just 'bounce back' (like flying brick mode in Interdictor II). Reversing is also allowed, but any racing times achieved are invalid. GAME mode allows you to race round any track, but without the indestructibility feature of FUN mode (head on crashing, rupturing fuel tanks and blowing gearboxes are not uncommon). The final type of race is the WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP — the full whack competition where you race on 10 randomly picked tracks from all over the world. One icon allows a visit to the GARAGE to change various aspects of the car (such as aerofoil angles, tyres etc..) to suit the race at hand (as well individual preference). An overhead view of your car is presented and to select a feature, simply point your spanner at it. (Powerband makes ample use of pointers!) I found the manual helpful in this area, but only by trial and error did I find the combination that suited me best. On to the other icons, and the AIRPORT allows you to travel to any of the courses. You can do a TIMED lap circuit, where the only opponent is the clock (in order to establish a grid position when you start the race against opponents. I found that it didn't matter what grid position I got — even if I got Pole Position, I still found myself in last place after the first corner!). Lastly, the final icon STARTS the game. Version 2, the current version, has an extra feature whereby you can change the number of opponents in the race, and their skill levels. This information can be saved to disc, and all best times and lap records are also permanently recorded.

Powerband is similar to E-Type in many ways, indeed, both games were coded by Gorden Key. He has opted for vector graphics instead of sprites, resulting in a serious lack of graphical detail. Although this move from sprites to vector graphics may seem foolish, it does create the effect of realism and thus allows more 'freedom' for the graphics — e.g. the car may now spin through all 360˚. Furthermore, the lack of graphical detail is a minor point in this genre of game (it's not a shoot 'em up!) and doesn't affect the playability. Further compensation for the lack of detail is the mega-smooth way that everything moves.

In-game sound is limited to a few samples, hummnn! Other cars, when passing you, don't ROAR past, they squeak past! They should have taken the sample directly from the intro sequence tune - THAT was a roar!

One niggle is the tyres. They don't spin, they flicker. I would have preferred to see the car that bounces around on the main menu used in the game — its tyres spin effectively and the car has more detail. Additionally, when you hit a barrier, you don't plunge through it, you simply 'bounce back'. Most un-realistic, but handy if you're a complete loser at this ilk of game (it means that you don't end the game on the first corner!) Very annoying is the need to pause the game and then wait if you want to see where you are on the track - why can't this be shown on the map next to the digital dashboard (and whilst on the subject, why a digital dashboard? 12098 RPM doesn't man a lot to the average punter, but a series of 'clocks' can be interpreted at a fraction of the time).

Powerband is more difficult than E-Type. This is mainly because of the sharper corners, or rather the irresistible urge to negotiate them at 260mph. If you spin off, you have to manoeuvre yourself back on the track (it doesn't just put you back in the centre of the track).
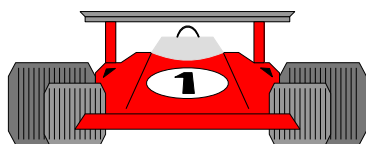
Powerband adopts the outside view approach, instead of the 'in car' view. There's nothing wrong with that, but 4th Dimension insist on calling it a 'pseudo-simulation'. This is where the game falls down. Surely for a simulation, one should have an inside view with an accurate copy of the dashboard. Other than this, it all seems pretty realistic — but one never gets the 'feeling' of being there because of the outside view. Thus it fails as a simulator. However, as a thoroughly good Formula 1 game, it succeeds. Maybe Gordon Key could re-write it with an option of inside or outside view, like Chocks Away. A 2 player option (using split screens) would really have made this an unbeatable game.

I'm not really a racing car game man myself, but I can assure you that this particular one won't get banished to the dusty shelf for a few nights yet (or at least until I can actually finish a world championship race in a position other than last!)

<table>
<tr><td>Verdict</td><td>Facts 'n' Figures</td></tr>
<tr><td>Graphics 5
Sound 4
Playability 7
Lastability 6
Value for money 5</td><td>PowerBand costs £24.95 to non-members, and £21.95 to Club-members. This special discount cannot be used in conjunction with other 4th Dimension special offers.</td></tr>
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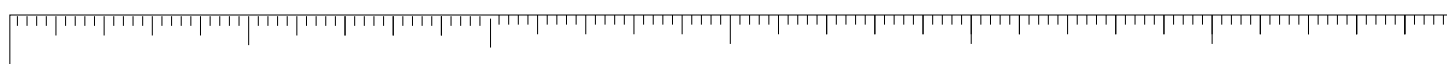
SALOON CARS

Comparing Saloon Cars to Powerband, two games revolving around a 'racing' theme, is a bit like comparing Manchester United Football Club to Arcade Soccer. Man United is a football game with heavy emphasis on team management and other aspects of football besides the obvious. It's graphics are superb and the entire game has an extremely professionally-produced feel to it. Whilst Arcade Soccer isn't a 'bodge it and leg it' production, it doesn't have the same polished feel to it, yet is perfectly acceptable if you want to load up the game and get down to booting a ball about without any fuss.

I have already described PowerBand's features and failures - the principal one being its lack of simulation. Saloon Cars is a different kettle of fish entirely...

Spot the mega tasty graphics!

Here's the scenario: You are an amateur driver who has an expensive hobby - driving rally cars. Well, that's the scenario out of the way!

Initial impressions weren't too promising. The manual (which is written by the game author and is very witty and an easy read) was too big to fit in the presentation box and subsequently had to be folded; the title page (well, that's what I presume it is) is a manky digitised thing, with no attempts to 'touch it up' and get rid of the 'digitised' feel to it; finally, the menu structure is very daunting to begin with.

Forget about what I just said. Once you actually start racing for the first time your jaw will need chiselling off of the floor - you cannot help but be astounded at the gameplay. I knew PowerBand was smooth, but this just takes the chocolate hob-knob. The whole thing is arguably smoother, and there's a lot more happening on screen. The cars and courses are realistic down to the millimetre (well, nearly!). The author went to the courses in question to measure them. The new Silverstone is faithfully reproduced and the road gets darker where appropriate to show the new tarmac. The other courses are Brands Hatch and the old Silverstone (used as a practice circuit). The 3 cars that you drive (Astra GTE, BMW M3 and Sierra Cosworth) are exact representations of the real cars, with the correct speedometers, clocks etc. You can do handbrake turns, control over- and understeer etc. The author has gone to a lot of trouble to make sure of complete realism in just about every respect - the screen even wibbles up and down as you hit bumps. The only 'mistake' I found was with the rear-view mirror. The background in the mirror doesn't scroll which is a bit annoying.

There are simply uncountable 'nice touches', a few of which include: progressive damage to your car resulting in speed and performance reduction or just cracks in the windscreen; skid marks on the road; signs that actually stay knocked over when smashed into; hands on the dashboard constantly move as does the gearstick and handbrake when appropriate; stands; bloke with the chequered flag and so on and so forth. You can even change your car colours (very handy indeed!)

The game's graphics really do put Powerband to shame in every respect. The cars are very detailed as is your car. Outside graphics are nicely detailed and instead of a pale blue sky it is graduated from dark to light blue. I would say that sound is better than Powerband, but not a lot better. This type of game never really does have good sound (as you would expect!).

I compared this game to Manchester United Football Club, which involves strategy. Indeed, this features here as well. You start of with a slow car, naff tyres, a pit crew (single man) who is a complete plonker, a naff engine etc... By winning races and collecting prize money you can buy several rather juicy upgrades to improve speed, stop your car spinning off the track every time you move the mouse, and upgrade your car to a customised replacement when the time is right. You can even get sponsorship! As this little lot takes many hours playing time, you can save your present position to disc.

4th Dimension claimed this game was "definitely Archimedes only", and I would have to agree with them. To be honest, I would not have imagined that with the amount that goes on, the display would have scrolled so smoothly. You simply need to see it to believe it!

Verdict

Graphics 8
Sound 5
Playability 8
Lastability 10
Value for money 10

Facts 'n' Figures

Saloon Cars costs £24.95 to non-members, and £21.95 to Club-members. See other 'facts 'n' figures' boxes for more information because I've run out of things to say!

Lovely jubbely! Just what the Arc needs. It's refreshingly nice to see an original game appear on our monitors every so often - and the Arc certainly does have a good variety of games on offer. Boogie Buggy, by 4th Dimension (and Coin Age (who?)), is at first sight a dodgems game with a humorous and appealing feel to it - but for twenty five smackers you would expect to get more than that, and indeed you do.

