

The magazine for members of

The **ARM** *Club*

**AGM, Bye-Laws and
Constitution**

On line with Psion 5

DrawWorks Designer

The Doom Trilogy

**Cromwell the
Fire Fighter**



Issue 26 — Summer 1998

The Seventh Veil

After those few tantalising glimpses at various places over the last few months, the time has come for Acorn to cast off the final veil and reveal the as yet unnamed Risc PC II in all its glory at the Wakefield Show.

The question now is whether this is going to be an innovative new computer, as exciting as the BBC B, the Archimedes and the existing Risc PC were at their launches, or just an upgraded version two of what many of us have already.

Whatever the answer, its impact will be crucial to the future of Acorn machines. At its worst and most pessimistic, it could be the end of the Acorn range but if, as we hope, it is just the latest of a continuing line, the future will be truly exciting! Each of the key Acorn computers listed above has introduced startling new features unimaginable when its predecessor first appeared. What might there be in a following generation of Acorn desktops in three or four years time?!

The choice of Wakefield for the official launch of the Risc PC II — even if we still have a long wait to buy it — is a tribute to the prestige the Show has gained in the few years it has been running. The credit goes to the group of enthusiasts who began it; ordinary Acorn users — such as those who founded and run The ARM Club — pursuing a keen interest with no financial motives.

Strangely, although there may be fewer people using Acorns now, Acorn shows appear to be booming. What began as The ARM Club's Open Days in a small school room have now become so well attended that John Stonier, who now organises our shows, has spent weeks searching for a hall big enough to take this year's Acorn SouthEast Show. Fortunately he has succeeded and we look forward to seeing you in Stevenage on 27th June. (Full details are on page 37.)

Peter Jennings

All opinions expressed in Eureka are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Club or its Committee members and officers.

CONTENTS

4 The Kent Acorn Show

Members mix Club business with pleasure at the Merton Hall open day and AGM.

6 DrawWorks Designer

The prize-winning program with the bolt-on features for Draw.

10 Tiger

Age improves the big cat utility for indexing your files with full descriptions. * *On Disc*

12 Matti Mole's Summer Holiday

A fun trip with some subtle humour that all the family will enjoy (and its educational too).

17 Illicit and Jaguar

Two utilities for a fiver, allowing you to write long descriptions for files and directories and encrypt them.

20 Annual General Meeting

A review of the Club's year and its plans for the future.

21 Constitution and Bye-Laws

Read the updated rules.

26 FontFX

Version six of the program which allows you to mould and mangle text for all the effects you can imagine.

30 1stSpex

Interior designing for infants with plans that get a 3D look.

34 CDFast2

Software to speed up your CD-ROM drive.

37 The Acorn SouthEast Show

A June date for your diary.

38 Cromwell the Fire Fighter

The excitement and action of a fire fighter's day, brought to life with video clips and sound.

41 AppByType

A file type identification utility to track down the source of those blank icons.

44 Psion 5 gets Web connected

Pocket Book Corner goes surfing and looks forward to Sienna connectivity and Pocket Book 3.

48 A Quarter of cockups and errors

An explanation of the problems that have beset the Club recently.

53 TextEase HTML Reader/Writer

The simple way to convert your TextEase pages into HTML for a Web site.

56 DataPower 2

The new relational version of the powerful database from Iota.

60 Around the Clubs

A visit to The North West London Computer Club and the first year diary of the of the The Surrey and Sussex Acorn User Group.

65 TriLink Terminal Package

Log on to those Bulletin Boards with a fast package with all the features you are likely to need.

68 Using the Toolbox from BASIC

Editing and deleting new diary events is covered in part five of our series. * *On Disc*

78 The Doom Trilogy

Let battle commence in the Acorn Arena with the long awaited games with amazing speed, sound and visual effects.

*** Entries marked *On Disc* have programs on the Eureka disc.**

Programs On The Eureka Disc

- A4: A directory of useful A4 applications.
- Final Look: Makes a pre-Risc OS 3.5 machine appear much more attractive.
- JfShared: Resources for PD applications.
- Pager: Internet paging utility.
- QuickFiler: Shortcuts to the Filer.
- Resistor: Works out resistor colours.
- Splatter: An extra Artworks module.

Additional programs on the ***HD disc only:***

- Glass: Replaces the sprites in the Argonet Voyager suite.
- Grab: Grabs the WIMP sprite spool and saves as a sprite.
- QServer: Easy connection to Internet Quake servers.
- QTalk: Talking to Quake Servers application.
- RevInvite: Demo about the Revelation Demo Party.

The Kent Acorn Show

I was very pleased to arrive at the Show slightly late and find it already quite busy. I had been a little apprehensive after last year when we didn't do a very good job with the publicity and it seemed that members of The ARM Club Committee outnumbered the visitors.

demonstrating some of the weird and wonderful effects of Photodesk, making the picture of me even more hideous than usual.

I don't know if the people from Spacetech on the other side of the hall appreciated the free advertising of

David Ruck reports on the Club's open day and AGM at Merton Court School, Sidcup, in March, and enjoys the nostalgia of a jumble sale with some historic items.

Despite such hiccups as the street name not being on some maps we provided, and the Countryside March making things difficult for people travelling through the centre of London, a good number of people managed to make it. We were also delighted to have a dozen exhibitors attending too.

Regular stand holders at our open days, the Clarringbulls, were making their picture badges again. Each of us on the Committee has one so people can put names to faces at shows. However, on this occasion Andrew and Sarah spent most of the time

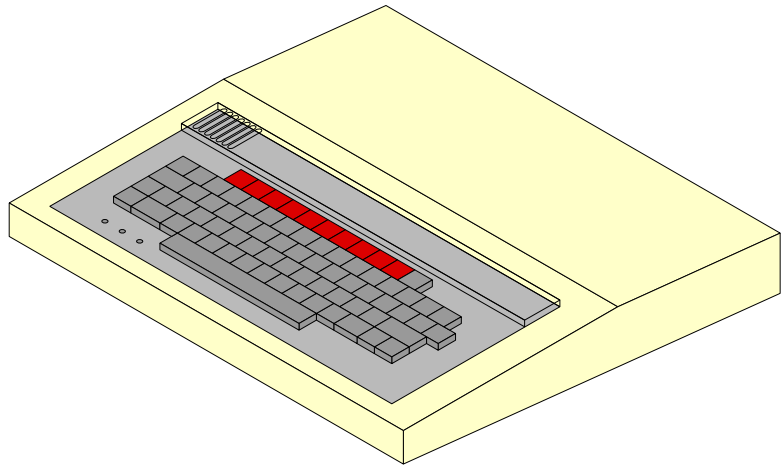
their product, but I certainly didn't appreciate finding pictures of myself with green punk hair and thick purple make-up stuck up around the hall!

Bring and buy

A large stand in the middle of the hall was reserved for a bring and buy sale of old equipment, most of which was provided by our treasurer, Simon.

He had a clean out of his cupboards at home and dug up two enormous crates of equipment, ranging from the Acorn Atom to the A5000 and with heaps of peripherals and software for every machine in between.

The clichéd image of sweet old dears down the jumble sale saying “I’ll give you 50p for that coat young man and not a penny more” has certainly gone out the window. These days you are more likely to find a wise older lady buying the increasing rare spare Acorn spares for future speculation!



Unsold nostalgia — a BBC B for a fiver

The only thing we didn’t manage to sell was a vintage BBC B, despite only asking for £5 and throwing in as many cassette leads as you could carry.

After the Show had finished, The ARM Club held its AGM. Despite not being the most thrilling of events on the calendar we were pleased that several members stayed and participated in the meeting.

Free raffle

The ARM Club ran a free raffle for everyone who came, with prizes of software and also a couple of bottles of wine (that’s more like it!). The draw was quite amusing because not everyone who left had given us back their ticket, so no-one claimed the first half dozen which were picked.

Thanks to Chris and Merton Court School for providing the venue and loan of computer equipment again this year and to all who attended and made it a very nice day out.

Everyone was just beginning to despair that we’d have to work our way through every ticket when we found a lucky winner.

AGM report

You can read a report on the AGM on page 20 and this is followed by the latest versions of the Club’s Constitution and Bye-Laws in full.

DrawWorks Designer

Draw is part and parcel of every Acorn machine and it reflects well upon Acorn that although Draw has attracted a number of low cost peripheral programs (such as *Drawtools* from RISC User), one has to spend quite a lot of money to get a

Draw. As DWD is installed, one has the option to install a patch (on a once and for all basis) to upgrade to OS 3.5. I tested DWD on an A5000 (4MB) and on cancelling the patch option, DWD starts up with a smart logo and an irritating jingle. Loading Draw subsequently produces a

Roger Price adds some useful extra features to Draw with the latest version of the bolt-on program which won a Best Graphics Software award for iSV.

major improvement (on, for example, *ArtWorks*).

DrawWorks Designer (DWD) fills the gap between the low cost peripherals and the major improvements by offering a bolt-on program that will enhance the way in which Draw can be used whilst retaining the simple and intuitive Draw interface. iSV must be congratulated upon the quality of fusion between the old and the new — it can't have been easy!

DWD comes on an 800K disc but requires to be put on a hard drive. It copied across flawlessly, but to get it to run correctly it must be installed upon the icon bar before loading

familiar (but newly renovated) Draw window, with the addition of a two row button bar at the top.

The button bars duplicate, but do not replace, the functions of Draw accessed from menus so that, instead of navigating menu trees, it is possible to short cut via the button bars. As a long term user of Draw, I am familiar with many of the keyboard short cuts and so I was a little taken aback to find that the button bars really are quicker. A particularly useful feature is that text processing is independent of menus and that the text font (and attributes) can be predefined as a 'style'. Thus to produce the reflection effect is straightforward but tedious in Draw,

but very fast in DWD.

At this level then, DWD enhances the use of Draw, but hardly generates excitement. However, the program offers a number of other features which make it much more attractive. To be fair, some of these are available in other programs, or from Draw itself, but put together they make DWD an interesting and useful proposition. DWD offers the user the chance to configure the program, so that the features described above can be accessed from all levels, but by selecting the 'student' option, only these simplest features will be available.

The next level up includes more advanced colour handling than in Draw. For users of OS3.1, 256 colours are available from the colour picker, with 24 bit colour supported by OS 3.5. Diagrams produced can be saved as Drawfiles, with colour intact, and the speed of selection makes for fast editing, even if a more artistic reviewer is needed to take full advantage! More significantly, images can also be saved as anti-aliased sprites, JPEG or GIFF files which allows easy export to the Internet or to the opposition. (These features use ChangeFSI which must have been seen by the computer).

Reflection

Reflection

Reflections

A very fast reflection effect

The program also supports colour separations.

As mentioned above, text styles can be predefined, but at this level they can also be subjected to standard 2D transforms, allowing rotation and many other effects. At this point, my enthusiasm for the program falters a little as the program outgrows its on screen help. Help comes with an information bar, or through the Acorn application. Beyond this is a 68-page on-screen manual, which is good — up to a point. It is clearly presented and prints out well but contains a number of spelling and other minor mistakes. I feel that it would have been useful to give an 'idiot's-guide' to 2D transforms, rather than the clever but obscure examples. I have tried to rectify this by providing a table (on next page) which provides a simple way for the non-mathematician to start.

I found one of the most intriguing features of this program to be the

	a	c	b	d
Identity	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Rotation cw	<i>cos θ</i>	<i>sin θ</i>	<i>- sin θ</i>	<i>cos θ</i>
Rotation ccw	<i>cos θ</i>	<i>- sin θ</i>	<i>sin θ</i>	<i>cos θ</i>
Scale	<i>S₁</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>S₂</i>
Reflect (x)	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-1</i>
Reflect (y)	<i>-1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Shear (x)	<i>1</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Shear (y)	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1</i>

Transforms as follows:

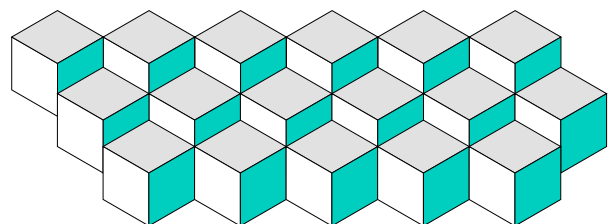
$$\text{new_x} = \text{old_x} * \mathbf{a} + \text{old_y} * \mathbf{c} + \mathbf{e}$$

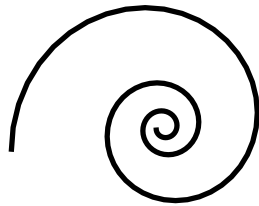
$$\text{new_y} = \text{old_x} * \mathbf{b} + \text{old_y} * \mathbf{d} + \mathbf{f}$$

2D transforms for the non-mathematician

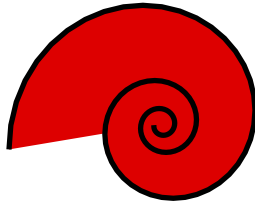
Edit feature which allows instant access to the editing of vector objects, including fonts. Such features are available in Draw, but DWD does make it very quick and easy to produce special letters for dropped or illuminated capitals by eliminating the sub-menu within sub-menu structure which makes editing so inaccessible. Taken with the DWD step-and-repeat tool, it is possible to build up borders etc. without effort or eyestrain and the illustration *Quick borders* (on

opposite page) shows the letter R in Homerton Bold after just a few moments work. This tool also allows complex patterns to be built up without repetitive copying and with greater accuracy than Draw will easily allow (see below). Because there is no need to access the Draw

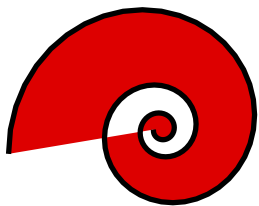




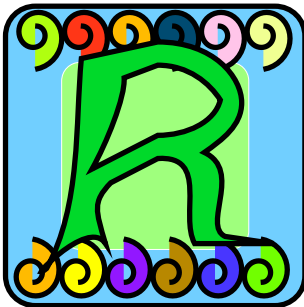
no fill



non zero



even-odd



Quick borders

which allows patterns to be produced and is also useful for producing stencil effects. Users of 4Mations's *Vector* program will be familiar with the idea. Lastly we have the facility to mould objects to predefined shapes. Again, this feature is not new, ICS's *DrawBender* does the same job but it is convenient to have the feature

sub-menus, the use of relatively obscure aspects of Draw, such as the winding rule, become easily accessible and the spirals used in *Quick borders* show examples of non-zero and even-odd filling. Filling of letters is also easy and the paths within outline fonts can be split and filled separately (see below).

Other features of DWD include a 'merge' tool

built in to this program. As mentioned above, the program can be customised to an appropriate user level and can also be customised to load Draw automatically. Other preset features include location of the button bars and the facility to switch off the help line.

Easy to use

Overall, I found DWD easy to use and bug free. As buttons are pressed, one sometimes sees Draw menus flash before ones eyes and this is a little disconcerting at first but this is presumably a consequence of bolting the two programs together. Obviously there is something of a learning curve and I suspect that newcomers to Draw would take to the button bar more quickly, Nevertheless, even experienced users of Draw have much to gain.

DrawWorks Designer

Price: £31.50 inc VAT and post
Upgrade from DrawWorks2 £16.50
(return master disc).