The first thing I noticed about the game was the size of it. "Well, pickle my onions" I gasped, "this game uses the WHOLE screen", which means that there is no border. This makes a surprising difference to the game, and it serves a greater purpose than just a gimmick.

The game has a very 'cute' feel to it (yes I know that all the other magazines have said exactly the same thing (I even looked in my Thesaurus for a better word!), but there is no other word to describe the graphics). The opening sequence is a lot better than most, with fancy hi-score table and scrolling title page, but these extra goodies have resulted in the game occupying three discs (yes THREE discs!), and the amount of disc swapping gets as annoying as it did in Nevryon. Once passed the high score table, you are presented with a colourful and well drawn map of Dodge City (the place you have come to purge of evil). Here you choose 1 of 8 screens to tackle (divided up into 4 Ore Conversion Plants and 4 location zones. Don't worry about what an Ore Conversion Plant is - the scenario's pretty boring so I won't explain it.)

On the O.C.P. levels (disc 2), you are presented with a sideways view of your buggy, and the objective is to bounce your way around a series of screens to the exits, then push a special lever on the last screen. This will start a timer and you have to then bounce back to the beginning (within a very short time). Crashing into anything or colliding with the various nasties that fly about cause you to get 1% more damage. 100% damage means losing a life (sorry - losing a motor).

The other 4 zones (disc 3) present you with an overhead view of your buggy (cue the really cute graphics). These levels differ from the O.C.P. levels because they use horizontal or vertical scrolling as opposed to being a series of stand-alone screens. Thus an extra element of variety has been added to the game. Here you 'drive' about (this in itself takes a little mastering), bumping into objects and cleverly animated nasties which causes the smiley face on your buggy to scrunch up - very nice touch. You can also jump over nasties to avoid collision, but beware because if you land on something you lose a life (very annoying). Objects travelling in the air all have their own shadow, but it is not a very convincing one because it is mid-blue (a lot of the background is blue) regardless of what's underneath the object. It looks a little silly when a bee flies over a green plant, with a blue shadow on the plant!

On these levels you are directed by arrows (on some levels up and down, on others left and right) to valuable mineral ore. Once this is collected, you travel to a manhole to deposit it. There is a gauge at the bottom which indicated a 'good-evil' level. You must collect and deposit 10 mineral ores to get the gauge to go from evil to good - thus completing the level. On the way a number of goodies can be picked up; plasters to reduce damage levels (but watch out for banana skins!); bricks to send spinning into the nasties; points bonuses; temporary invulnerability; turbo boost and my favourite - a chainsaw. This little sweety pie allows you to splat any nasties you come into contact with - a brilliant points booster. It must be said, though, that the explosions are a bit 'naff' (substitute a suitable word in there)...

In game sound is better than most games, with samples where appropriate, backed up with two 'not-bad-but-could-have-been-better' background tunes. I would say that the major shortcoming of this game is that for all the superb and appealing graphics and playability, this is not one of those games that will keep you rushing back for more after the novelty has worn off. Don't be fooled, however, because this doesn't happen for a long time and for the first few days you won't be able to leave it alone.

Verdict	Facts 'n' Figures
Graphics 9	Boogie Buggy costs £24.95 to
Sound 7	non-members, and £21.95 to
Playability 8	Club-members. It's from 4th
Lastability 6	Dimension. I've given you
Value for money 7	address and phone number. What more do you want, eh?
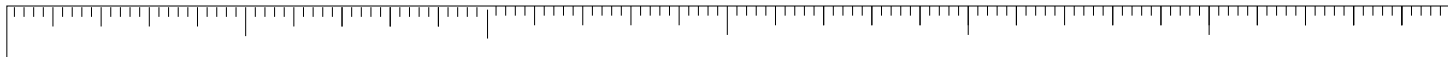
CHOCKS AWAY

After buying InterDictor, and seeing InterDictor II at a show, my faith in the Archimedes' ability to churn out a good flight sim began to grow thin. That's all changed now with the arrival of Chocks Away (V2) from 4th Dimension (surprise, surprise!).

It has got everything you would expect from a flight simulator - smooth vector graphics (Version 2's are 70% smoother than Version 1) with basic, yet adequate graphical detail (with certain improvements from InterDictor, like the explosions, smoke and excellent 'death' sequence where the action switches to outside view, and you can watch your plane plummet to the ground in a pool of smoke). There are a host of nasties to shoot down in the air, on land and in the sea. A scattering of crisply digitised samples provide the sound.

So what's new? Firstly, you're not in a stealth fighter or similar type of plane, with missiles, bombs and cannons to boot. Instead, you pilot a bi-plane, with a single front cannon. Secondly, there are 3 modes of play: Practice mode where you simply fly around on 1 of 3 maps blowing up anything and everything. Dogfight mode is simply you against a friend (more of that lark later). Finally, Mission mode allows you to attempt 20 missions of increasing difficulty (they are of the shooting down planes and boats type). Completing a mission allows you to attempt the next, and progress in the missions is saved to disc. Just in case this hasn't impressed you yet, there is a special 'Black Box' recorder fitted on your plane, so you can actually save your flights to disc and view them later. 90 minutes of recorded flight are included on the disc to demonstrate various manoeuvres (better than any manual, eh?)

A major, innovative improvement on the Arc flight simulator front is the ability to view the action from both inside and outside the bi-plane on 1 of 4 directional views (front, back, left and right). With the ability to switch between all views with the touch of a key, the best view can be selected as the need arises. I found that inside view was essential for accurate firing.

However, the cream on the cake has to be the two player mode (using split screens). Now, you any a friend can either battle it out together (in Dogfight Mode) or you team up to defeat all the nasties in Practice and Mission modes. Because all Missions are obviously easier in this mode, there are two mission score tables. It is only in split screen mode, and when a lot's happenin' on screen that any major form of slowdown is noticeable (and that's on an old A310 with no MEMC1a upgrade).

This surely must be the game of the year, breaking new barriers in flight simulation on the Archimedes. I have a

couple of friends (believe it or not!) who have an extremely unsociable habit of criticising every game I buy, simply because it is for the Archimedes. I loaded this one up. They shut up!

CHOCKS AWAY EXTRA MISSIONS

Just when I was running out of adjectives to describe Chocks Away, 4-D send me the Extra Missions disc. Cor!

Chocks Away Extra Missions features snow, more intelligent enemy manoeuvrers and lots more. However, could you guess all this just by looking at this screenshot? I didn't think so! That's why I've just told you.

How do you improve on a game that left me rushing for my Thesaurus to describe it? Well, those guys at 4th Dimension have delivered the goods once again, and have somehow managed to improve on the best flight simulation on our humble Arc.

To cut a long story short (well, I'll have to because that screenshot just hogged a lot of valuable space), there are oodlums of features to keep you happy. More superb (and fiendishly difficult) missions (including reconn-aissance missions where you need to photo enemy equipment), serial link options for 2 players on 2 computers, more intelligent enemy, more camera views, more vehicles and millions of tiny little nice touches. It's a shame about the slowdown.
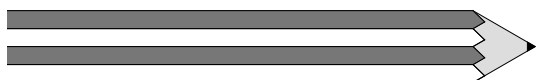
The Club A3000 CLUB CLASS award. Only given to the elite of the truly brainbusting games found on the Arc.

Verdict	Facts 'n' Figures
Graphics 7	Chocks Away costs £21.95.
Sound 5	Chocks Away Extra Missions
Playability 9	costs £16.95. Get them both
Lastability 10	for £36.95. Members prices
Value for money 10	quoted. Can you guess who
	they are from? You got it. 4-D.

MASTER BREAK

reviewed by Mark Richardson

Master Break is a snooker-style trivia game, based on the popular pub game Give Us A Break. There is a facility for 1 to 4 players and the type of game you play depends upon the number of players. In the 2-4 player game you must compete against your friends for a high-score. In the single player game you play to get the highest break.

Master Break concentrates more on the trivia theme and is not a snooker simulator. If a good 'ol game of snooker is what you are after then look out for Break 147 & Superpool.

Hopefully out late this Summer, the game promises to provide an accurate simulation of both games. 4th Dimension have employed a totally original method of 'aiming' at the various balls.

Upon loading Master Break you are presented with a title page and a not-so-good tune. Which ever game you choose you are presented with the main game screen and are shown the number of reds to pot. When it is your turn you must first pot a red. A category is chosen at random from 1 of the 6 groups: Science & Nature, Pop Music, Geography, Sports & Leisure, Arts and History. The question to answer is displayed on the screen and your time limit starts. You must chose 1 of 4 answers shown at the bottom, which can be done using the keyboard or mouse. Assuming you pot the red you then have the chance to chose a colour. Each colour is given a different category and and points for getting the question correct are based on normal snooker scores. The higher the value of the colour, the less time you have to answer the question.