Supplier: iSV Products
86 Turnberry, Home Farm,
Bracknell, Berks, RG12 8ZH,

Tel/Fax: 01344 455769

Fax: 01344 55769

Email: atimbrell@aol.com

Obscure

Tiger 5

Tiger, which is a big cat(aloguer), provides a quick and easy way of seeing the contents of your directories, automatically listed with information and optional descriptions of up to 140 characters for each object. It was originally designed to

top offers various facilities.

The descriptions can be typed in or entered in various other ways, including dragging, selecting and saving and importing by way of the Tiger buffer or by using the provided

Nearly eight years on from its debut, the latest version of the 'big cat' utility offers even more features for indexing your directories with extended descriptions.

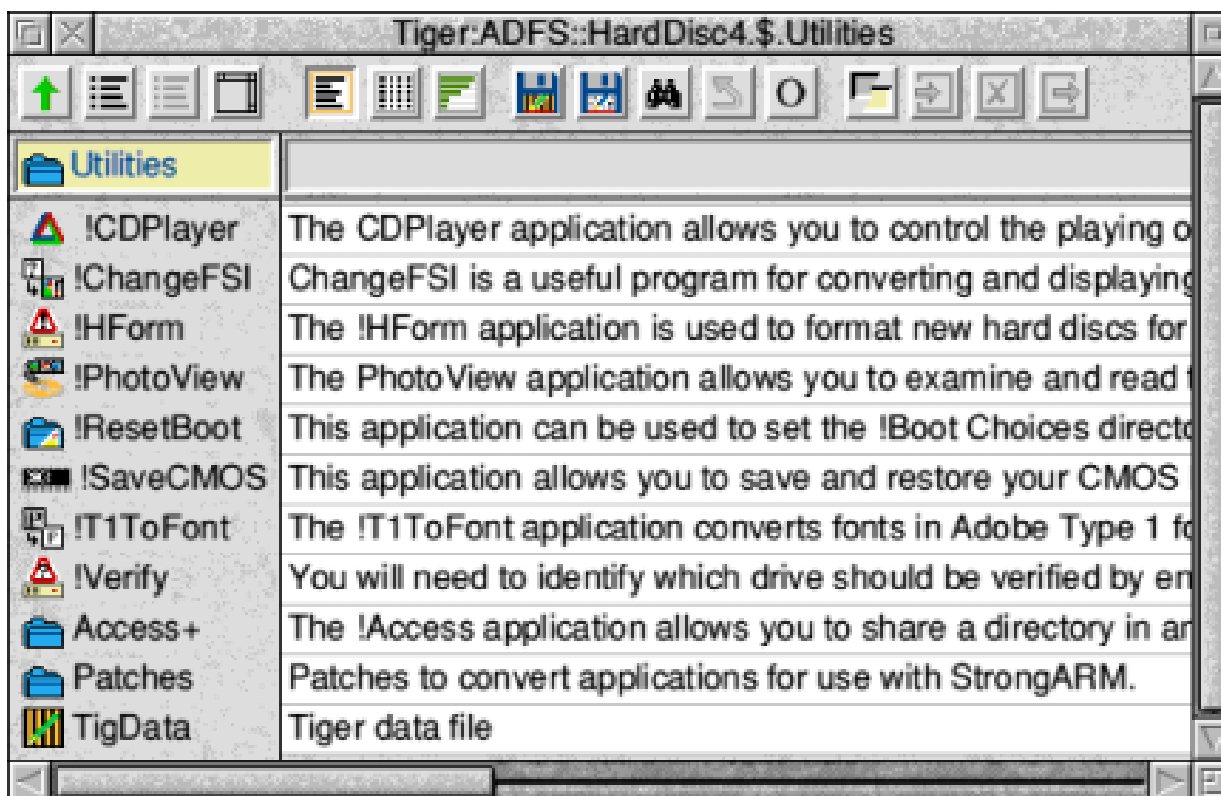
overcome the 10-character limit for RISC OS filenames and was first uncaged as a program in RISC User in October 1990. Since then it has continued to develop and add more features, changing from PD to shareware and reaching version 5.05 in February this year.

A catalogues is created by dragging a directory or any file within it onto the Tiger icon on the icon bar. This immediately opens a window with a table of all the objects in the directory, displaying their icon and name, and with space beside each for extended descriptions which can be added and edited as you wish. A button bar at the

PtrCopy PD utility which copies characters as the mouse pointer is moved across them. The descriptions are stored as a datafile within the directory and they can also be saved as a text or CSV file, making it possible to compile a catalogue of all the directories on a disc. There is also a search facility.

The window acts like a filer, allowing objects to be opened or run by clicking on their icons in the usual way.

The display can be changed from showing descriptions to listing object information or nested sizes.



The Tiger descriptions window

Two copies of Tiger can be run together, allowing information from two different directories to be viewed simultaneously and even dragged between them.

Tiger is offered on a very good try before you buy system. Internet users can download the latest version from the Web and this is completely functional except that it is restricted to displaying only 10 objects per directory. Buyers are emailed a registration file which is simply added to the User directory to convert the demo version to full use.

MenuBar and WorkTop which, with Tiger, form the DeskTop Suite, will be reviewed in the next issue.

Tiger

Price: £15 (No VAT)

Upgrades £7.50

Site licence: £25 (2-5 machines)
up to maximum £95 (36 or more).

Supplier: Graham Crow

Manor Lodge, Llangattock,
Monmouth, Gwent NP5 4NG

Tel/Fax: 01600 772532

Email: gmcrow@argonet.co.uk

Web:

www.argonet.co.uk/users/gmcrow

Matti Mole's Summer Holiday

Every so often a new debate rages in the media about why so many of our children can't —or won't — read. Are they bored? Is the material at the wrong level? Do they forget quicker than they learn? Whatever the reason, we are told that our

Guide and booklet containing some very useful associated educational ideas.

Minimum requirements for the Acorn are an A3020, RGB monitor, dual speed CD-ROM drive and 2MB RAM. I was a bit spoiled, having a

Rilla Paterson goes on holiday with Matti Mole, playing games and exploring pictures, and discovers another educational winner from Sherston.

classrooms are a breeding ground for illiteracy. Well there is certainly no excuse now, for Sherston have once again come up with a superb reading aid, brimming with interest and activity to tempt the most hardened truant.

“Matti Mole's Summer Holiday” — and I quote from the package cover — “is a delightful interactive story for junior children ... full of fun and surprises together with a wealth of stimulating language activities, all cleverly linked into the storyline.”

It comes as a triple CD for the Acorn, PC and Mac, accompanied by a short but comprehensive User

Risc PC with 34MB RAM and a 24-speed CD-ROM. The instructions were very clear to anyone reasonably familiar with the basics and I encountered no problems running it from the PC side either. However, I was unable to see how well the program runs with less sophisticated hardware as might be found in a school.

The program can be run directly from the CD if required. The software keeps a record of the child's name and the level of activity achieved, but this record-keeping facility operates only when the software is installed onto the hard disc first and not if run directly from the CD.

enough to sustain plenty of interest. Too often in programs of this kind the tale is finished almost before it's begun, but not so here. The programmers, Mike Matson and Hans Rijnen, have paid a great deal of attention to detail and made use of many opportunities for those little extras that are guaranteed to appeal to the more observant reader.

The narration is very high quality, and in appropriate places contains sections pronounced in an endearing French accent. Every time Matti earns some money coins drop into her purse and when she eventually has enough, the purse changes to a plane ticket. There is another wonderful moment when two rabbits make eyes at one another. It is almost imperceptible, and would probably go unnoticed were it not for the fact that in the next screen the

pair have become surrounded by about twenty babies. No further reference is made to this event — it just happens, and if you are quick you can see Matti give a quiet chuckle as she, too, notices. The whole of Sherston Ltd must have been howling with laughter.

Positive reinforcement

We also find very strong images to illustrate the occasional French words: a signpost carrying the word *L'ECOLE* is constantly changing, fading to *SCHOOL* and back again, toggling between the two. Children reading that French word for the first time will never forget the translation; the image is so strongly reinforced.

Every opportunity for positive reinforcement has been exploited. We find it in the story itself, for example:



"You are a tired penguin,"
says Matti.

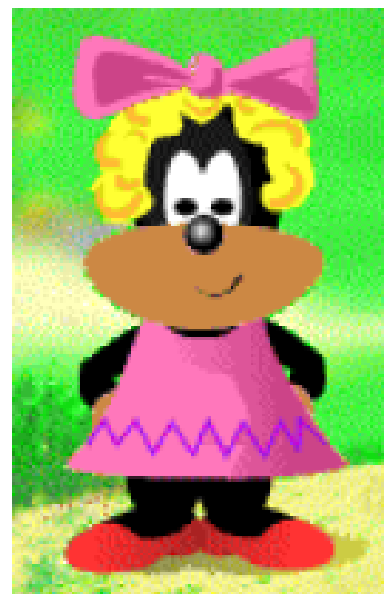
"A tired, hungry penguin,"
he tells her.

"A tired, hungry, friendly
penguin," Matti says.

"And handsome?"

Matti thinks for a moment.

"All right," she says, *"You*
are a tired, hungry, friendly,
handsome penguin."



Games and activities

Every so often the story pauses for a diversion. With each interactive screen, the user is invited to *Explore the picture* by clicking on various objects.

Poking a swimming duck causes it, predictably enough, to fly off the screen with a suitable duck noise. Then, just as you are wondering where it has gone, the creature suddenly plummets vertically into the water with a thud. In another screen an ice-cream flag zaps an unsuspecting bird, transferring its creamy image to a surprised and indignant beak.

The prize, though, goes to the woodpecker, as in a noisy and impressive Black-and-Decker-style overdrive it literally *turns* the post on which it has been resting into an exquisitely carved newel post! There are four games to play, including a spot-the-difference and putting objects in the correct places. Another of these involves finding humans in the zoo but the zookeepers are penguins and the humans are behind bars, pacing up and down like caged leopards.

At every point in the journey the program enhances reading skills. Even diversions such as the games require the child to carry out instructions which must first be read.

In addition, there are 16 activities which emphasise particular language skills. Each of these is designed like a game. For example, in *Capital Letters and Full Stops and Speech Marks* text is displayed and children have to click on the places where the punctuation should go. Matti in the corner shakes her head if a mistake is made. The child cannot leave the screen until the activity has been completed correctly, accompanied by congratulatory gestures from the enthusiastic Mole.

Other activities include: Verbs, Composite Words, Tenses, Alphabetical Order, Opposites, Definitions, Plurals, Questions, Nouns and adjectives. For *Plurals*, endings like “ies” or “eys” need to be selected as appropriate. There is even an intriguing *Backward Words* section, included to emphasise how words should look when correctly written and exploring the phenomenon of the palindrome. (One wonders whether the programmers could have included a section on the humble but often misused apostrophe — in Version 2, perhaps?) Each of these sections is quite short, but just long enough to maintain interest.

A separate *Options* screen sets the level of difficulty. The third level is noticeably more difficult than the

Alphabetical order

- 1.
- 2.
3. door
4. tables
5. tablet
- 6.
7. bark
8. bath
9. alien
10. house
11. dream
12. timber
13. foot

Put the words in alphabetical order starting with the first one.

first. I had to think quite carefully before placing words like *painting*, *paints* and *palette* in alphabetical order. The vocabulary throughout is varied enough to be stimulating, and again, more advanced at the higher level.

Conclusion

We all learn at different rates and mixed ability in the classroom is here to stay. Software which can cope with this variation is invaluable. A program with such imagination as this, with its constantly changing screens and very full list of options and activities, would make it an exciting addition to any classroom, and good value for money. I only wish that Matti Mole had been born in 1947. I'd have had a lot more fun.

Incidentally, I've just noticed that Sherston is near Malmesbury. How about a story of two little street-wise pigs on their way to the slaughterhouse...?

Matti Mole's Summer Holiday

Price: £40 +VAT

Site licence: £75 +VAT

Supplier: Sherston Software Ltd
Angel House, Sherston,
Malmesbury, Wiltshire,
SN16 0LH.

Tel: 01666 840433

Fax: 01666 840048

Email: sales@sherston.co.uk

Illicit & Jaguar

Upon opening the package, a folded A4 manual popped out with a high density floppy disc nestled in the centre. The manual, consisting of a front page and two instruction sheets stapled together is very basic in appearance. Each sheet

before use, however I found the application very simple to use.

Although the instructions don't mention loading !WBModules, which is also provided, it is essential to do this, otherwise Illicit throws up an

John Stonier checks out two utilities at a very modest price which let you hide your secret files from other eyes and give files and directories extended descriptions.

consists of a brief introduction with instructions listed in a logical and concise manner. Both Illicit and Jaguar are compressed into one file using PackDir, which is also supplied.

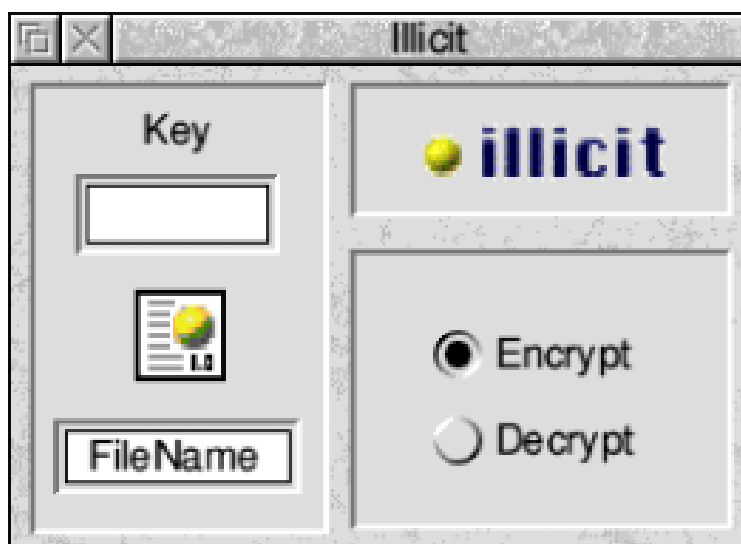
error box requesting the 'WB' module and refuses to load onto the icon bar.

Once loaded, encrypting a file is simplicity itself. The file to be

Illicit

Illicit allows you to both encrypt and decrypt any type of file using a user defined key. This could be useful for backing up confidential data or sending private files via email.

The documentation recommends that the instruction sheet is read



The Illicit encryption window

encrypted needs to be dragged onto the Illicit icon which causes a window to appear in the centre of the screen. Making sure that the *Encrypt* button is set, a filename needs be typed in and up to

Original file	Encrypted file	Time
1k	17k	1 sec
50k	800k	8 secs
100k	1.5MB	17 secs
500k	8MB	88 secs

Illicit encryption times

seven numbers entered and these are used as a key to encrypt the data. It' s then a case of dragging the file to where you want it saved. Illicit saves the encrypted file displaying its own special icon. It' s worth noting that encrypted files are substantially larger than the original files. However the time taken to encrypt a file seems quite reasonable.