Graphics throughout the game are of high quality and the main game screen is well laid out, even if it is redrawn after every 'go' (but it does it in some pretty flash (if slow) ways). Sound comprises of a scattering of sampled effects depending on the question. The less said about the loading tune the better. The game really comes into its own when playing with a friend, as the single player version is very hard and getting the questions right is no mean feat.

Overall it's very addictive providing you enjoy trivia.

Verdict	Facts 'n' Figures
Graphics 9	Master Break costs £19.95 and is available from Superior Software, P O Box 6, Brigg, South Humberside, DN20 9NH. Or phone your order on 0652-58585.
Sound 7	
Playability 7	
Lastability 5	
Value for money 7	

BLASTON

reviewed by Mark Richardson

The latest game from Eterna— - a French company doing Arc—hie games - is Blaston. The story line to Blaston goes like this: You have been chosen from amongst the best warriors of the universal guild (yawn!) to defeat the Kor—guls invaders who are trying to gain control of your planet.....

Yes, you've guessed it, it's a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. It's the best of the vertical shoot 'em ups (beating Alerion and Quazer, but not the horizontal Nevryon), but there is still a lot of room for improvement. Take note software houses - this is no Xenon II.

The usual bonuses are available for collection and there are a large number of Korguls to squidge. It's quite hard and your three lives soon become a bad memory.

Graphics are reasonable throughout the game and sound is pretty mediocre, but the loading tune is a bit boppy. This game has good short term appeal but for long term sadism I advise looking elsewhere (see Top Cop (guess who's writing Top Cop this summer? - ED))

Verdict	Facts 'n' Figures
Graphics 8	Blaston costs £19.95 and is available from Eterna, 4 Rue de Massacan, 34740 Vendargues, France. I'd give you another set of figures, but she wouldn't tell me them!
Sound 7	
Playability 6	
Lastability 5	
Value for money 6	

PLEASE NOTE: The reason that these reviews are short is because they were 'over-the-phone' reviews, and I (well, my parents) were paying for the bill. Too many long phone calls and I get strung up and dangled from the shed roof as a punishment (- Andrew).

HIGH SCORE

Here they are - the best of the best have submitted their high scores to be included in the legendary Club A3000 high score table.

APOCALYPSE : 137,903 - Marc Turner

ARCADE SOCCER : Sweden/Algeria, 9 minute game - 126:0 - Anthony Bexon - (I goal every 9 seconds!!!!!! You better not be telling me porkies Anthony or you may come up against some.....trouble!)

BIA TETRIS : 18,730 - Andrew Thacker (I would imagine that John (The One) Nicholas is feeling pretty gutted as I just pipped his 18,600 high score only days before this magazine went to print!)

CORRUPTION : 180 out of 200 - Chris Dawson (game completed)

DROP SHIP : 529,010 - Marc Turner (game completed)

HOLED OUT : 18 under par, professional level - Anthony Bexon

MAD PROFESSOR MARIARTI : 53,467 - Marc Turner (game completed)

NEVRYON : 750,000 (ish) - Marc Turner (good grief, puts my 130,000-odd high score to shame. This guy can complete the game on Ace Level without dying once (Phew!))

PACMANIA : 1,502,500 - Keith Lawrence

ZARCH : 101,055 - Anthony Bexon (I bet I could beat this, but I always get bored on Lander and give up after a few hours (brag, brag!))

ENTER THE REALM : Haven't been inundated with Enter the Realm scores this month. Surprising really. I suppose this could have something to do with the fact that it has not been released yet, but I wouldn't be too sure!

If you glanced at the list, spotted a particular score that you know you can double whilst simultaneously having a conversation on the phone with your girlfriend and trying to stop the little bruver picking at the leftovers from last night's aardvark stew, then send in your best scores to me at the usual address. Let's face it, some of 'em shouldn't be hard to beat 'cos they resemble average results in GCSE exams and certainly not high scores...

HELP!

Need help with game playing? Got any hot hints and tips for the latest games? Get scribbling and send them in to me, so I can relieve other Club members of their tension.

Little hinty-thingy from John (The One) Nicholas - type SUBJECTTOCHANGE (no spaces) on the Terremex Main page. I can't remember what he said it did, but it does something! He also gave me a Zarch cheat, but everyone knows that one because it was printed in just about every magazine about 1 year ago, and we don't want to churn out old hat in this games column, do we now?
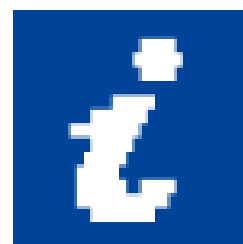
NEVRYON PASSWORDS

MIRADOR,
ISENGARD,
KRYNN

These are all places in J R Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings'

DROP SHIP PASSWORDS

DAHLIA,
GAGGLE,
KAUNDA,
NAUTCH (that may be NAUTSCH - I can't remember!)

And now a few tasty morsels from Mark Richardson:

On that PD alien-blast YAIG, press CTRL+SHIFT to stop the action, press SHIFT to slow it down.

On ORION (Defender 'effort' (and I stress the word 'effort') from Minerva), press U L C and SPACE on the high score table or main screen. You will be asked 'What level' and you can enter in your desired starting point. Furthermore, you start with 10 smart bombs and 10 lives. Your high-score name will be replaced by 'I'm a big CHEAT!' (oh, the wit!)

Finally, press R U T H on the opening sequence of HOSTAGES for some 'extras'. Gary Partis always adds cheats to his games (the names of his girlfriends!)

GALLERY
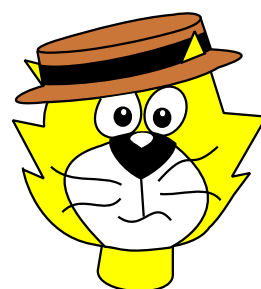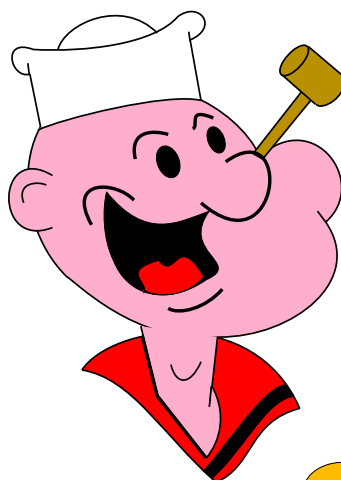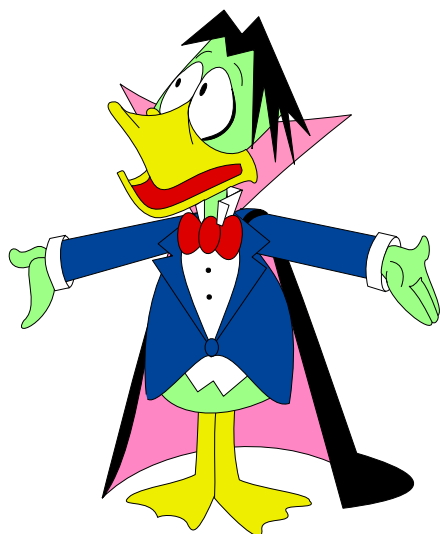
Some of our Club members are really superb artists, as these Draw files clearly show.

The cartoon characters were hand-crafted by Stephen Orme, who has produced 2 shareware discs full of the stuff. As well as cartoon characters there are a wealth of other miscellaneous (I had to look that word up!) drawfiles, and both discs represent outstanding value for money and can be purchased from the DataStream PD. The codes are CL - 001 and CL - 008. As they are shareware they cost £2.50 each. These discs are exclusive to the DataStream.