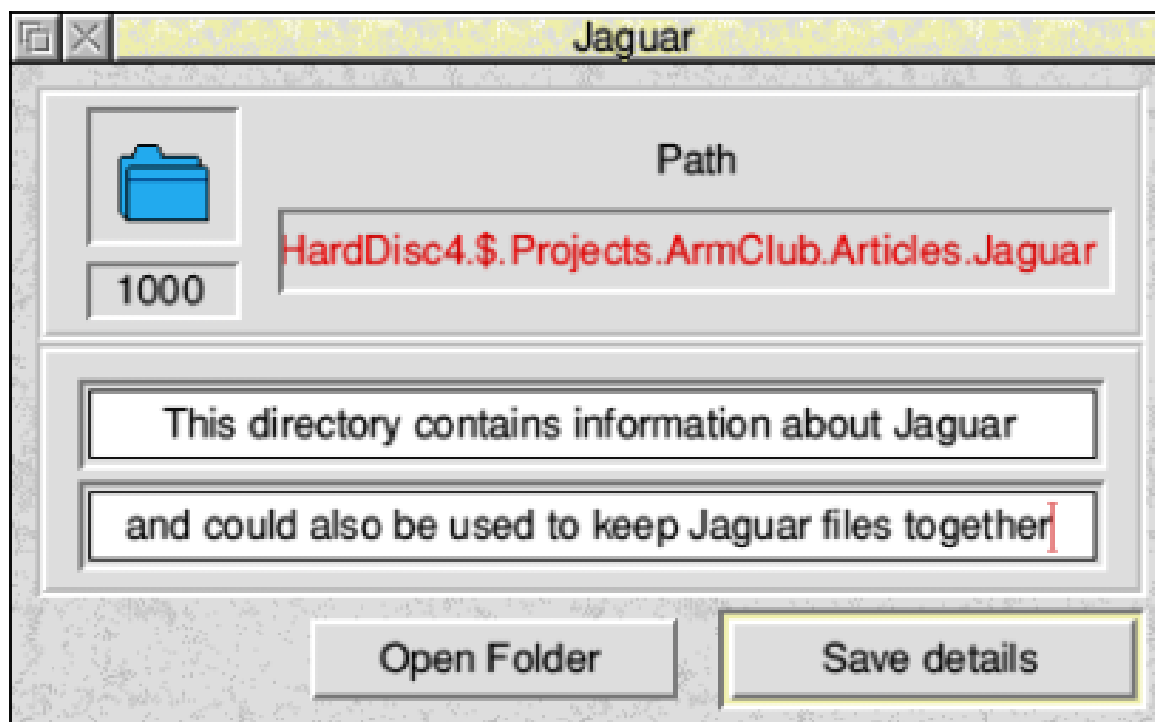
Decrypting a file is more or less the same process in reverse. Simply drag an encrypted file to the Illicit icon, which brings up the same window. A filename needs to be typed in along with the key number that was used to encrypt the file, ensuring that the *Decrypt* button is set. The file icon should then be dragged into a directory where the file is saved in its original format.

Illicit is very easy to use and if you simply want to protect your private data from prying eyes, without understanding the principles of data encryption, it is well worth considering.

Jaguar

According to the instruction sheet, Jaguar gives extended descriptions to files, applications and directories.

As with Illicit, make sure that the !WBModules has been loaded first. Once the Jaguar icon appears on the icon bar, it' s simply a case of dragging a file, application or directory to the Jaguar icon. A window appears displaying the file' s filepath, filetype and two fields which allow you to type in a description. Once this has been entered you press the *Save details* button and the data is saved.



The Jaguar window for entering the extended file or directory description

Every time you drag a file to the Jaguar icon the extra information is displayed. It is even possible to execute the application or open a directory should you need to.

To be honest, I'm not sure who this application is specifically aimed at. On a positive note, it gives you the flexibility of storing information specific to a file, which you may otherwise forget. However, the application doesn't do anything else and it's the sort of program that is more likely to be PD than commercial.

Conclusion

The main application on this disc has to be Illicit, which is a very useful tool. Jaguar is a poor second and I suspect that most people will want to buy the disc purely for Illicit alone.

Illicit & Jaguar

Price: £5 (no VAT)

Supplier: X developments

18 Park Avenue

Wreccsam

LL12 7AH

Tel: 01978 264929

Email: xeev@netmatters.co.uk

Annual General Meeting of The ARM Club held 1st March 1998

The Chairman thanked everyone on the Committee for their hard work over the previous year. He identified increased involvement from a greater proportion of the membership as a key objective for the coming year in order to avoid increasing problems resulting from long standing committee members having less time to devote to the Club.

Mark Smith, Honorary Chairman

The Treasurer confirmed that the Club accounts are still looking healthy and that the Club is solvent and able to continue operating for the foreseeable future. The point was made that the membership fee barely covers all the direct costs of sending out the joining pack and four issues of Eureka in a year and that the running costs are being heavily subsidised by sales of the Club software.

Simon Burrows, Honorary Treasurer

The Membership Secretary pointed out that membership figures have been slowly declining from a peak of 1,500 about two years ago. The

current membership stands at just under 1,000 having risen slightly at the end of last year with new joiners at Acorn World '97 and other end of year events. The decline was generally felt to be a result of reduced interest generally in the Acorn desktop market, although we need to consider what we can do to improve renewal rates.

***Toby Smith, Honorary Membership
Secretary***

Amendments to Constitution and Bye-laws

All proposed amendments were accepted unanimously. The new Constitution and Bye-laws are published in this issue of Eureka.

Election of Committee & Officers

All existing Committee members were re-elected unopposed. No new nominations were received. The committee will re-elect its officers at the first committee meeting.

Any Other Business

It was unanimously agreed to award Nick Evans an Honorary Life Membership in recognition of outstanding service to the Club over a prolonged period of time.

CONSTITUTION OF THE ARM CLUB

Article 1 Name

The name of the Association shall be The ARM Club.

Article 2 Objects

The objects of The ARM Club shall be:

1. To advance the use and knowledge of all RISC based Acorn Computers among its members and to provide or assist in the provision of facilities for those purposes.
2. To provide every means to foster good relationships between members of The ARM Club and others using these computers which will be for the ultimate benefit of the user base.
3. To organise activities and events for the purpose of supporting The ARM Club's aims and raising funds.

Article 3 Establishment of Sub-Committees

1. The main Committee of The ARM Club shall establish sub-committees as necessary to further its aforesaid aims.
2. The main Committee of The ARM Club may also establish such further sub- committees as it may deem necessary from time to time.
3. The main Committee of The ARM Club shall provide standing orders for the conduct of all associated committees.

Article 4 Membership

1. Any person shall be entitled to be a member of The ARM Club upon payment of the appropriate membership fee and acceptance of the constitution of The ARM Club.
2. All members of the main Committee shall be members of The ARM Club.
3. Honorary life membership may be extended to those who have rendered outstanding service to The ARM Club.
4. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee may vote to disbar a person

from membership. Such votes must be supported by at least two thirds of the Committee. Examples of exceptional circumstances may include wilfully bringing the Club into disrepute or consistent failure to observe the Constitution or Bye-laws.

Article 5 Meetings

1. Annual General Meetings of The ARM Club shall be held at least once in every calendar year.
2. Extraordinary General Meetings shall be held for such purposes and convened in such manner as shall be required by this Constitution at any time by:-
 - (a) The Chairman of the Committee
 - (b) Three Officers of the Committee
 - (c) Or at the written request of a minimum of 10 members of The ARM Club addressed to the Honorary Secretary.
3. Two weeks notice in writing must be given to all members to convene a General Meeting together with an agenda which shall clearly state the reasons for such a meeting.
4. Minutes of any of the above Meetings shall be kept by the Honorary Secretary and be available upon request to all members of The ARM Club

Article 6 Officers and Committee of The ARM Club

1. The governing body of The ARM Club shall be the elected Committee.
2. The Officers of The ARM Club shall be: a Chairman, one or more Vice Chairmen, an Honorary Treasurer, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Membership Secretary, and an Honorary Editor.
3. The Committee of The ARM Club shall consist of:
 - (a) The Officers as specified in paragraph 2 above.
 - (b) A minimum of four further members of The ARM Club.

Article 7 Amendments

1. The ARM Club shall have the power to make amendments to this Constitution but such amendments shall be made only by the votes of not less

than two-thirds of those who, being entitled to do so, vote in person at a General Meeting of The ARM Club, a quorum being present.

2. Notice of the terms of any proposed alteration shall be given in writing to the Honorary Secretary at least 21 days before such General Meeting and the Honorary Secretary will make the amended Constitution available to any member on request in advance of the meeting.

Article 8 Bye-Laws

1. The Bye-Laws appended have been provided for the carrying out of this Constitution.
2. The ARM Club shall have the power to make alterations in the Bye-Laws to suit its requirements.

BYE-LAWS OF THE ARM CLUB

1. Officers and Committee

- (a) The Officers and Committee of The ARM Club shall be as specified in Article 6 of the constitution.
- (b) The following are ex officio and entitled to attend Committee Meetings but not entitled to vote:
 - i) any other person at the invitation of the Committee.

2. Election of Officers and Committee Members

- (a) Any member of The ARM Club shall be eligible for election as a Committee member of The ARM Club.
- (b)
 - i) The Committee members shall be elected at the A.G.M.
 - ii) All nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than 14 days before the A.G.M. Later nominations may be accepted by a majority decision of those present.
 - iii) The Committee shall serve for the period to the following A.G.M.
 - iv) Nominations for the Committee shall be submitted by members

of The ARM Club. Each nominee should be proposed and seconded by two members of The ARM Club and should also indicate a willingness to fulfil the requirements that holding that position involves.

(c) The Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancies arising during the year until the next A.G.M.

(d) The name of any candidate for Honorary Life Membership (see Constitution Article 4, paragraph 3) shall first be put before the A.G.M. for adoption or otherwise.

(e) All contested elections shall be by secret ballot. Two scrutineers shall be selected, by the Chairman, at the meeting. Ballot papers shall bear only a mark of identification identifying it as from The ARM Club for purposes of a ballot. Postal votes are admissible.

3. Quorum and Amendments

(a) At any General Meeting of The ARM Club eight (8) of its members shall constitute a quorum.

(b) i) These Bye-laws may only be amended at a General Meeting by a majority of not less than two thirds of the members present.

ii) Notice of any proposed amendments shall be given in writing to the Honorary Secretary at least 21 days before the meeting. The Honorary Secretary shall make the details of any amendments available to any member on request in advance of the meeting.

4. Meetings of the Committee

(a) The Committee will meet at least four times per year and the Committee can also be convened at such other times as may be decided by the Chairman or at the request of not less than 3 members of the Committee.

(b) The Committee shall elect its Officers at its first meeting.

(c) Two thirds of the Committee constitute a quorum and must include 2 Officers of The ARM Club.

(d) If any elected representative shall be unable to attend he or she may send another member as a non-voting observer in his or her place.

5. Finance

(a) All assets and funds of The ARM Club shall be managed and controlled by the Committee. The membership fee shall be set by the committee from time to time as is deemed necessary.

(b) i) The Honorary Treasurer shall be responsible for the banking of all net funds which shall be banked to the credit of The ARM Club.

ii) The Honorary Treasurer shall be responsible for the payment of expenditure from The ARM Club funds. All cheques shall be signed by one or more authorised signatories to all bank mandates. The signatories shall be the Chairman, The Honorary Treasurer and other Committee Members as deemed appropriate by the Committee.

(c) All payments from The ARM Club funds in excess of such amounts as may from time to time be determined by the Committee shall require the prior approval of the Committee.

6. Accounts

(a) The Honorary Treasurer shall prepare and submit to the Committee an annual statement of the Accounts of The ARM Club, together with an Auditors report. All accounts and the auditors report shall be prepared for The ARM Club Financial Year ended on 31st March.

(b) These accounts shall be audited by a person or persons appointed by The ARM Club at their preceding A.G.M. and need not necessarily be a member of The ARM Club, but shall be unassociated with the Treasurer.

(c) A copy of the audited Accounts and the Auditors report shall be available for inspection at or before the A.G.M. at which the Accounts and Auditor's report are to be approved.

7. Dissolution

If The ARM Club should be dissolved then all net funds or assets standing to the credit of The ARM Club following dissolution shall be distributed to charities chosen by the final Committee. Before dissolution all bills and invoices shall be settled and assets sold at fair market value.

FontFX 6

FontFX 6 is the latest in a line of FontFX font manipulation programs and for those who haven't used such programs, the idea is to produce eye catching titles and illustrations using outline fonts as a basis. Font manipulation programs

The latest FontFX (this version is 6.01) comes on a single disc with a small (A6, 30 page) instruction booklet. On receiving the software, I broke the habit of a lifetime and read the instruction book first. This proved something of a revelation as the booklet is clear, well written and

Roger Price finds a problem with the latest version of an old favourite font manipulation program — he's simply spoilt for choice!

are not new and in the early days of the Archimedes, FontFX was in competition with programs such as *Fontasy* and *TypeStudio*.

The programs were similar in that they took outline fonts and converted them to path objects which were then manipulated to produce effects like drop shadows etc.

Many of the effects could be produced in Draw itself, but the time, care and concentration required usually proved a major disincentive. FontFX and similar programs provided a quick and easy approach with success almost guaranteed.

informative – other software houses take note! It offers advice on the use of the program, the aesthetics of font enhancement and a table showing which effects are mutually incompatible within the program. (Well you wouldn't want wall and floor shadows together – would you?).

The program itself is accompanied by a ReadMe introduction and a selection of patterns for use with the stencil effects. It installed on my A5000 without problems and on running the program a single window opens giving the user access to the wide variety of effects available. The program offers an on-screen manual and interactive help through the Acorn Help facility.

Taller and Shorter

EFF Soho font with Grow and Shrink effects

The default font is Acorn Trinity Medium but the program supports the use of all outline fonts. It is at this first stage that the problems arise, one is simply spoilt for choice! The large number of fonts available and the the large number of effects give an amazing variety.

I tried the Acorn fonts, RISC Development's fonts and EFF fonts successfully but some PD script fonts did not seem to space too well after processing.

If one can overcome the perennial problem of making up one's mind, then the program proves very easy to use. It is simply a question of typing in text (up to 250 characters), selecting the feature required and clicking on the 'eye' on the toolbar. The effect is displayed and can then be saved as a Drawfile or readjusted. Because

some effects are mutually incompatible, if one makes a large change in the effect, it is sometimes necessary to reset the program from the toolbar but this does not result in loss of text. Processing times are very short though the 3D effects do cause some delays.

The new FontFX offers a number of new features, mainly concerned with colour control. Fill, outline and shadow colours can be selected from the usual 16 colour palette, through the familiar RGB percentages (with coarse and fine control) or from a colour picker with 16 million or so

choices. The colour menus also offer CMYK and HSV features which should appeal to the professionals and provides a useful lever to get one's spouse to agree to the purchase of the new colour printer. As part of this enhanced colour control, there is a rainbow effect which will colour each letter a different colour. Each



EFF Eve font in Circle effect with Acorn Homerton font and Slope effect

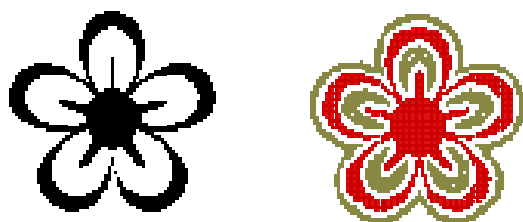
colour in the rainbow effect (up to a maximum of 16) can be user defined and the rainbow can be combined with shadows etc. There is obviously quite a lot of work involved in defining all these colours, but the configuration of the program can be saved so as to ensure successful repeats.