The extremely talented Mark Watts is responsible for the superb camera, A3000, lorry and printer. It's not surprising that he does this sort of thing for a living!
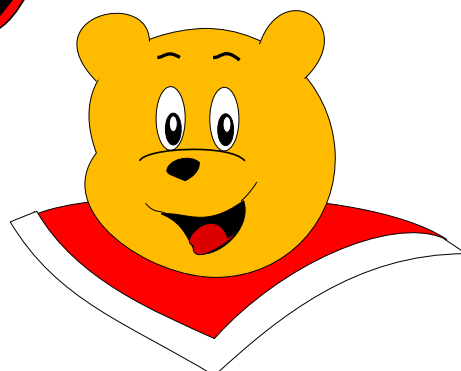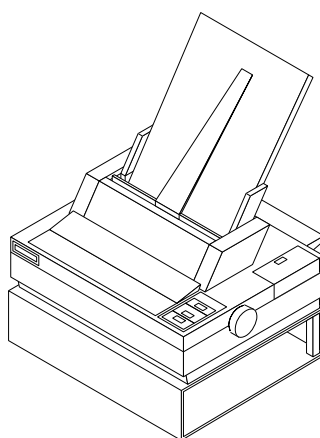
The other 2 files, Alphabet and Dick Tracy, are examples of my clipart (hmmnn... how did they get in there?)
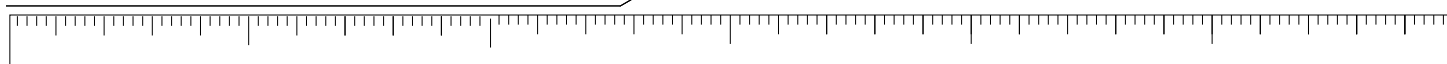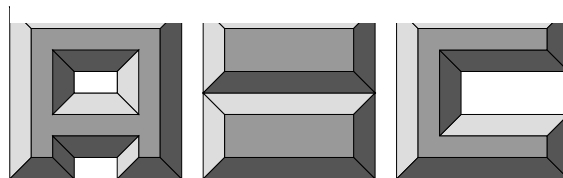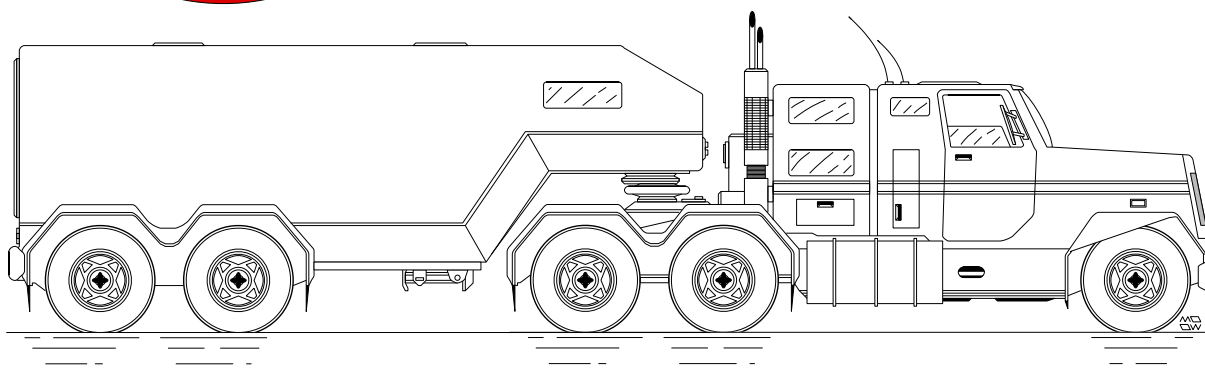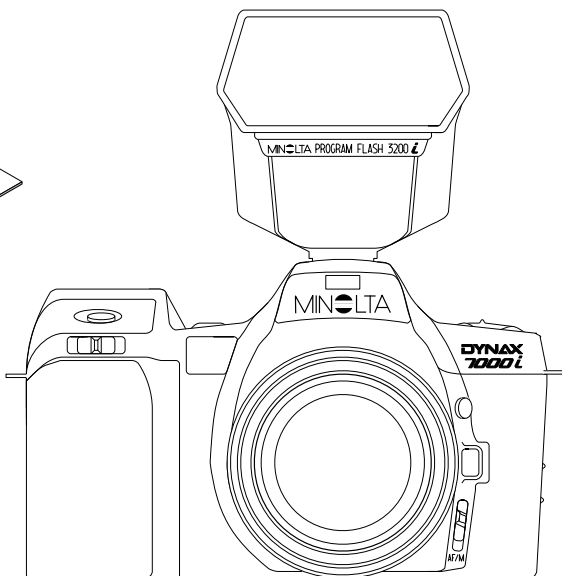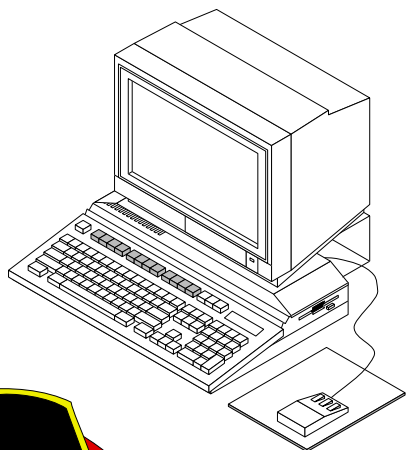
Keep sending in all your brilliant clipart
so we can show other Club members.

Andrew Thacker

DTP

I was quite surprised to hear that many people didn't know how to achieve similar effects to those made in the first Club A3000 newsletter (oh such modesty!). However, there are many features of the Arc's DTP software that we don't tap. To produce the magazine I used Impression II, Poster and DrawPlus. For serious DTP I would recommend that you invest in Impression II - undoubtedly the best Document processor around; Poster - a versatile image manipulation program that allows you to create impressive title and border effects; Draw - you've already got this, but do get hold of the Public Domain program DrawPlus which has many more advance features. With a suite of software as powerful as this, it is so often the case that the only limitation is your imagination (oh for a cliché!) I would strongly recommend that you observe the designs used in magazines, posters and pamphlets, as most design is a combination of pinching designs, altering them and adding new designs to produce a new layout. For example, the contents listing in this magazine is in fact the design used in a GCSE study book. The arrow and 'contents' word was the result of me doodling on a piece of paper for a few minutes.

It is best to have a copy of the last newsletter handy when reading this so you can refer to the effects that I will be describing. The reason that I'm not using this latest magazine for reference is that I haven't finished designing it at the time of writing this article.

The Club A3000 logo was done in Draw, with the help of Computer Concept's FontDraw which converts outline fonts to a series of Draw-compatible lines. The word 'club' was coloured grey, and the '000' of 'A3000' white. The Archimedes 'A' was hand drawn. Finally, to finish the logo, a black rectangle was drawn behind the A3000.
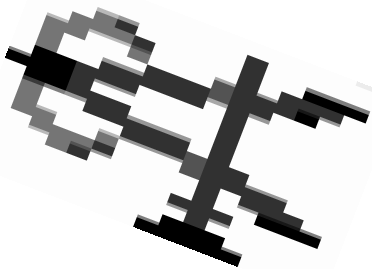
The monitor which shows the page number is a graphic from Impression II, placed on the master page along with automatic page numbering. The frame has repel borders around it for text to flow around and not touch the edge of the monitor.

The 'Beebug' Discs (page 2) are simply 1 graphic, a disc, rotated in DrawPlus to 3 different angles. In Impression this frame was made transparent and the repel text option taken off. Getting the text to flow round these discs is quite tricky. After deciding the text size (it is essential to get this sorted out before continuing), the 'Keep to linespace grid' style was turned on so that the text did not appear vertically relative to the top of the frames. Then lots of 1, 2 or 3 lines high frames were created to go around the discs. All frames had the repel text option off. These frames were linked by clicking button 1 in the first frame and button 3 in the second frame, then click button 1 in frame 2, and button 3 in frame 3, etc... (?!?). (Try this with the Keep to linespace grid both on and off, to see the different effects). As previously stated, the text's size could not be changed now because if it was all the frames would have to be re-sized accordingly. A similar effect seems to be employed on page 7 on the credits bit, but this is just a transparent text frame over the border graphic (created in Poster), then all the text was centred and number of words per line was changed if the text ran into the graphics.

The word 'Public Domain' (page 3) which fits in the flag was simple to create. Already having the graphic flag, a line was drawn over the bottom edge on the flag, so that the word would be parallel with the bottom and top of the flag. Poster has a 'follow path' option, which made the text follow this draw line. It was important that the 'adjust size to width' option is on. The section on public domain at the bottom of the page were merely screenshots grabbed from the desktop (*SCREENSAVE), then edited in Paint. They were placed in Impression as a graphic frame, then a transparent text frame was placed over this, and the text added.
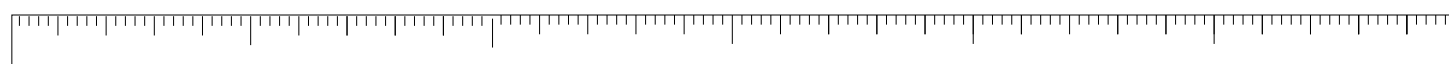
To get the RISC USER V ARCHIVE effect on page 4, FontDraw was used to type the text (with black line colour and no fill colour), so the text was in Draw format, then the text placed in 3 different transparent frames in Impression, over some text. As they are over text it was essential that the repel text option in the alter frame menu of each graphic frame was turned off to allow the text to flow under these graphics, not around them. Another good effect on the same lines can be seen on this page (') - lighty filled text is placed underneath. The text frame must be OVER the graphics (unlike the above example). DrawPlus is not needed in this example, instead a new style is created with a large text size, and the change in the font colour.