Border effect

One new feature that I found particularly appealing was the border effect which enhances the font

Eureka

without producing any 'clutter'. The example *Eureka* (above) makes the point, but the flowers (below) demonstrates the border effect to a



single Selwyn character (ASCII 96). As with many of the other features, the border can be combined with other effects. Another feature allows text to be grow taller and shorter (see previous page). In these new features there is also the facility to change the

Bad Example

!12345 6789 012345

length and angle of shadows and some neat compass icons make this job very straightforward. Not all shadow effects are pleasing, such as the *Bad Example* of a decorative font with a shadow and the difficult to read EFF Horrow novelty font (both above) .

Circles and arcs

Other features of the program are the tried and tested circles and arcs, slopes and columns. I have included a few examples of how these can be used separately and together (see *Keep Out*, on the previous page, and *Why Bother* below).

Why Bother With
font X

EFF Primary Bold Oblique

The lean feature allows oblique text to be produced from font families which do not include this face (see *above*) and finally the stencil feature allows a variety of effects to be produced either



for single letters (see *drop* at left) or words. A number of simple stencil backgrounds are provided but any Drawfile can be used.

commands to produce single or multiple effects. Full instructions are supplied and the process can be completed in Edit. Anyone who has set up a text area in Draw will have no problem in programming FontFX.

Long pedigree

In conclusion, FontFX is a program with a long pedigree – and it shows. It is easy and intuitive in use, with the limitations being set by the user



Look! (above) was produced by typing the word in *TextEase*, copying it to form a line of text and then copying the lines with changes to text colour. The text was then saved as a Drawfile, the stencil 'LOOK!' produced in FontFX and positioned on top of the text. The two objects were then grouped.

To make more extensive use of FontFX, one can access the command line structure of the files and provide a sequence of

rather than the program. In all, an excellent product.

FontFX 6

Price: £31.95 inc VAT and post

Site Licence: (available)

Supplier: The Data Store,
6 Chatterton Road,
Bromley, Kent, BR2 9QN

Tel: 0181 460 8991

Fax: 0181 313 0400

Email: dss@datstore.demon.co.uk

Web: www.datstore.demon.co.uk

1stSpex

I've been a fan of the Spex software for some years now and so I greeted the arrival of 1stSpex, the junior version of it, with some trepidation.

The problem I have found with 'cut-down' versions of software is

inadequately packaged software that the Royal Mail has managed to mangle!

Inside the box were three items — a manual, an HD disc and a single sheet

Chris Price and his pupils enjoy interior designing with the junior version of Spex, even though the children get most fun from dumping the furniture in the dustbin.

that they are so rarely done sympathetically. The editor and programmer decide what is to be left out and, not having much grounding in education, do so on the basis of programming or other criteria which have nothing to do with education.

1stSpex I am glad to say is quite different.

To start at the beginning: the package arrived in a stout cardboard box which had suffered no privations at the hands of the Royal Mail.

This is a policy that all companies should follow as I am sure that we have all been recipients of

of A5 paper giving simple instructions on how to install the program. Installation is, in any case, a doddle. Load up your floppy disc, click on the !Install icon and simply follow the instructions —it really is that simple!

Wow!

Now consult the manual. My first reaction is simply "Wow! These people have really thought about this."

The manual is written in Pipkin —a font designed to be used by lower infants. I could give this to my Year Twos and let them get on with it by themselves! (But I didn't!)

It is clear, lucid and written in simple short sentences. Each section is copiously illustrated with a number of diagrams that show the points being made beautifully.

And now to work! (Sorry! Mustn't start a sentence with "And".)

First click on the 1stSpex icon and you are presented with a window which offers you the choice of a bathroom, bedroom, kitchen or lounge. Your choice is loaded to the icon bar and, when you click on this, you are asked whether you want big, medium or small. Click on the appropriate picture and you are presented with the plan with the furniture by the side.

Dragged and dropped

Several things apply here. Furniture is simply dragged and dropped into its location on the plan. If you want to change the way a piece is facing then click with *Adjust* while it's still on the left hand list and it will turn. (NB Objects can't be turned when they are on the plan).

If you want to get rid of something then just drag it to the bin and its lid

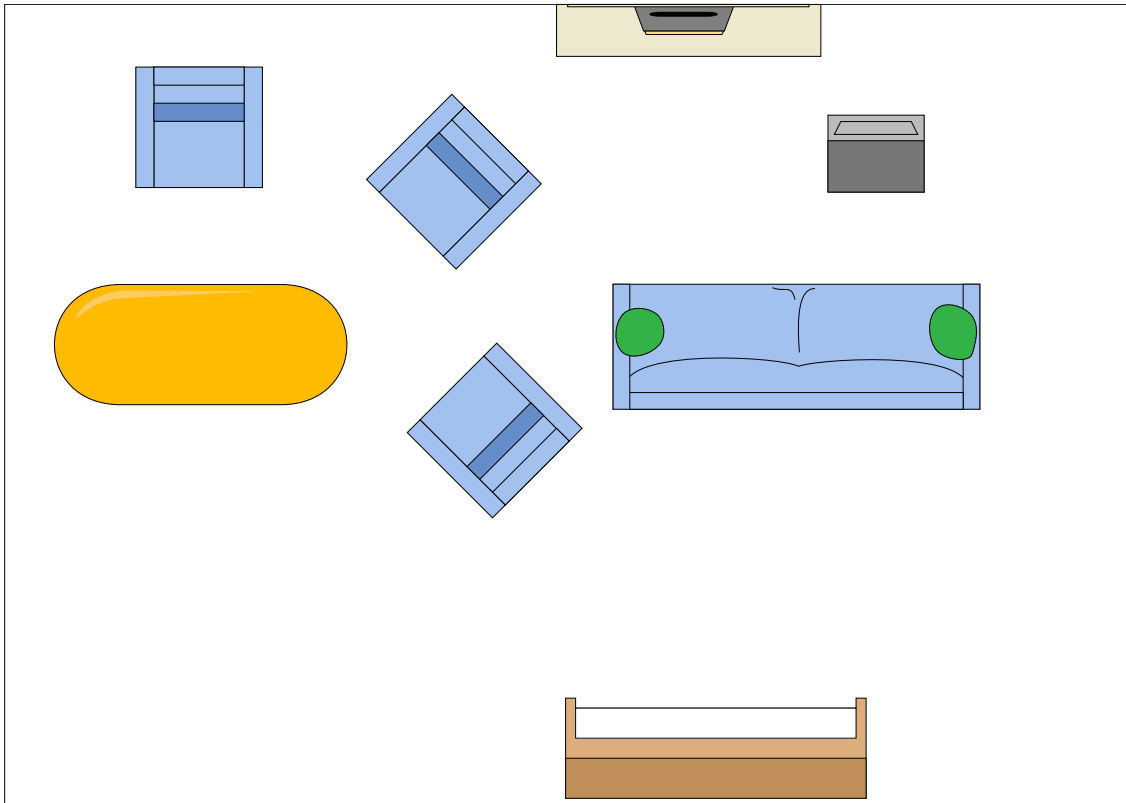
will open most obligingly to swallow the offending object.

I have to say at this point that some of my children did get a little carried away with this, persistently placing objects on the plan only to bin them moments later —you have been warned!

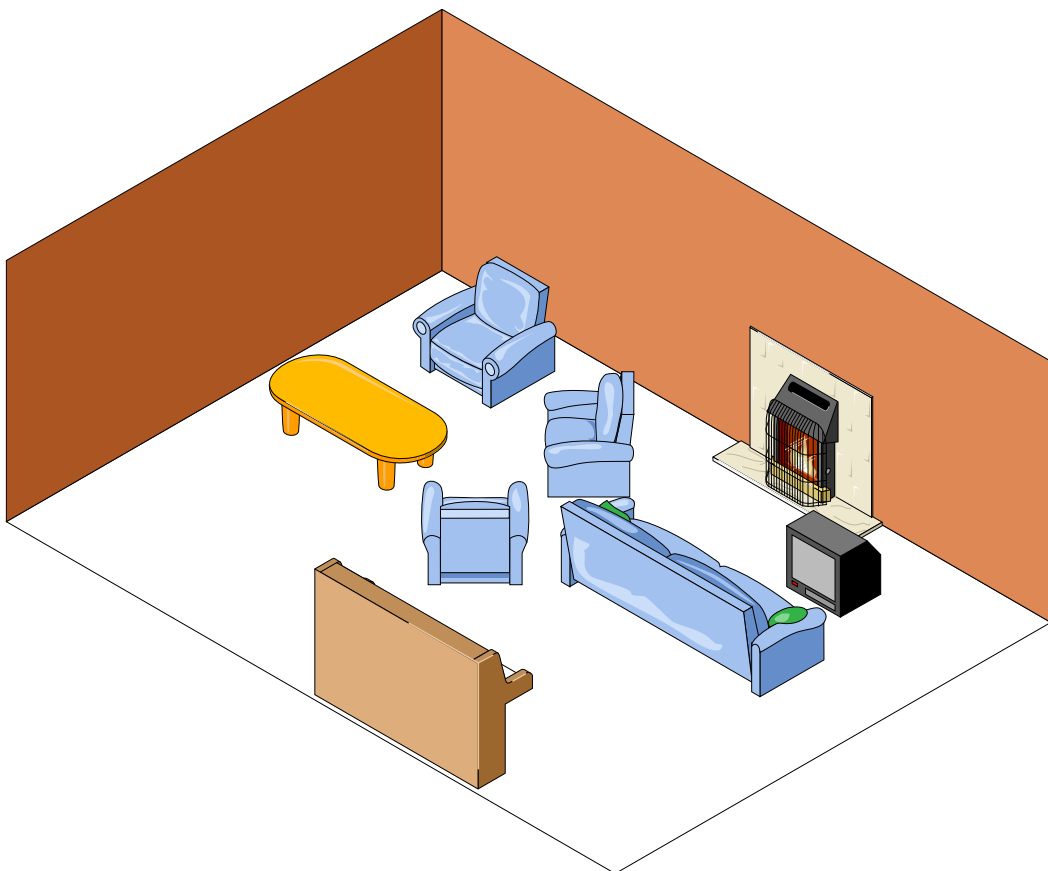
In 3D

Right, so you've put several objects on your plan and you want to see what it looks like in 3D? There are three icons above the top left corner. Click on the middle one (it *looks* like a 3D view) and you are presented with a 3D view.

To get back to the plan: click on the icon that looks like a plan. Use the scroll bars to scroll down for other items like televisions and sofas. Click on the door icon to get doors. How do you get more items (like windows or other stuff for your room)? Remember that door icon? Click on it again. You get windows. Click on it again you get plugs and other utilities. If you do this whilst in 'plan' mode you get more things to add to your furniture.



The lounge plan (above) and the 3D view (below)



Go back to 3D mode. To the right of the door icon is a space for the words 'smaller' and 'bigger'. Click on 'smaller' and your picture —gets smaller! (OK. So I think you can guess what happens when you click on 'bigger!'). Next to this is a bar chart icon which will give you a pictorial bar chart and next to this is the 'keep' icon for when you want to save your work (the same happens if you press *Menu* on the mouse).

Special mention must be given to the print icon which prints you out a full A4 picture of your design in 3D.

Interior designer

But what are those funny colour spots on the right hand side? So, click on one —and here's your chance to be your own interior designer. The area is divided into three parts —floor, walls and background —each with their own button bar.

Select the colour of your choice and the area you want coloured and — bingo! Anything from a rather pleasant pale blue to a garish green is yours.

If you want to get rid of your room, then you simply press *Menu* over the

icon on the icon bar, select 'New Lounge' and go ahead.

What haven't I mentioned? In plan view you are able also to keep a check on how much money you have spent (which is very useful for top juniors trying to plan for a budget).

Recommend

Coupled with the excellent manual, this is a package that I can unreservedly recommend for anyone with primary school children, or for primary schools.

I have used it extensively with Years One and Two pupils and even had some success with Reception age children all of whom have enjoyed the experience thoroughly.

1stSpex

Price: £39 inc VAT and postage

Site licence: £79 inclusive

Supplier: Aspex Software

Heather House, Down Road,
Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9AG

Tel: 01822 611060

Fax: 01822 611061

Email: aspex@argonet.co.uk

CDFast2

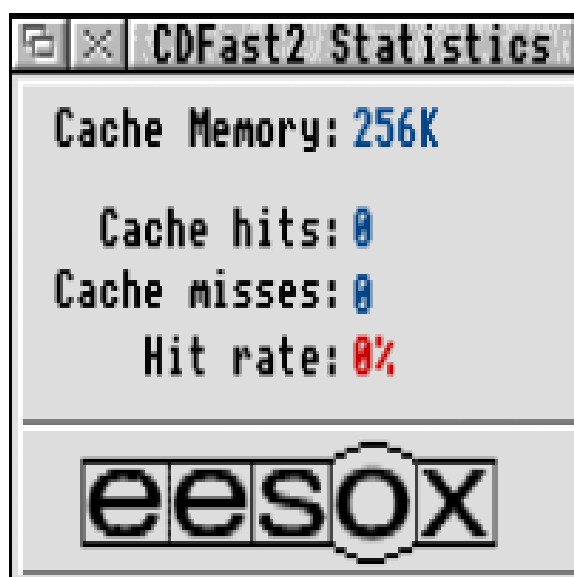
Since buying my CD-ROM drive over a year ago, I thought that real speed increases could be had only from buying a faster model. When the Editor sent me CDFast2, I was curious to see what just a little cache could achieve. For this review, I used

manual, the single disc contains the application and nothing else, which was easily installed by simply dragging it to the root of my hard disc. The application does not need to be double-clicked, it runs the first time the Filer sees it, this is great for those

Garry Taylor tries the software way to speed up his CD-ROM drive and measures the cost in beer.

my Eesox Parallel Port CD-ROM, which is a dual speed device, and it was connected to my 4MB A3010 with ARM250 processor.

CDFast2 comes in an attractive plastic wallet and an eight-page



who do not want to mess about with their !Boot file.

Test

I decided to test its performance using the Acorn User CD No. 3, as many of you will have this CD and be able to compare my results to your own. I tested CDFast2 on other CDs to get a more general view of its performance, but did not notice any difference with the results found on the AUCD. On the AUCD,

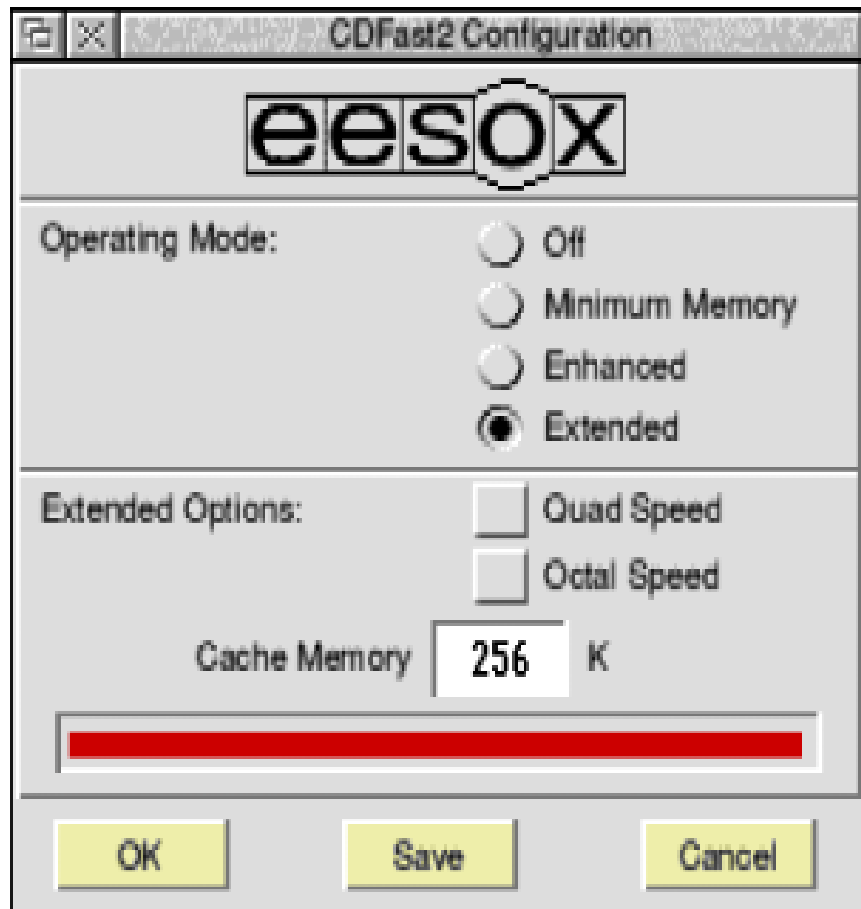
I timed the following with no CDFast2, CDFast2 turned on with a 64K cache, and CDFast turned on with a 256K cache:

- Opened the root of the disc for the first time.

- Decompressed the ArcFS file, NEWLOOK.

- Viewed the JPEG file, MELSDI/JPG.

As you can see from the table (below), the increases were not huge, apart from the ArcFS test, with the 256K cache. CDFast2 was able to cut the time in half of this test, and I was most impressed by this, although, how many of us mind waiting an extra 10 seconds? Obviously, a StrongARM Risc PC would do the above tasks in a fraction of the time and may make CDFast2 less worthwhile. If you do find CD based tasks a little slow, this



Configuration options

may be for you, but as a Scotsman, I hold onto my money (what little there is of it) with an iron fist, and would be hard pushed to buy this myself, especially considering how much beer could be bought with the money. Some of the results were what I

	<i>View MELSDI/JPG</i>	<i>View AUCD3</i>	<i>View NEWLOOK</i>
<i>No CDFast2</i>	3 Minutes 40 Seconds	19 Seconds	20 Seconds
<i>CDFast2 - 64k Cache</i>	3 Minutes 16 Seconds	16 Seconds	21 Seconds
<i>CDFast2 - 256k Cache</i>	3 minutes 14 Seconds	16 Seconds	9 Seconds

Speed tests with and without CDFast2

expected, some were disappointing, and one quite amazing.

In conclusion, I would not buy this software, I don't find CD-ROMs slow, but then, I was brought up on tapes, which took astonishingly long times to do the simplest of tasks.

There just is not enough benefit to be had from this software, although I cannot fault the way it works or its ease of use. CDFast2 is one of those programs which you would forget you owned if it wasn't for the packaging sitting on a bookshelf.

A minor complaint is the program's disregard for the Style Guide, which is fine if it is improved on, but CDFast2 uses Check Boxes as Radio Buttons and Buttons highlight when the mouse pointer is moved over them, a bizarre thing to do which is easily rectified.

With 32x CD-ROM drives hitting the market, and probably faster ones by the time you read this, and machines like the StrongARM RiscPC and its successor to exploit them, I cannot really see a place for this software unless you need it for a particular

purpose like watching Replay Movies. But Replay films spool pretty well off a 16x drive. With a faster drive, I doubt anything would be able to improve on it.

Twenty five pounds is more than a touch expensive for a program of this nature and I was surprised that I could not find any Shareware alternatives. Eesox also sells this software for £15 if you are buying a drive at the same time. Even this still seems a bit pricey. Eesox would be wise to consider bundling this with their drives, as buying a CD-ROM from an Acorn dealer is always more expensive than from just about anywhere else besides Harrods, and this would make the extra cost more easy to swallow.

CDFast2

Price: £25

Supplier: Eesox

1st Floor, Century House,
Market Street, Swavesey,
Cambs CB4 5QG.

Tel/Fax: 01954 208208

Email:

sales@eesox.demon.co.uk

Web: www.eesox.demon.co.uk

in association with
Welwyn Hatfield Computer Club



ACORN SOUTHEAST SHOW

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- Hobbyist area

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ADMISSION CHARGES

Adults £2 / ARM Club or Clan members £1

Children under 16 FREE (accompanied by adult)

(Refreshments available)

For further details - Phone/Fax: (01707) 390410

Email: acornshow@argonet.co.uk

<http://www.argonet.co.uk/acornshow/>

Cromwell The Fire Fighter

This is a new fire safety package, produced by Durham County Fire and Rescue Brigade and the Durham ScITech Centre.

The software comes on a CD-ROM that is Acorn and PC compatible. The

through the chain of command to mobilise the fire engine. We watch the firefighters leap into action. The use of video clips and sound recordings really does bring it to life. We have Mrs. Jones's panicked conversation with the operator. There is footage of

Susan Bancroft, a firefighter's wife, looks at the day to day activities of a fire brigade, starting with a ride on the engine to answer a 999 call about a blazing chip pan.

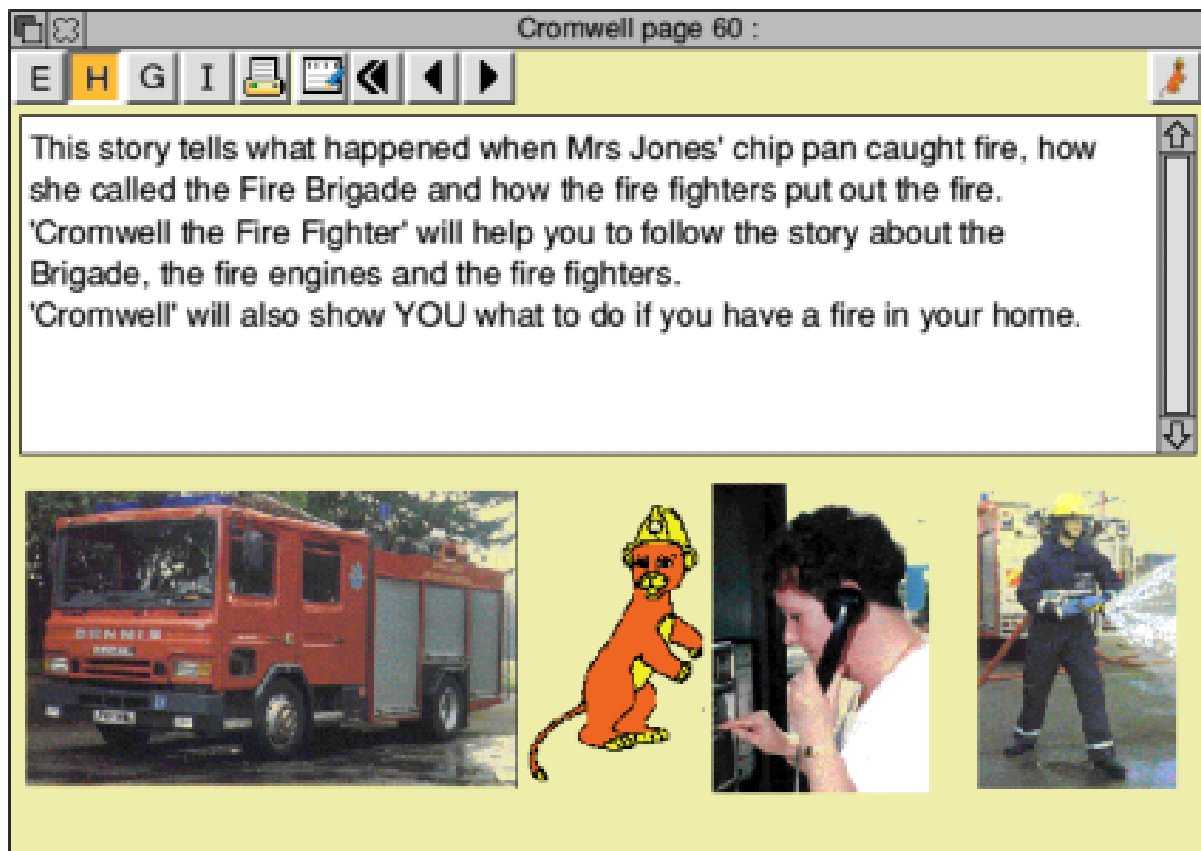
material would particularly appeal to children between the ages of seven and 12 years. It would be ideal for a school project or a present for those obsessed with fire engines!

There are 34 main pages to work through. The chunky icon bar is very user friendly and, if that fails, the text will point you in the right direction. The text can be set to an easy or more detailed level and can be voice activated. Great care has been taken to make the information as lively as possible.

The main story is of a Mrs. Jones's chip pan fire. The 999 call follows

the fire engine's journey to the incident, hampered by less than competent road users. It feels as though you are sitting in the front of the cab. And yes, you can set off the blue lights and siren..

Most pages have additional material to explore, by clicking on boxes with the various subject headings. The range of information is impressive. I have it on good authority that it is all accurate! Everything is there that you would expect —the firefighter's day, the equipment, the fire engines. But there is much more of interest —the phonetic alphabet for example, with a sound clip of a firefighter spelling out



the name of a chemical in a radio message, for us to decipher.

There are also two other stories. A teenage girl makes a hoax phone call, which delays the firefighters attending a subsequent incident, a car accident. The girl is left waiting at her friend's house, wondering why her parents are so late collecting her by car. This presses all the right emotional buttons, I think.

The third is an illustrated story featuring the mascot Cromwell. He gives advice on three action plans, should you find yourself in a burning

building. This method of describing a crisis using animal characters is not very effective. It seems out of keeping with the program's overall feeling of realism. We are not shielded from Mrs. Jones's blackened kitchen and decimated chip pan after all.

The main weakness is the character of Cromwell himself. He is a highly pixellated animal of no obvious identity, wearing a firefighter's helmet. My 10-year-old son's first reaction was "Is that a bear?" I am told that one manufacturer of fire helmets is named Cromwell, so perhaps this is subliminal



sponsorship... In Northamptonshire, the mascot is a red Welliphant. The associations are clearer : trunk = hose, the wellingtons = the firefighter's uniform, the colour red = the fire engine.

A mascot is a good ploy to involve children, but the graphic of Cromwell has not been designed well enough to convincingly appeal. It is his icon that has to be pressed to activate the speaking text. The voice is a little surprising —the clipped tones of an older man, in the style of Harry Enfield's Mr. Cholmondley-Warner.

Another minor annoyance is that the text is not set completely within one

block. You have to scroll up and down a vertical bar, when just reducing the size of the font would eliminate this necessity.

With the CD and manual comes further resources for games. There is a giant paper map with work cards detailing different types of incidents. The basic instruction is to 'use your imagination to describe the incident as though you were one of the firefighters.' Players are advised to look up certain sections from the disc, to make sure of accuracy. It will be difficult, however, to persuade them away from the computer.

Cromwell the Fire Fighter

Price: £39.95 +VAT and postage

Site licence: £65 +VAT and post

Supplier: Cambridgeshire

Software House

PO Box 163, Huntingdon

Cambs, PE17 3UR

Tel: 01487 741223

Fax: 01487 741213

Email cshsoft@compuserve.com

Web

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cshsoft>

AppByType

You come across a file, type 'bc5' "What an earth is this?", you are heard to say. You spend a long time searching your new 5GB drive for the application only to find it was a Publisher document.

application. After you have checked this is the right filetype, you click 'search'. In a couple of seconds the computer produces another window showing lots of interesting facts about your filetype, but of primary interest

Matthew Cook goes searching for 'bc5' with a utility which reveals the secrets of the applications which own those infuriating blank icons.

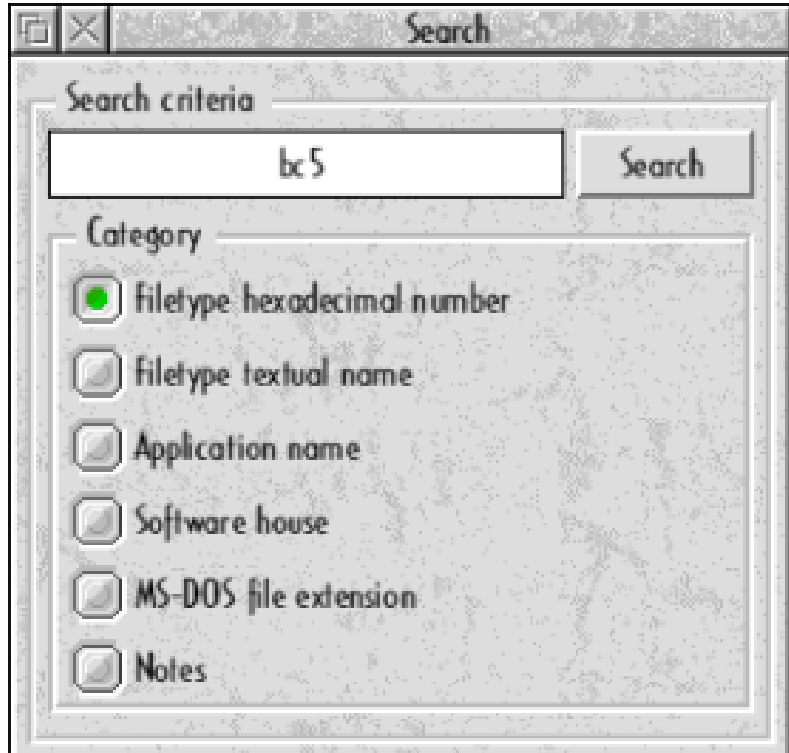
From Cherisha Software comes a small utility called AppByType, now in version 1.09. This utility identifies itself as 'The Premier RISC OS FileType Identification Utility.'

Search for bc5

To get a feel for what the application does, I will run through a typical search for our mystery 'bc5' file.