The word 'MEMBER-SHIP' (on page 7) took a little time to do. To create such an effect Poster was used and both the word and the graduated fill file that comes on the Impression Clipart disc was moulded, using a pre-defined mold on the Poster disc. The text was changed to white and placed over the fill. Unfortunately the magazine was photocopied and so the effect of the background going from light to dark grey was lost, and it nearly all appears as black or near black.

I hope this has been of some help, and has given you a few ideas. if you have designed some interesting page layouts, or have any hints or tips on how to produce some interesting effects, please drop me a line! Alternatively, if you want me to do some DTP for you...

Andrew Thacker >> of APT grafix <<

(I thought I'd just point that out!)

DRAW HANDY HINTS

At the recent Club show, I managed to have a chin-wag with Club member John Bancroft, who pointed out these rather effective draw hints:

• To create parallel lines like the effect on the 'Letterbox' heading, simply set the grid and draw the line in black with a coloured linewidth. Copy the line and make the linecolour 'none' and make the line white. By turning the grid on you can easily and accurately place the white line in the centre of the black one.

• For shadows on text. why not place a white object inbetween the black and grey objects? (see page 2).
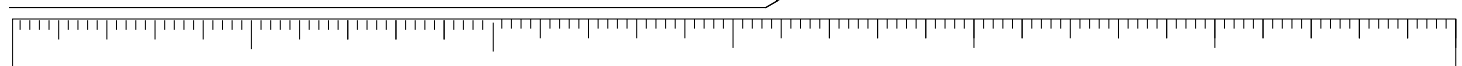
Banner

I required to print out a banner in a hurry so did not have time to send off for a specific Banner program. Looking at the software supplied with my A3000 I came up with following solution.

Load Draw, Fonts, and your appropriate Printer driver e.g. PrinterDM. Click MENU on the Printer icon and via Page size alter Page type to A0 and set Page height to 1190mm and width to 200mm. Don't forget to set up the printer resolution to a minimum to print out a draft copy of your banner.

When you have finalised the design this can be changed for the final print out. With the printer set up, now click SELECT on the Draw icon to open the Draw window. Click MENU in Draw window via Misc set the Paper limits to A0 also click on Show. This shows the page limits in the draw window that you have to keep within. (These limits only show when the printer driver is loaded.) Via Style set the Font name and Font size, start with approx 150 to 250 point size this can be adjusted later as required. Now all you have to do is type out your banner keeping within the page size. Always press return at the end of the line so Draw recognises it correctly. Save the final result to Disc and then this can be printed out from Draw menu (via MISC -> PRINT).

Best results are obtained using Font Manager 2.42 or above, if you do not have this an update can be obtained from your Acorn Dealer. It is also available on the Ovation Demo Disc which is good value @ £5, from BEEBUG this also gives you another outline Font i.e. SWISSB, or on the Tempest Demo disc that is free. If you are lucky enough to have ADTP or any fonts from EFF then you have access to more fonts to give the banner more style.

Fontfx (£9.95) is produced by Data Store Software. This program allows any font text to be scaled to various sizes, just an outline of the letter with a different shade or colour center (if you have a colour printer), and an addition of a shadow wall or floor. These are a few of the programs effects that can be used in a banner. As a starting point set the scale to 5 this gives a reasonable height for the banner letters. When the particular font and effect is created it is then saved as a Draw file, and can be further manipulated in Draw as required.

Brian Cocksedge

Banner2

Letterbox
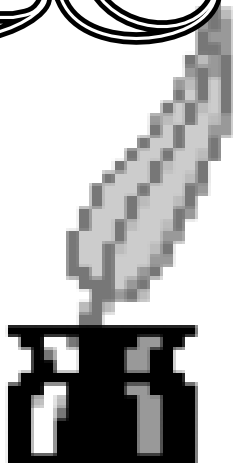
A round-up of all the letters and strange-looking parcels that come through our letterbox. Edited by Andrew Thacker.

USER GROUPS

S.O.S. to all enthusiastic users of any Acorn Equipment and Software. I am a regular user of Impression, V3 Accounts package and Public Domain software, with Laser Jet printer and many other packages. There are a small number of enthusiasts in the East London and East Islington area that meet occasionally to overcome user problems, share knowledge of using Impression towards its full extent and capabilities, publish a small, commercial magazine, and assist each other in using any RISC software. Genuine enquiries, users and members of Club A3000 are welcome to telephone Lee Cant on 081-986 2149, after 6:30pm.

GROUP PURCHASES

I read the BBC Acorn User and saw an item on the latest Acorn RISC OS modules. Obviously this stuff is in the public domain (the article clearly states that with a modem one can access the data directly). So how about we make a 'group-purchase' of this sort of thing, for distribution to subscribers? Divided by a couple of dozen, the cost would be minimal.

The cost of the disc from Acorn direct is almost twenty quid - so whoever subscribes gets his money back three times over in a single hit.

Barry Watts, Hendon

a very good suggestion indeed, but probably a little tricky to implement in this fashion. all the latest versions of acorn modules can be obtained from datastream public domain - the official pd house of club a3000, at only 90p/disc (this is with club a3000 members' discount). this cuts out the trouble and cost of us having to find out who wants what, then ordering it and sending it to them.

THE COST OF FREE SOFTWARE

I agree that PD prices are widely varying, but it does not automatically follow that chargers of relatively high prices make unacceptable profits. Take as an example David Pilling of Bolton, whose prices are about £6 per disc. He stands out because his catalogue is either all original work, or because he has performed the conversions from MSDOS or Unix or whatever. In that context perhaps £6 is not excessive. Otherwise I agree with your comments about profits.

G T Swain, Edgware

i know a lot of people are not too happy about the varying price of pd software, and about where the 'unaccounted' money goes to. i wrote to beebug about this and one of the magazine's editors, mike williams, explained that as a commercial company they have many more overheads to account for, such as v.a.t., the high quality discs that they use, paying the salary of the bloke who does the copying, etc... my advise is to stick with datastream pd - 90p/disc. the excellent software from mr pilling is not in fact public domain and cannot be purchased through a pd library. this is why is costs more.

SHOWING OFF!
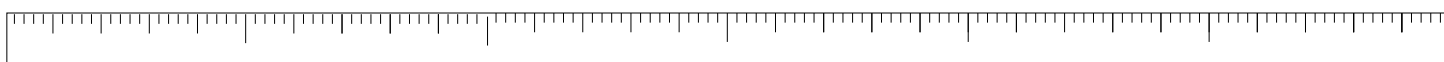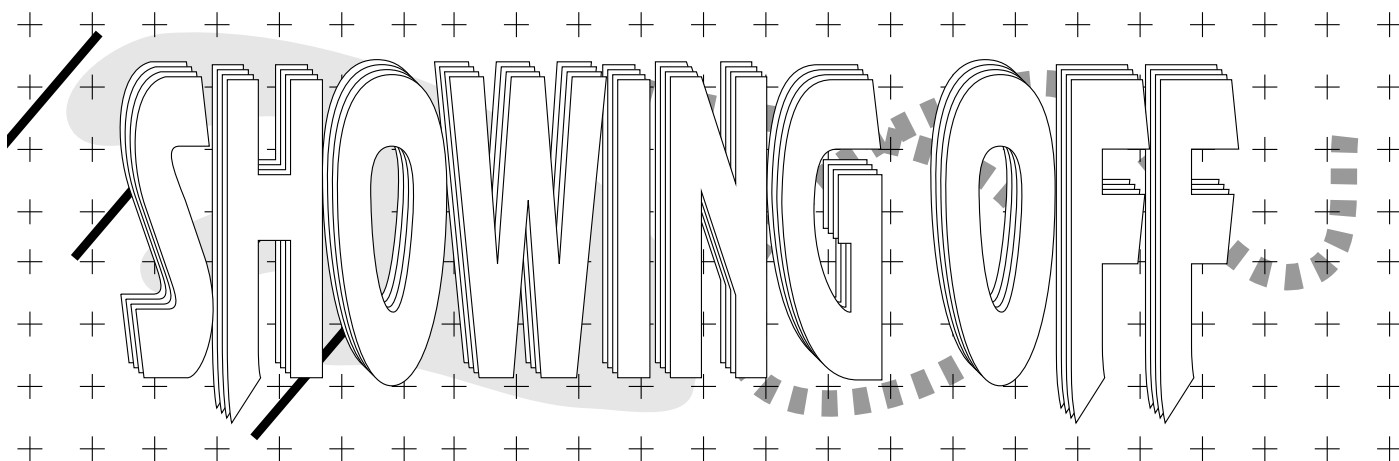
Where were you on Sunday 23rd June?