The first stage is to enter the unknown filetype into the search window. This window is obtained by clicking *Select*, the left mouse button, over the

in the 'Originating application' field. You can also see from the original search window, there are other

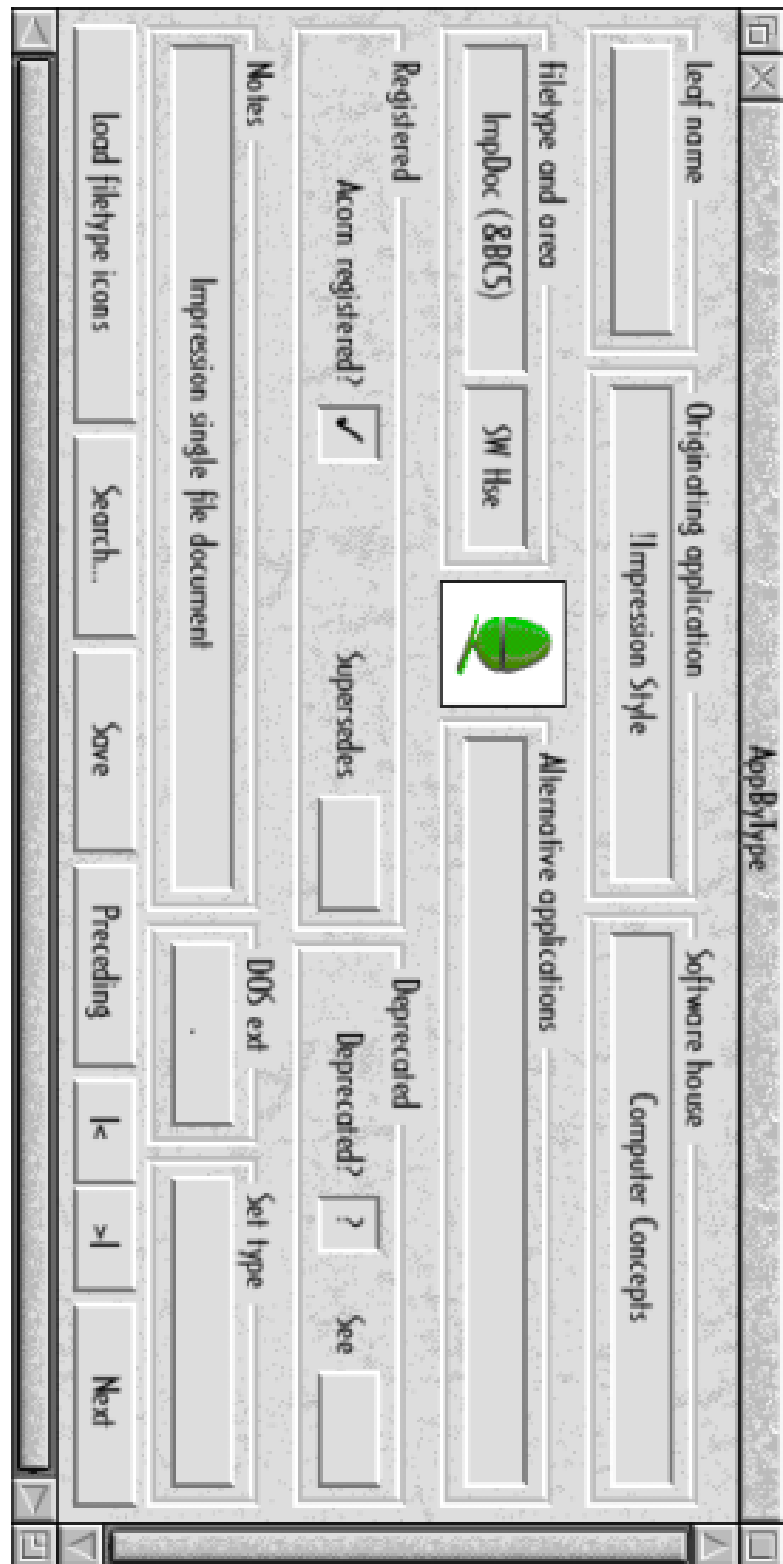


The Search Window

options to search against; the textual name, application name, software house, MS-DOS extension and the notes field. If you choose to search any of these criteria, be prepared to wait with the hourglass for about 30 seconds. I asked Cherisha at The ARM Club's latest open day and they said, "Unfortunately we cannot improve that loading time, by the nature of the way the information is stored!"

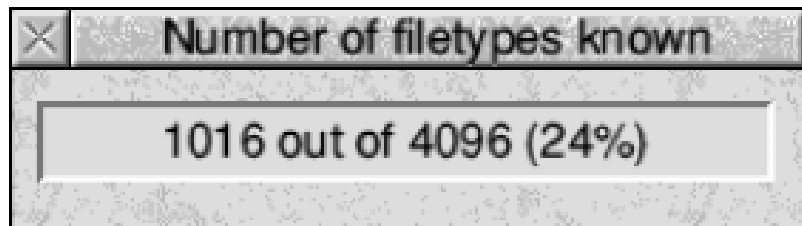
AppByType has a numerous other features :

- **Dropped Files:** You can just drop a file onto the iconbar icon and it will search the database for you.
- **Squash Files:** AppByType will tell you the original type previous to squashing.
- **Saving Data:** You can save the information fields as a text file.



*The Information Window
(rotated to fit on page)*

The version (1.09) of AppByType I used knew about 1016 out of 4096 which is about 24% of the RISC OS filetype allocation.



This can be shown (*see above*) by a *Shift+Select* click on the icon bar icon.

I tried several other types but they were unknown for example TBAFS and Advanced Level 4 users files. Although this is the case, Cherisha Software are offering a free upgrades service to expand your filetypes database and encourage you to send back your entries.

WWW site

Another interesting thing about AppByType is that on the disc is a copy of the Cherisha WWW site, which I thought to be a good idea, especially if you have not got Internet access.

AppByType retails for £15 and I think that an application of this type would be better suited to a budget price of about £8.

I am sorry to say I would not buy this utility, as I do not have the need, but it could be invaluable to network managers, BBS sysops, PD authors or any software author in fact.

Neat and tidy

The application is very neat and tidy and has an excellent front end. I would not hesitate to recommended this to anyone that require the features provided.

AppByType

Price: £15 (no VAT)

Supplier: Cherisha Software

16 Woodside Drive

Wilmington, Dartford,

Kent, DA2 7NG.

Tel: 01322 553953

Fax: 01322 400883

Email:

cherisha@katech.zynet.co.uk

Web:

www.zynet.co.uk/gold/katech/cheri.html

Psion 5 Gets Web Connected

Psion have finally released the email and Web clients for the Psion 5. These have been in development for a long time —many pundits expected them to come out with the Psion 5, but the original boxes all had stickers saying ‘available soon’ which disappointed many.

There is also the ability to connect via SLIP to another computer, as long as it can talk SLIP back. I haven’t seen this working yet, but adding the Psion to my house network is on the ‘to do’ list!

The email software itself is modelled somewhat on MS Outlook email

Toby Smith emails us from the pub with news of the Psion 5 email and Web clients and rumours of an Acorn Pocket Book badged Psion 3c clone.

The suite adds a few extra configuration options to setup how your Psion talks to your modem. It also provides definitions for a selection of common modems, and a couple of good general scripts that will work with most others.

There is a section for configuring your Internet account and access, using a SLIP dialling system (identical to what your ‘big’ computer will probably use). Again, a selection of login scripts are provided for most major Internet providers, and you can edit your own scripts for others.

software for the PC, with in and out folders and so on, and a similar user interface. It’s quite nice, the screen doesn’t get too cluttered and many of the more obscure options are available.

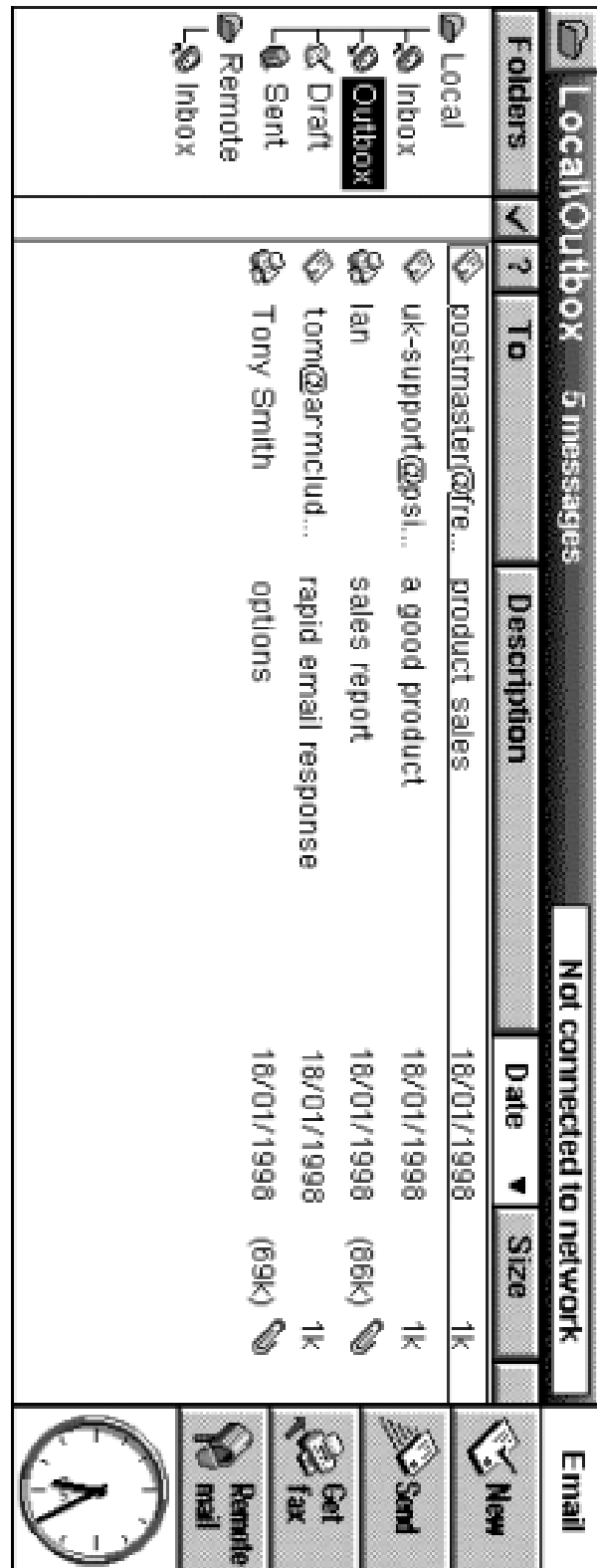
Faxes

The same software also handles the fax send and receive, given a fax modem. Faxes can be composed directly or composed in other Psion applications and sent via a virtual printer definition through this application to the fax modem. Readers used to the Windows 95

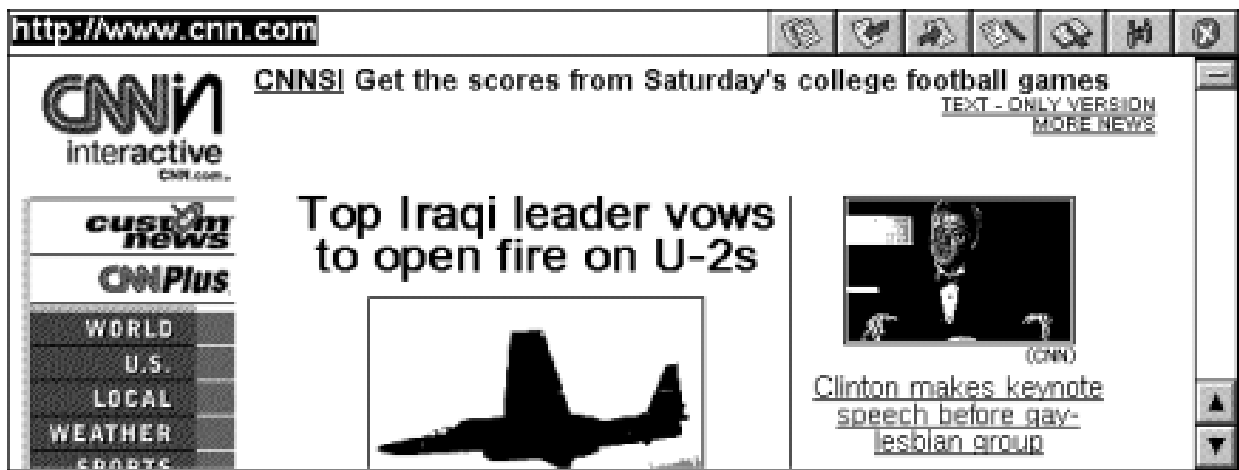
email and fax methods will see many parallels, as this is the main ‘other’ computer for Psion owners.

The Web browser does similarly well, providing a lot of information in a small screen. While obviously limited by a small viewing area and greyscale graphics, it does a very good job of displaying most pages and any problems are probably due to the design of the page not taking small grey screens into account. Fussy background pictures, for example, can make the text hard to read at a small size, and larger text leaves too little on the screen, though the option to ignore colouring of text and backgrounds is available.

At the moment, the browser doesn’t support Frames (a scenario not unknown to us Acorn users) though many suggestions for avoiding them are provided. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to identify the parts of a framed page (ArcWeb in particular used to automatically create a page of links to the subframes of a page, a system that perhaps ought to have been adopted), but considering the limitations, it’s a very good implementation.



Email messages Outbox



I've been testing the software out on a series of sites, and I'm yet to trip it up! (It displays my Wedding Web pages quite well!)

The Psion Internet Suite is available for free Download from Psion's Web site <http://www.pSION.com/> but it does need PsiWin on a PC/PC card to install easily.

It is hoped to have a full report on how useful the software is from our very own Roving Reporter, Ralph Sillett in a future issue.

PsiWin Free Upgrade

There's also an upgrade from PsiWin 2.00 (shipped during 1997) to the current version 2.01 available from Psion's website for free download (though it is about 14MB long) and additional converters for Microsoft Office 97.

Pocket Book 3?

The recent BETT Show saw rise to a repeated rumour that Xemplar may be looking to re-badge either the Psion 3c or Sienna for sale to schools under the Acorn Pocket Book range. Pocket Book Corner welcomes this idea, as the demise of the Schools plan was perhaps a great opportunity missed. The children of today are very likely to be at the forefront of the main palmtop computing revolution, just as the increase in home and office desktop machines arrived with the coming of age of the group who first experienced the BBC computers in their school days. Having said which, it still takes a visionary teacher to glibly let their class wander around with such equipment, but we are reminded of the success of all the pilot projects, mostly reported in these pages.

Sienna connectivity at last?

IMS solutions are apparently moving towards the final stages of development of their Psion connectivity program, to be called PsiRisc (to fit in with PsiWin and PsiMac). Only scarce details are coming our way but it promises to be quite good. We're searching for a review copy to bring you the information as soon as possible.

The Psion 3c/Sienna version is available now, but the extra file conversion bits and Long File Names support for the full Series 5 product is still under development, though the existing version will allow you to transfer files.

Drag and drop

It has been cleverly implemented as a proper filing system, giving all the usual Acorn drag and drop copying facilities. Supported formats are also converted 'on the fly' (eg: Word files appear as text or RTF). There are also Backup & Restore facilities, and the program apparently works OK on multiple serial port cards.

Series 5 users buying this version will apparently qualify for a free upgrade

to the Series 5 version when it arrives and there is a special offer, for the first 100 orders, of a £25 discount.

That's about all I've got space for this month, so keep your Psion queries flooding in, and look out for more Pocket Book Related reviews in the next issue.

PsiRiscFS (3c/Sienna)

Price: £66.99 In VAT and postage

Special offer: £25 discount for the first 100 orders.

3c Cable: £24.95 with PsiRiscFS or £29.95 without.

Supplier: Innovative Media Solutions (IMS)

Box Bush Farm, West Wick,
Weston Super Mare, BS24 7TF

Tel: 01934-522880

Fax: 01934-522881

Email: sales@ims-bristol.co.uk

Web:

<http://www.ims-cdc.demon.co.uk/>

Psion Website:

<http://www.psion.com/>

Follow links for PsiWin

Upgrade/Message Suite

A Quarter Of Cockups And Errors

A guide to what's gone wrong recently

By Mark Smith (Chairman) and Toby Smith (Membership Secretary — and no relation)

As you will all know, we've been rather beset with problems recently, most of which have affected what you receive as members and have also been intensely irritating and time consuming to fix for us on the Committee. The purpose of this article is to explain, in some depth, what has happened, as you have a right to know.

Membership Cards

Many of you who have recently joined the Club, or who have renewed your membership in the last five or so months, will currently be without a Membership Card (or you'll have got one of our little paper temporary ones).

In early December, having finalised the changes to the Club address and phone numbers as described in the previous issue of Eureka, we contacted a company to produce us a

new bunch of cards (the same firm who have produced our previous ones, in fact). We were promised their standard 14-day service. This didn't happen. Our very busy Membership Secretary had to constantly ring them up to find what the latest excuse was for not doing the job, some of which have been hilariously inaccurate. In fact, after two and a half months, they'd still failed to come up with a final proof; quite impressively poor considering we sent them the layout already in electronic form on disc in the first place. We've now cancelled this order, due to poor service, and are in the process of getting our deposit money back.

Another firm, local to the Membership Secretary, has been contracted to do the job, and that means cards should appear soon and will be sent out to those who are in need of one.

Eureka 25 — Floppy discs

The magazine discs for Eureka are duplicated by an external company, which means that we have quite a lead-time on preparing both the magazine and disc for duplication. The original discs were sent off for duplication in good time, but it would appear that they got lost in the post, and consequently we didn't receive the discs back from the duplicator when expected.

The magazine was ready and waiting to go out and the decision was made to send the magazine without disc, as much of the information in the magazine was time dependant, especially information about the Kent Show and AGM that weekend. It would perhaps have been wise to include a note explaining the lack of discs but we didn't have the time — photocopying and stuffing more than 900 magazines definitely can't be done in an evening —to do so would have delayed the magazine long enough to destroy the point of getting it out quickly.

A message was sent to our email announcement list, to which many members are subscribed, explaining

this. We also prepared a standard set of replies for people asking about the disc —while this does seem a little impersonal, if you look at it from our side, the time taken in individually replying to everybody would have been phenomenal.

A second copy of the disc was sent to the duplicator and distributed later in batches. These were sent out separately, in another mammoth effort —take a look at the disc holders used, and image how long it takes to insert the disc, close them, tape them up, stick on an address label and a stamp. Then multiply that by about 900 and spread over the spare time you have after work in the evenings and at weekends. It's a lot isn't it?

Unfortunately, we found out after sending them that all of the High Density discs had been duplicated with a series of errors. These are apparently errors in the copying process, as our master discs are fine.

Discussions with the duplicator as to where the errors crept in and what to do about the cost of replacing the faulty discs are ongoing.

We'd also like to thank all those of you on the Internet who chose the ftp method we suggested to save us the cost and effort of replacing the discs manually —thanks.

FREEPOST The ARM Club

As announced in the last issue of Eureka, we've recently organised one of the Royal Mail's new 'FREEPOST Name' services for our mail, ideally meaning that we can change secretary with minimum fuss.

However, we've experienced lots of problems with this system. Mail sent to **FREEPOST The ARM Club** has been getting to the correct sorting office (Sidcup) where it has been meeting what can only be described as abject incompetence. Several of the sorting office staff have obviously missed the implications of the training in FREEPOST Name that we are assured they have been given, and have been treating our envelopes as mail for our previous (and now cancelled) address and consequently returning them to the sender.

Not only does this mean that a lot of your mail to our expensive new address isn't getting through, it's also

incorrect behaviour for mail addressed to a cancelled address (which should be sent to us with a surcharge, not returned to sender). Not only are the staff failing to get the right procedure, they're not even following the wrong one correctly.

We've had many conversations with assorted different levels of Royal Mail staff and our intense displeasure at this has been made clear. It was not helped by the fact that the Sidcup office didn't actually pay any attention to what we were complaining about in the first place.

We are expecting a marked improvement since the last complaint, which, we are told by our contact, may result in ritual hangings of some sorting office staff. We're keeping an eye on the situation and the Royal Mail are aware that if it doesn't improve to perfect, then the service will be cancelled and a large compensation bill for time, trouble, and most importantly new stationery will be sent to them.

We hope to be able to publish the apology letter in a future issue.

If you do experience any problems with mail sent to 'FREEPOST The ARM Club' being returned by the post office, please contact us (preferably by email to toby@armclub.org.uk or by phone if you can't) with the details from the red sticker on the returned envelope. We'll then tell you what to do, which will probably involve sending us the envelope as well —we're collecting them for evidence.

Feedback

We've had lots of contact with members during this cycle of problems and most of it has been quite nice. The majority of messages are very understanding and many have offered sympathy for the large amounts of our volunteer time and effort that have gone into sorting out these problems. We try to do our best.

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind members that while the Club Committee tries to provide as smooth a running of the Club as possible, it's not a 'service' that you pay for. We are not paid employees of the Club. Everything that gets done for the Club is done in our free time. Constructive offers of help and assistance are much

more useful to us in the running of the Club than complaints, where even just a few can be very discouraging to those putting in a lot of hard work. Nasty complaints don't make things happen better in future, in fact they probably do more to stop us wanting to do the work in the first place.

Do not ask what your Club has or hasn't done for you, but what you can do to help it not happen in future.

So What Can I Do To Help?

Some of these problems have been unavoidable. However, we could have done better on others if we'd had more help. There is a lot of work involved in running the Club and it's often the little things, like chasing companies around to check they're doing the work in time etc, that doesn't happen under the pressure.

In fact, if we'd had extra assistance (either inside or outside the Committee), then many of these problems would not have happened, or could have got caught and dealt with earlier.

There are many things you can do to help run what is essentially *your*

Club. We're not asking for people to step right into the big jobs, like Treasurer, Chairman, Editor etc, we're after people to help with little things to take parts of the work off the current overloaded Committee and free up a bit more of our time to sort things out (and see our families and things like that).

There are many small jobs, including, but not limited to: maintaining parts of the Web site, collecting the data for the Eureka discs, helping 'on the ground' at Club shows, producing leaflets and so on. We're currently collating a list of little things to do, none of which are likely to take more than an hour a week, if that, and many which only need some time every couple of months or so.

If you've got that kind of free time, and would like to help in the running of your Club, please contact chairman@armclub.org.uk or use the new Freepost address to offer your services for whatever kind of assistance you can offer.

Please note the Freepost address is:
FREEPOST "The ARM Club"
Do ***not*** add a postcode.

Notice of AGM

The ARM Club's next AGM and open day will be at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham on Saturday 28 November.

Nominations for new Committee members should be received by the Secretary at least 14 days in advance of the AGM.

Member's Ad — For Sale

1995 Archive CD

1996 Archive CD

The Arm Club *Game On!*

'First Impression' A tutorial Guide

Squirrel *Move* disc c/w Squirrel

Installation discs, manual etc.

Archie B+W Hand Scanner, Watford

Electronics (works on SA with cache turned off)

486 SXL40 PC card

Impression Dongle

Risc PC 700 Card + 3.6 ROMs

Almanac from Stallion Software

Please e-mail offers to:

Peter E Davies

gw0hq@claranet.co.uk

(located in Cardiff, South Wales).

TextEase HTML Reader & Writer

More and more Internet users are being tempted to take advantage of the free Web space being offered them to open their own sites. The big drawback has been the need to learn Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) or to pay a

as separate programs on a single disc. The Reader is delightfully simple. The program is run once to install it into TextEase and from then on any HTML file dropped onto a TextEase page or the icon bar icon is automatically converted into a normal

Peter Jennings looks at an early version of a utility which allows non-techie TextEase users to create their own Web pages with a simple drag and drop.

company to create the Web pages but programs to convert documents created in word processors or desktop publishing programs are now beginning to offer a simpler alternative.

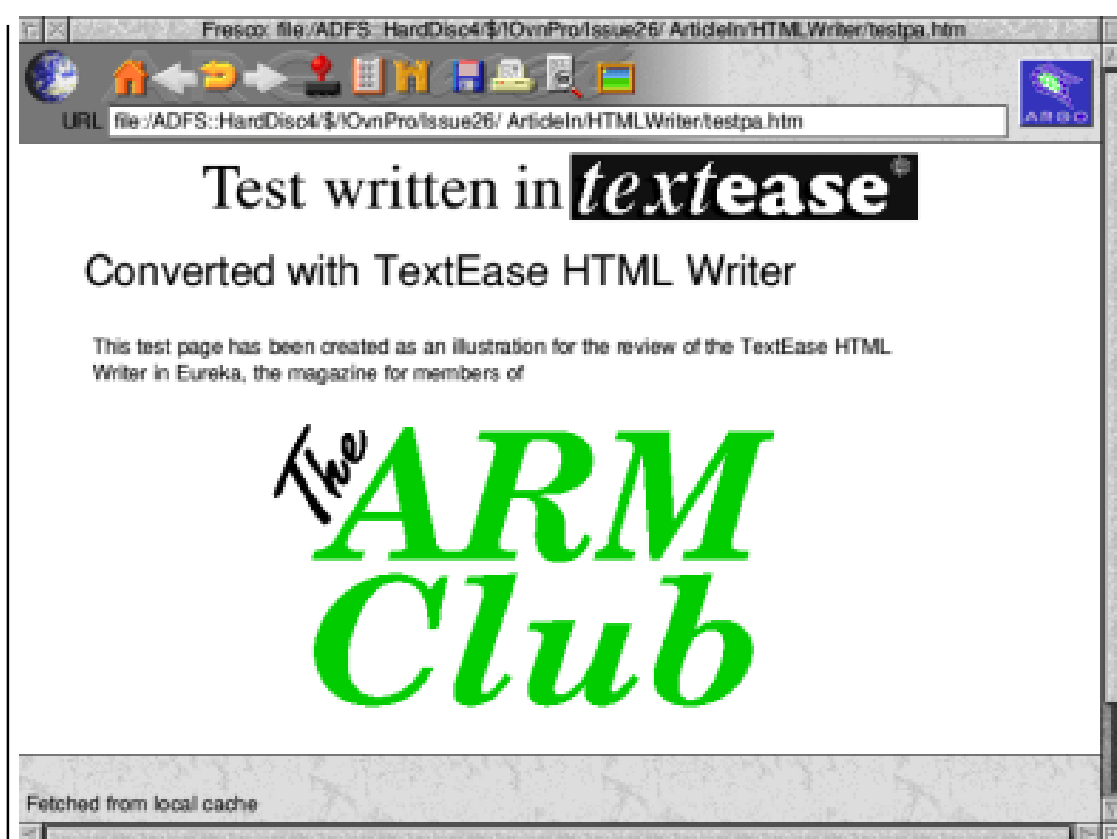
SoftEase has produced a pair of reader/writer programs to do this with TextEase. Before trying them out I had first to look at the latest Multimedia version of TextEase itself. This has now added drag and drop video and animation facilities and links to other documents in addition to the speech and sound of previous upgrades.

The HTML Reader and Writer come

DTP document which can be edited and printed in the usual way. Links to local files can still be activated.

With the early release (version 1.1) that I have been using, I found that HTML files dropped onto a page were positioned too far to the right and had to be dragged left to be seen in full. Those dropped onto the icon opened a page with the file correctly positioned.

The HTML Writer remains a separate program, with its own icon on the icon bar, but is equally easy to use. At its simplest, a TextEase file dropped onto the icon opens a save window for an HTML file, offering a choice of



A TextEase page (top) and the converted HTML file

formats for any images included, with a default combination of GIFs and JPEGs. When this is loaded into a browser which supports tables it should look the same, or very similar, to the DTP page.

Differences can be caused by different browsers, which vary and do not all use the same default sizes for text. Softease have standardised on text sizes which look best when viewed at the default values for Microsoft Explorer, Netscape Navigator and ANT Fresco. I began using the Argonet beta version of VoyBrowse and later the Argonet version of Fresco and the results with the latter can be seen opposite.

The first test page I converted reproduced text and pictures exactly except that words marked by the spelling checker, including 'HTML', appeared on the browser page without their preceding space. When the DTP page was recreated with the spelling checker switched off there was no problem with the converted page.

A directory full of TextEase files can all be converted together but care has to be taken not to have too many files

TextEase **HTML** Writer

TextEaseHTML Writer

The effect of using the spell checker for the TextEase page (top) when converted to an HTML file.

in the directory as additional files are created to contain pictures during the conversion and this could cause the 77 file directory limit to be exceeded.

This is explained in a Guide, supplied in both TextEase and HTML formats, which also contains a useful section on constructing Web pages. Various additional features are promised for future upgrades (which may now be available) and anyone finding problems is invited to send examples to Softease to help with improvements.

HTML Reader/Writer

Price: £35 +VAT

Supplier: Softease Ltd

The Old Courthouse

St Peter's Church Yard

Derby DE1 1NN

Tel: 01332 204911

Fax: 01332 609224

Email: sales@softease.co.uk

DataPower 2

The ARM Club uses DataPower to store the membership database so I've been using it as a user for some time now. Until now, I'd never used it as a database

to the floppy disc before it can be installed somewhere else. The other discs contained some supplementary programs plus tutorial and example material.

Experienced database user Tom Hughes gets creative with the latest version DataPower, from Iota, and appreciates its powerful new features.

developer although I had used other Acorn database systems and I work with Unix and VMS based database systems every day.

As a result, I looked forward eagerly to the opportunity of reviewing a major relational database system for Acorn machines, particularly given the severe lack of relational database systems on the Acorn platform in the past.

The package was attractive enough and contained four discs and a thick manual of some 270 pages. The first disc contained the program itself, protected by a credit based system that allows you to install a single copy which must then be deinstalled back

I began by working through the first tutorial in the manual. This was a simple non-relational database, using records for a group of students, and demonstrated the various field types available and how to search and sort the database as well as its ability to import data from CSV and TSV files and produce columnar reports and mailing labels from the data.

All the normal field types appear to be supported, including text, boolean, integer, real (floating point), date and interval fields. In addition to this there are graphical and file fields (file fields can either contain a copy of the file contents or a link to the real file elsewhere on disc). The final field type is the expression field which

allows complex expressions derived from other fields to be displayed. A full expression editor is included to assist in the creation of these fields.

Moving on to the second tutorial took me into the realm of relational databases. For anyone who may not be familiar with the concept, a relational database involves having more than one file (or table as it is usually known) each holding a different type of data and then using fields in one table to look up record(s) in another table. For example you might have one table containing customer details and another

containing order details and by using the customer number to link (or join) the two you would be able to display information on the orders placed by a given customer or the customer who placed a given order.

My attempt at the second tutorial was slightly less successful than my attempt at the first however. To begin with, a number of the files which the manual claimed I would find on the discs were missing (though fortunately I was able to fetch them from Iota's Web site). Once I had overcome that hurdle I somehow managed to completely corrupt my

Customer orders

Name Mr Blobby
Address Blobby Manor
Postcode BLB 0001
Telephone 34334

Code	Description	Price	VAT	Quantity
BK1	Book "Creative house lighting"	£5.99	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
ANG	Angle poise lamp	£35.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
BK2	Book "More creative house lighting"	£5.99	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3

database so that I had to start again from scratch. Unfortunately I was unable to repeat the problem so I can't report it as a bug.

Having started the second tutorial again I found that things worked much better and I was able to follow the steps in the manual to completion without any trouble, creating a relational database containing four tables in the process.