Well, I don't know about you, but I do know that from 10am-4pm a lot of Club A3000 members (and some non-members) had responded to our notices in various newspapers and the computer press, and came down to Mill Hill School and the 2nd official Club A3000 show.

This was not to be a show like the User Shows that most Arc owners have been to, where you walk round and round picking up loads of leaflets, buying yet another box of unbranded discs and not really meeting anyone else. The point behind this show was not only to demonstrate various packages and software on the Arc, but also for members to meet and chat. This is what the Club is all about. Obviously there were those who just had a look round then went, but many were chatting and playing around with the hardware and software on offer.

There were demonstrations from various companies. Computer Concepts had Impression II loaded up as well as their new Scan Light 256 had-held scanner. They were printing out piccies scanned from their software using their LaserDirect series of laser printers. The quality was simply amazing.

Club member Steve Arnold were demonstrating Acorn's new PC Emulator which should be out by the time you read this. The big difference between this Emulator and past versions is not one of speed but that it is entirely multi-tasking and all action takes place in the desktop. This will set you back £100, but there is an £30 upgrade offer for registered users of their old PC Emulator. Definitely one to look out for in the near future.

There were many other people exhibiting, including the Euclid User Group, Arxe, Black Sheep software and T J M Software who were selling some cheap software

and games. We were also selling Public Domain discs and we must thank Steve Arnold for making up a special Club A3000 Public Domain disc. It contained a SPARKed (i.e. compressed) set of utilities, games and other Public Domain programs. All it costed was 40p with the money going to charity.

In the afternoon Paul James from Acorn User came down to give on the spot advice. Later on EMR set up in a nearby classroom and demonstrated their range of Midi Software. As well as handing out discount vouchers, we also launched the Club A3000 EMR Users Group. This is a collaboration between Club A3000 and EMR, which will provide help and support for users (and anyone else who wants to join) of MIDI software. We also were delighted to see the Headmaster of Mill Hill School and the Mayor make an appearance in the afternoon.

I spent most of the day loading up games for people and demonstrating applications like Poster. I had intended to demonstrate Impression II by designing the next Club magazine (i.e. this one!). However, have you ever tried using Impression II and 6 discs of PD fonts on a 1 megabyte machine with no hard disc? I gave up after about 20 minutes!

Throughout the day refreshments were available and meals were prepared for anyone who had reserved one. All in all I think the day went rather smoothly with very few hiccups. We must express our gratitude to Bruce Dixon, the head of the computer department at Mill Hill School, for letting us use all his computers, and generally for organising everything. We hope to have another show in November, which should be a much larger affair, but before then - in October - we will be at the Acorn User show, and we look forward to meeting some Club members and recruiting more members. If you would like to help in the organisation of our next show, then please get in contact with us as soon as possible. Thankyou.

Andrew Thacker
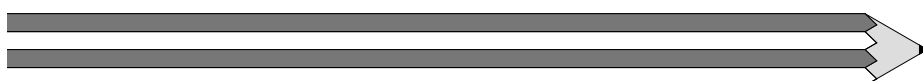
ARCticulate

Here's something different. It costs £21.95 (to Club members) and is available from the 4th Dimension. It is not, however, a game.

ARCticulate is in fact an animated speech synthesizer. For the simple amongst you (like me), that means that with this program you can actually make your Archimedes talk to you.

The more observant amongst the ranks will have noted that 4D have finally succumbed to the rather corny temptation to finally release a piece of software that is prefixed by ARC. Oh dear!

This speech synthesizer differs from the competition in a number of ways. The disc comprises of 4 multi-tasking talking figures (whose lips move in accordance with what they say). The figures are a man, woman, droid and alien, and a number of bonus items including a program that generates funny noises in the desktop, and a joke telling program. There is a demo of


The 4 stars of ARCticulate, 3 of which are pictured above and below, are actually accurate renditions of the members of New Kids On The Block. A spokesperson pointed out that they have been given aliases and are not actually named after the famous pop stars for reasons of copyright.
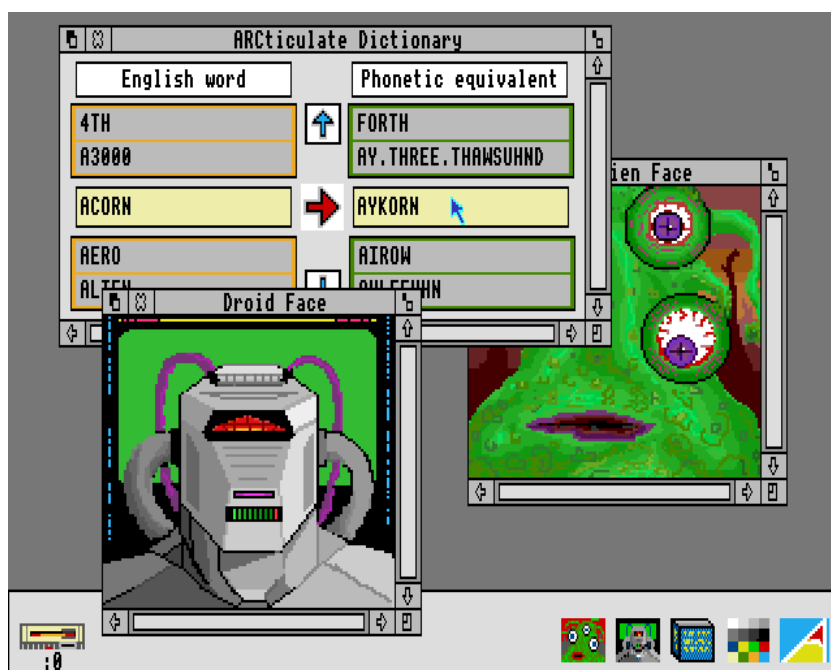
the program facilities provided as well to give you a hint of the software's capabilities. Finally, the core program which must be loaded up (which shows you the current English text, and a 'translated' phonetic version) and a dictionary are included. Basically the program will say anything you tell it to, and the dictionary is provided so you can 'refine' the speech phonetics so they sound clearer.

Dragging a text file onto the main window will cause the program to read it out in the current text voice. I found the male easiest to understand, but with every voice you cannot understand absolutely every word if you are not reading the text at the same time.

Having 4 figures means that you can set up conversations between them, and extra features are included to change voice pitch and volume - you can even draw your own faces! I would say that the speech is clearer than PEP speech system. If you want a good larf, get it!
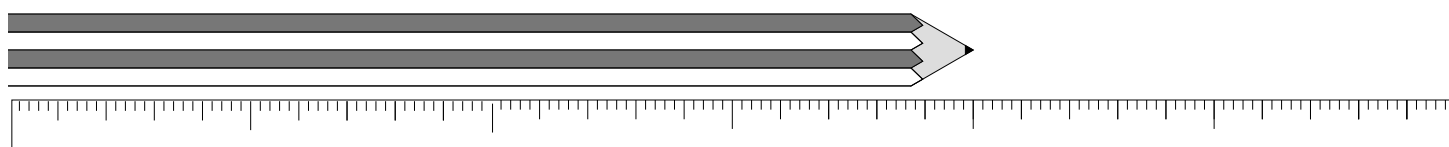
CLUB A3000 presents
ARISTOTLE BBS
081-634 8494

Aristotle BBS is a new bulletin board for Archimedes users. It supports Club A3000, providing a vital link between user and group that a newsletter can't provide. Club A3000 bulletins will be posted on the board, providing an up-to-date view of what's going on in the Club.

As well as this there are loadsa PD files and hopefully soon a PD library with ordering facilities over the BBS.
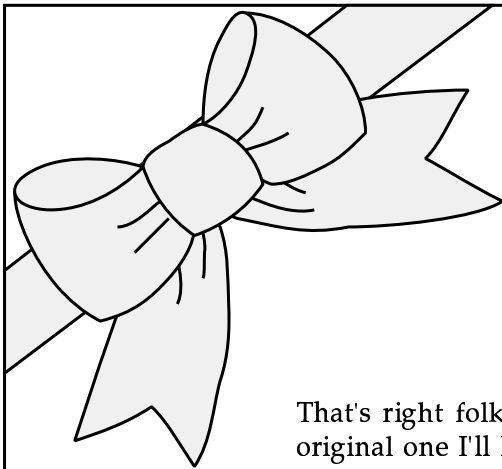
IT'S COMPO TIME

That's right folks, competition time has struck. Up for grabs is a copy (an original one I'll have you know!) of the Chocks Away Compendium - that's Chocks Away and Chocks Away Extra Missions, generously given to the Club by 4th Dimension.

To win this feast of flying fun (cor - alliteration!), just write us a jolly article of interest to all Club members (or at least one of interest to most of them).

This Club magazine is not supposed to be run by one or two people, it is supposed to be run by YOU. That's right - we want to see more member participation. This magazine should just be us (the editors) stringing together all your articles, not us jabbering on about this and that. Your scribbling can be about anything you like (well, it has to be loosely related to computers - an article entitled 'My Holiday In Margate' will be carefully deposited on the compost heap). You could describe what you use your computer for; what special effects you have been able to create using a piece of software; or just do a review of a piece of software that you are familiar with.

Please send all articles on a disc (with an S.A.E. as we are a poor old lot and cannot afford postage!!!!) The most interesting article will be printed in the next magazine and the winner notified alongside it.

Who knows, one day in a couple of months time you may wake up to the sound of the birds, breath in the clean, fresh air, clamber down the stairs and gaze at the front door mat on which a parcel lays. Your face suddenly metamorphosises into one of rapturous joy as you rip open the environmentally friendly packaging and suddenly realise that what is staring you in the face is this bounteous prize.

THE PD SCENE

A run-down on the low-down in the PD world courtesy of The DataStream PD.

BACKGROUND

The Data Stream is run by John (The One) Nicholas and Chris Dawson. John's contributions to the PD world include DataDemos I, II and soon to be released III. Chris' main claim to fame is his song writing - most of the Soundtrackers he makes are well over 250K long and last many minutes. He has also written Excalibur (a PD equivalent of Repton) and a versatile address database, which we at Club A3000 use to store your names and addresses.

Public Domain software on the Archimedes is one of the most rapidly growing areas at the moment with new libraries springing up all the time. In the last issue it was mentioned that the Club was to set up its own PD service. Instead of this the DataStream has been chosen to supply the PD at cheap rates for Club A3000 members.

TALKING SHOP : THE JARGON

Many people writing to us have little or no idea of what PD is about and how the 'system' works. There are several terms, all coined in America, which you need to know to get an idea of what's on offer:

• Freeware (Public Domain) is software written by Archimedes enthusiasts who want their software distributed and used by everyone, without having to pay for it. Technically there is no copyright attached to it, so you may copy it freely. Although free, this software is often hard to come by, and updated versions of software are always being produced. This is where a PD library comes in. They are companies that have a large base of PD software, and usually the most up-to-date versions of the software. They can only charge for the cost of the discs, the postage, packing and any running expenses (like advertising).

• Shareware differs from PD in that is may be copied freely like PD, but the end user is 'obliged' to pay a small fee to the writer if he/she uses it a lot. It is up to the user how much they give. However, in America a lot of money is made by Shareware authors (one earns $100,000 a year!)

• Licenseware is sold by PD houses much like their other software, but it is more expensive than PD because the PD house has to pay a royalty to the author for each disc sold.

• Careware is mainly supplied by Norwich Computer Services. For each
disc sold they give half of any money made to charity. Diamond PD and DataStream also give a
proportion away to charity.

THE LATEST AND GREATEST

New on the desk this month, and hogging the limelight, is the new megademo from Armaxess.
Completed recently it is probably one of the best demo collections around. Armaxess is based in
West Germany and were responsible for the first ever Arc megademo. Have they surpassed
themselves this time? The answer is yes! The first one had 7 sections to it, this one only has three
(and a database at the end which is a sort of demo), though they are all superb. It is called
RISCdream and features multi-tasking loading (The first ever in an Archimedes demo) and 4
excellent Soundtracker tunes. The first section is a normal scrolltext/starfield demo with some
interesting graphic distortion effects. The second section has a superb 3D scrolling background with
various 3D shapes flying about. The third section is probably the best with a full 3D world in which
you fly around and even go into an A3000 disc drive!

!Scheme is also pretty new and is written by Andrew Barron. It is a page layout program and is
rather like a ViewData system. You can edit pages, click on various icons, play Soundtracker tunes
and put graphics onto the screen very easily. You can customise you own pages to suit your own
needs and it would be very useful for a company who wanted to display their products in an
interactive environment. !Hyper, written by Nick van Someren would also fit the bill and this works
from the desktop.

Some of the latest useful utilities include !Dos_FS. It is an MS_DOS filing system that
installs itself into the left of the icon bar as a disc drive icon like the ones that are there
already. Once loaded, you may insert any MS_DOS or RS_DOS (Atari ST compatible)
disc, just as if they were Archimedes ADFS discs. To convert a file from MS_DOS to
ADFS is easy - it's just a matter of dragging the appropriate file(s) from the viewer to
another. With this you can convert graphics, Soundtracker and samples from the Amiga
and graphics from the PC.

There seem to be a large number of Soundtracker front end players at the moment;
over 6 at the last count and all of them have varying play modules and facilities. If you
want lots of functions whilst playing in the desktop you should get !STplay which has
a sample ripper, a graphics equaliser and a graphical control unit. One or two libraries
are adopting The Serial Port's !JukeBox format. It's not really worth getting because
the 8 track player written by Hugo Fiennes and Matthew Farrow is becoming increa-
singly popular.

The cheap but cheerful version of the £49.95 !Tracker program, !Coconiser,
is finally here. Written by those guys at Armaxess, it is not strictly Sound-
tracker format, but you can convert tunes to this format and even
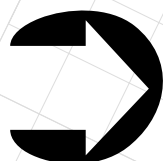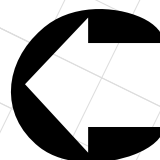compose your own tunes!

Technical manuals for 3.5 inch disc drives. Including connector details, internal links, DIP switch settings, interface circuits etc., for Schugart, Teac, NEC, Cinnon, Mitsubishi, Citizen and Sony drives. Each manual contains a wealth of information for enthusiastic A3000 owners who wish to attach additional disc drives to their computer. Only £5.00 each. Postage and Packing is free to Club A3000 members, just quote your membership number.
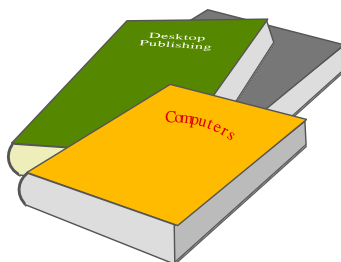
Phone Edd on 0493-441394, evenings.

I can advise on suitable suppliers of the IDC connectors and cables used to connect these drives to your equipment, or alternatively arrange to have them made at very reasonable prices.

EMR

IN CONJUNCTION WITH
CLUB A3000
ANNOUNCE A NEW

MUSIC USERS' GROUP

Musicians of all ages and musical abilities can benefit by joining this exciting new branch of Club A3000!

Now you can enjoy sharing your own music compositions and sound creations with many others with a similar interest in using the Archimedes for great music making... There will be m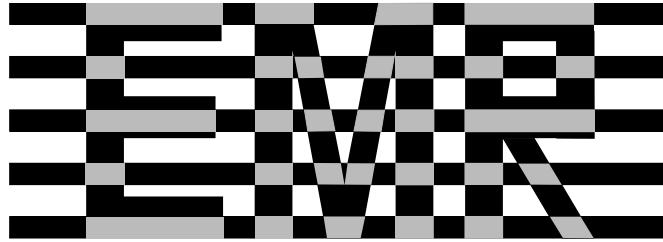eetings which you can attend with the chance to exchange your own music files and original sound samples - plus special presentations by well-known musicians in the computer music field. Special discounts on EMR software and training courses will be available to members of Club A3000, and a monthly newsletter will be published giving hints and tips and the latest information on new products in the hi-tech world of computer music using MIDI. Whether you own an Archimedes or not - here is a great opportunity to see, hear and learn about this amazing computer in action for musicians of all abilities.

For more information and an application form, please send an S.A.E. to the Club address (see back page).

TELSTAR PD

Telstar PD can now offer 300 PD discs. Just send £1 for our demo disc which has more information.

By ordering our demo disc you will automatically be entered into our free draw to win 20 PD discs.

We are looking for games created with the brilliant ALPS and CREATOR, from Alpine. If you have made any games with these why not send them in and let other people enjoy them?

Telstar PDSL, 40 Alderbrook Close, Rollenston, Staffs, DE13 9AH

SCANNING FOR THE ARCHIMEDES

If you want high quality images suitable for DTP, I can scan any picture or photograph up to A4 size into a Mode 15 sprite (which can be in the form of a 24 bit per pixel file for subsequent processing by Acorn's !ChangeFSI program).

For more information and a disc of sample images, please send a cheque for £2.40 to:
Ken Warwick, 9 Ingleby Gdns, Chigwell, ESSEX, IG7 6EH. Phone 081-500 5701.

A LONG SCSI STORY

by Nick Evans

Working in the hospital environment I greeted the arrival of SCSI and removable hard drives i.e. SyQuest MR45 with considerable anticipation. The thought of being able to lock away the sensitive patient data in a safe at night seemed irresistible, especially as the Archimedes is a relatively transparent machine as far as programs on a hard disc are concerned and only needs a little knowledge to be able to catalogue and hence download files onto floppies etc.

I looked around at the drives and in December placed an order for the MR45 from the main importers, Sys-Gen. I then looked around for a suitable SCSI interface. I decided that I would prefer a 16 bit to an 8 bit interface as the potential for connecting scanners, laser printers etc. in the future seemed interesting. This ruled out the Lingenuity and also Acorn boards, leaving Oak or the new (at that time) TechnoSCSI cards. Having tried in vain to get hold of an Oak board (Oak prefer to sell the podule and drive together) I wandered the six miles to Technomatic and purchased the SCSI podule. I was fairly happy with this having read page 15 of the December 1990 issue of Archive which said that the board worked with the MR45 removable drives.

I took it home and then came the first upset. The leads were incompatible since the TechnoSCSI podule has a 50 way Centronics type female socket and the removable drives come with a 25pin D plug as standard at that end of the lead. I went out to Maplins and bought two male 50 way Centronics IDC plugs order code JB56L at £5.65 each and 1 metre of flat 50 way IDC cable no. XR79L for 60 pence. A quick press in a vice and powered up. Lights then glowed hopefully.

The next thing was to configure SCSIFS, SCSIDirCache, SCSIdrive according to the Technomatic 4 page manual. Nothing happened. A quick call to Technomatic showed that a full stop had been inserted where a it didn't belong (blame their typesetter) and the problem was soon remedied.

I then was able to format the hard disc. Brilliant, I thought, and started to transfer files from my internal 40meg drive to the SCSI drive. Oh dear! the SCSI drive crashed the Archimedes after loading a couple of files. A reset was needed and then more files could be transferred, but again the SCSI drive crashed. After four attempts, crashes and resets I managed to transfer Impression onto the SCSI drive.

A phone call to Technomatic caused me to spend an afternoon there and discuss the problem with Richard Brain who wrote the software. Nothing was really solved and so I left the drive with them (very altruistic) and hoped that a software patch could be written to get over the problem.

Two months later the drive still wouldn't work with the TechnoSCSI board and I was told that it was the software on the board itself that was at fault. A newer version (FD2) was now produced - mine being version EOJ, but even that won't work. I have had to accept that the TechnoSCSI board is incompatible with the MR45 removable drive at the present time. It is also incompatible with the Acorn SCSIsoftware at the moment, although this is being re-written at the present time.

The removable drive does work well with both the Oak and Lingenuity SCSI boards and I am very happy with the Oak board that I now possess. (Does anyone want to buy a TechnoSCSI board?)

The other thing that I have discovered in this tale lasting nearly three months is the problem of connecting leads.

As I have said the TechnoSCSI board needs the lead to have a 50 way Centronics type IDC plug (a bigger version of the plug that fits into most printers), the Lingenuity board needs a 25 pin D type plug (such as that found on the printer cable that fits into the Archimedes, and the Acorn and Oak boards needs to have a 2 * 25 double row IDC connector (box-type) similar in design to the cable which joins the internal floppy disc drive to the main board. If you want to daisy chain 2 SCSI devices then you will probably need a lead with 50 way Centronics male plugs at each end.

It is important to make sure that you specify which board your SCSI drive to be connected to, as these cable are not cheap to buy. A Macintosh SCSI daisy-chain lead will cost nearly £45.00. I would also suggest that you buy from a local dealer if possible, or by credit card so as to have some protection in law if things don't quite work out. I am a little surprised that there are still problems with SCSI podules - the standard is not new, and has been overtaken already by other systems with much faster data transfer times than the standard SCSI can manage.
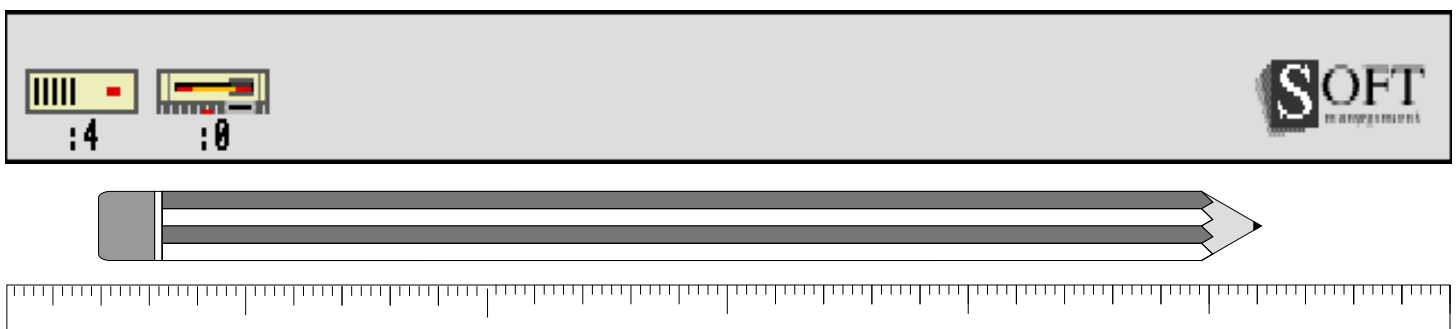
FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

On the 17th November we will be holding the 3rd official Club A3000 user show at Mill Hill School. Based on a similar theme to the previous one held there on 23rd June, we will once again be placing emphasis on members meeting other members and establishing contacts. With the increased support from software companies, coupled with increasing Club membership, the event promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Whilst on the subject of shows, we will be 'exhibiting' at the BAU show in mid-October (well, we'll be there at least!) BAU have once again kindly donated a stand for the Club. This once again represents an excellent opportunity to meet up with members and exchange thoughts and ideas.

We must express our grateful thanks to Computer Concepts who generously loaned us one of their LaserDirect HiRes printer for a few days. In case there is anyone out there who doesn't already know, Computer Concepts are the company behind the Impression suite of DeskTop Publishing programs for the Archimedes which basically wipe the floor with the competition both on the Archimedes and the PCs. Offering facilities similar to those programs on the Apple Mac and PC, Impression is available for a fraction of the cost.

You will notice that this magazine is not a cheap photocopy bodge like our introductory newsletter. This is because the printer used to print this out, Computer Concept's LaserDirect HiRes, can print both text and graphics at resolutions of up to 600*600 dpi (dots per inch). Considering that traditional Laser Printers (which typically cost TWICE the price) can usually manage resolutions of just 300*300dpi, professionally designed and printed material need not involve going to the printers!

club A3000

The user club for the Archimedes

I wish to enrol as a member of Club A3000: The Archimedes owners' Club

Name . . . . First Name(s) . . . .

Address . . . .

. . . .

Post Code . . . . Telephone Number . . . .

Which model of Archimedes do you own?   A3000/A300 series/A400 series/ A500 series . . . .

What are your Archimedes interests? Please tick as many as you like

Education (which field?) . . . . Music . . . .

Games . . . . Midi . . . .

DTP . . . . Graphics . . . .

WP . . . . Research . . . .

Programming . . . . Databases . . . .

Spreadsheets . . . . Other (specify) . . . .

The Archimedes programs with which I am most familiar are . . . .

. . . .

Extra hardware that I own and use are . . . .

. . . .

Please tick the following as appropriate —

I would be prepared to offer some of my hardware for the purposes of Club members (e.g. if you have a scanner,

would you be prepared to scan pictures for Club members?) . . . .

I would be willing to be a contact for my area . . . .

I do not mind having my 'phone number given to other members . . . .

I enclose herewith a donation (minimum of £6) towards the Club. I understand that the Club does not make money in any way, and the donation is used to pay for administrative costs (such as postage, correspondence etc.).

Please sign . . . . Send to Rene Barreto at the Club Address printed overleaf. . .