One major new feature of DataPower 2, which is unfortunately rather poorly documented in the manual, is support for Structured Query Language (SQL) which is an industry standard method of writing database queries. The SQL support in DataPower appears to be reasonably complete. In fact it appears to have a rich set of functions compared to many major database systems on other platforms. The only SQL feature that appeared to be missing was subqueries.

Having completed the tutorials, and read through the rest of the manual (which forms more of a reference than the earlier tutorial based sections) I decided to attempt to implement a

small relational database. My idea was to create a database to store information on registered users of software sold by the club.

I began with the main table which I called 'Serial'. This would contain a record for each registration and would include the serial number and the name and address of the registered user. A second table described blocks of serial numbers in terms of a minimum and maximum serial number along with details of who was allocating from that block and what product the block was being used for.

Obviously each record in the 'Serial' table will have a single related record in the 'Block' table. Unfortunately the relationship is quite complicated to define and indeed it can't be done using DataPower's normal join interface which presents a graphical view of the tables involved and allows the user to drag a line between the fields which define the relationship. Instead I had to use SQL to define the join as follows:

```
Select '*'
From 'Serial' Inner Join 'Block'
On 'Serial.Number' >=
```


`'Block.Minimum'`

And `'Serial.Number' <=`
`'Block.Maximum'`

I then discovered that when presented with a complicated join like this, DataPower fails to update the set of visible records when a new record is added. The record is there though, and it reappears when you change to an alternative layout. An email to Iota produced a detailed response within a day with suggestions as to other techniques I could try and mention of a forthcoming version which would fix this limitation.

Another new feature of DataPower 2 is the addition of a scripting language which enables the user to write scripts which can be used to perform batch updates on a database or to customise user interaction with the database by attaching a script to an action such as clicking on a field. Unfortunately this is another very poorly documented feature so that I found myself largely reliant on looking at the examples supplied with the package rather than having a reference available.

In terms of its functionality and user interface, DataPower 2 seems to be an

excellent package with many worthwhile improvements over earlier versions. The manual is woefully inadequate though. Not only are significant features almost completely ignored but the rest of the manual attempts to be OS neutral so that it can be shared with the Windows and Mac versions. This has the unfortunate effect of ensuring that it can be difficult to follow on any one of the three platforms.

In summary, I have little hesitation about recommending this, although potential users should be aware that there is likely to be a steep learning curve. Hopefully this will improve as Iota add to their Web site all the extra documentation that they currently promise as coming soon.

DataPower 2

Price: £149 +VAT and postage

Site licence: (10 users) £347+VAT

Supplier: Iota Software Ltd

Iota House, Wellington Court

Cambridge CB1 1HZ

Tel: 01223 566789

Fax: 01223 566788

Email: sales@iota.co.uk

Web: www.iota.co.uk

Around The Clubs

The North West London Computer Club

Reporter: Geoff Stilwell

The NWLCC has been in existence for about three years now. We have to thank The ARM Club for our

your browser at the address shown at the end of this article.

On occasion we have spent the evening more formally tapping on the expertise of the members to improve our knowledge of HTML

A visit to the well-established North West London Computer Club and a peep into a diary chronicling the first year of The Surrey and Sussex Acorn User Group.

beginnings as they gave us the initial publicity. We have a loyal core of regular members who have been around since the first meetings and a group who have joined more recently and drop in occasionally.

For a year now we have had the use of a telephone line and use that to access the Internet. We invariably have some time surfing and collecting email and occasionally we access a chat server and share our experiences with those further afield.

We do have a Web site devoted to the Club which gives basic information and provides a map of the area. Point

programming, Desk Top Publishing, Educational Software or even basic DOS. These proved very successful and we intend to work towards similar evenings in the future. Obviously the more members we have the more expertise we will have to draw on.

Although the Club is still biased towards Acorn computers it is our intention that the Club should be cross-platform. One of the members does turn up with his PC (although he also has a Risc PC).

We meet on every third Wednesday in the month in the Sidings Community Centre, Brassey Road, West

Hampstead which is about ten minutes' walk from Kilburn (Jubilee Line) tube station and 15 minutes from any of the three West Hampstead stations.

The idea is that you can bring your computer, plug in and play (if you'll excuse the expression). If you bring a computer there is a small car park at the Centre but come early as it fills up quickly.

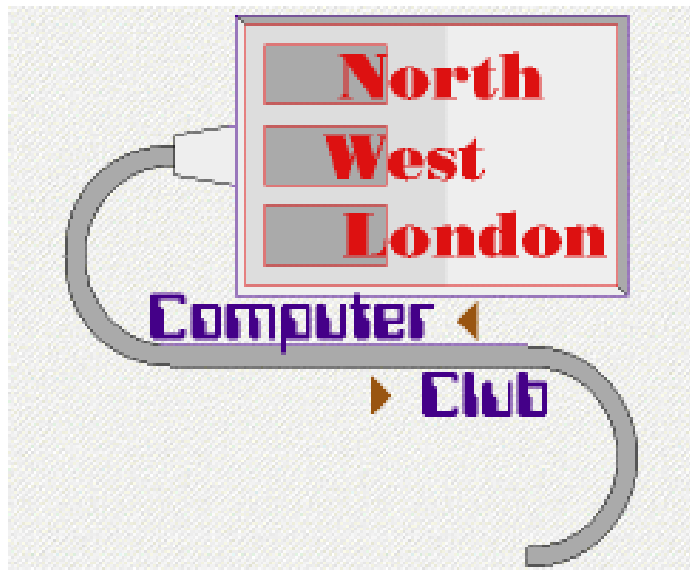
But don't feel you have to have a computer. Some of regulars come long distances on public transport. Just bring yourself.

There are plans afoot to collaborate more closely with the youth members at the Community Centre to perhaps develop their own web site.

First visit free

The cost is minimal. Your first visit is free and thereafter it costs £2 towards the hire of the room and a contribution towards the phone costs. Light refreshments are available free.

We don't like to think of ourselves as 'Anoraks' or 'Techies', just people



with a common interest in computers, all types, and learning more about them.

If you share that interest and want to join us on a Wednesday evening you'll be made very welcome.

Contact

For more information you can contact Chris Dunn on 0181 904 5106 or email: chris.dunn@argonet.co.uk or Geoff Stilwell on 0171 916 5886 or email: nwlcc@gds.globalnet.co.uk

Our Web site is at:

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~gds/nwlcc/index.html>.

We hope to see you soon.

The Surrey And Sussex Acorn User Group

Reporter: Geoff Arnold

The SASAUG is one of the local user groups set up to enable Acorn users to meet face to face rather than down a modem.

With all these new user groups popping up all over the place, Eureka's Editor has asked me to give you a quick peek inside the diary of a committee member of one of them: me! This should not be read as the official SASAUG viewpoint; it's just the contents of my pocketbook's diary!

February 97: First committee meeting.

We decide to try to keep things simple and avoid bureaucracy by not having a constitution. The fact that all the committee members have access to email also helps in keeping costs down and speeding up organisational communications. I think that it's fair to say that we couldn't run the group as easily as we do without using email.



April: First 'proper' meeting. Guest: Oregan Developments, Mark Perry.

A great success. We now have enough members to ensure that SASAUG is financially healthy. Our guest was very popular and so was the new venue, cheaper to hire and with a much larger carpark. It's also near a BR Station.

May: Dalriada, George Buchanan.

After travelling a long way to be with us, George gave a very interesting and informative demonstration of his products as well as explaining a little about the realities of being a developer.

June: Acorn, Chris Cox and Dave Walker.

Wow! A very interesting and amusing evening. Alas, we didn't get to use the phone link that we had for the

Netstations demonstration. Dave's smartcard was anything but smart! The A7000+ provided a talking point with Dave showing how the new window manager could put the iconbar into a window (and not get it out again!).

July: Acorn SouthEast Show.

Thanks to John Stonier, SASAUG had a stand at the show. A successful day with lots of talking and some strange tasting coffee.

July: ARMed Forces, Chris Claydon.

Chris was on the counter attack after a poor review in a certain Acorn magazine... A good evening thou'.

August: No meeting this month, we're all on holiday.

I'm trying to get some SASAUG T-shirts printed in time for Acorn World. Printmaker has been very helpful but we still can't decide on a design or a colour.

September: 'Land Mobile' magazine, Richard Lambley and Tony Tolver.

Our first 'in house' meeting with one of our members being the speaker. It was also one of the most popular meetings so far. Richard also designed the SASAUG logo.

October: Acorn World.

Phew! T-shirts arrived on the morning of the show. Thanks to The ARM Club and The Association of Acorn User Groups (AAUG) we're on a stand just by the entrance. I never knew that just talking to people could be such hard work. Despite being there two days I saw less of the Show than I normally do.

October: Arcade BBS, David Dade.

As well as David's interesting talk we had a visit from John Stonier, who also knows a thing or two about BBSs, and some other members of the Welwyn And Hatfield group.

November: Spacetech, Chris Hornby.

A very good evening with Chris wielding his new digital camera. I guess that means there'll be some new mugshots on our website now! We felt very bad at not being able to even

offer Chris a coffee so from now on we're going to have refreshments at all meetings.

December: 'How I use my Acorn', by any member!

What a diverse range of uses we saw tonight, Unix (RiscBSD), Weather satellite image downloading and even Acorn powered presentations about churches in France.

January: 'Bring and Buy'.

Would have been better if more people had actually brought anything along to sell!

February: Acorn, Russell Scoates, Dave Walker and Phoebe.

We nearly ran out of chairs tonight with about 45 people turning up despite having very little notice of who would be our guests. No surprise that we let our guests talk for longer than the normal hour, a lot longer!

March: The ARM Club Show, Sidcup.

Another good day spent promoting SASAUG and other local groups for

AAUG. Very useful for putting faces to all those email addresses.

March: !Pluto, SASAUG Chairman and the Publicity Officer (me!).

A nice informal evening talking about our experiences of using the new email/news application followed by a quick look at the Spacetechnics Weatherdesk system.

Summary:

A very successful first year for a new user group. We now have 41 full members and more that drop in only occasionally.

For more information on local usergroups please visit AAUG's website:

<http://www.argonet.co.uk/scs/AAUG/>

For details of The Surrey and Sussex Acorn User Group, telephone the Chairperson, Stuart Bell on 01403 253915 or email Geoff Arnold: sasaug.geoffa@argonet.co.uk
The Group's Web site is: www.poppyfields.net/sasaug/

TriLink Terminal Package

TriLink arrived in a smart, A6, hard plastic box. Proclaiming itself to be the ultimate budget ANSI and VT100 terminal package, it came with a pocket size 22-page manual, a registration card and a single floppy disc, formatted to double density so older machines can

Since the manual is very compact, the print may be a little hard to read for people with bad eyesight. However, the print quality is excellent throughout the manual.

The manual itself is very straightforward and takes you

Bulletin Board Sysop Luke Stutters logs on with a terminal package from Bajorasoft and finds all the features he likes to use and impressive speed.

read it. TriLink requires only 1MB RAM, a modem, RISC OS 3.10+ and can run from a floppy. It is also Risc PC and StrongARM compatible.

through the installation of the software step by step. Every single part of the application is explained and jargon is completely avoided.

TriLink comes from Bajorasoft, which was originally a PD software group but has since entered into the commercial world. TriLink is their first commercial venture and this is their second release of the product.

The man behind it all, Toby Mackenzie, has teamed up with Keith Hall, author of the BBS server ArmBBS, and Gareth Babb.

Installation

TriLink has its own installation program which is fast and only requires you to drag and drop where you want to install TriLink. No problems on my Risc PC, although on my A5000 it crashed the machine terminally (*geddit?*), right at the end of the installation. However, the software was fine after I had hard reset the machine.

Features

The most useful feature of TriLink is probably the 11-button control panel. This puts features such as the Directory, Download and Upload directories and the timer (for keeping track of your online time) at your fingertips. This is an advantage over other comms packages which make you root around in menus for different functions.

The Directory allows you to enter the names and numbers of BBSs you call often. This enables you to dial a BBS with only a single click. The macros window is similar—it allows you to define buttons which enter text into the terminal window. This is useful for logging on as you need only click to enter your username and password.

The configuration of the software is also simple but not as flexible as other packages. The software supports Dual Serial Cards and older machines' serial port leads but does not allow you to vary the speed of the modem very easily.

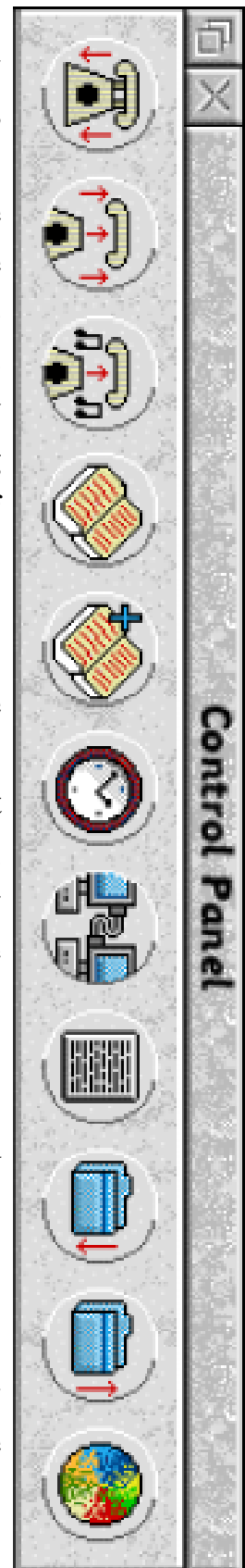
However, the modem interfacing can be fully configured which, as far as I am concerned, means it will be

compatible with any modem. What spoils the configuration setup is that for some of the options to take effect, the software must reload. This is slightly improved by the software quitting and reloading itself but I am puzzled why it has to do this.

Another oddity is the colour selection option. In the default setting of 16 colours, the terminal window does not display the ANSI colours correctly.

This can be changed by selecting 'ANSI Colours' but this loads a different palette file and changes the colour scheme of the whole desktop.

This leaves me with, among other things,



Control Panel

a psychedelic-looking Acorn on my icon bar and some interesting shades of pink.

Speed

This is the most impressive bit of the software. In every aspect, TriLink is the F1 McLaren of all comms software. Installation on the Risc PC and A5000 took, as the box claimed, only two minutes.

The speed of the terminal window display is the fastest I have seen on any comms package. Even on my A5000, the terminal was extremely smooth. The transfer speed with my 33k6 modem was terrific. My ageing A5000 maintained 3400+ cps easily and my Risc PC got the highest bauds I have ever had when using BBSs, 5000-7000 cps at times.

I had a look at the code and, as far as I can tell, it was either written in ARM code or compiled with a very good C compiler.

Summing Up

TriLink is, in my opinion, the best comms software available for the Acorn at this time. However, it is far from perfect. I still have to use the

icon bar menu to open the control panel which, annoyingly, does not open with the terminal window. The software does not support chatting from one copy of TriLink to another similar comms package and more obscure types of terminal, like ANSI Avatar, are not yet supported. Neither is a new bit of comms software, BBSMouse, which is supported by a couple of BBSs. These are not at all commonplace and TriLink has all the features that I ever use when dialling BBSs.

Anyone who uses BBSs seriously should purchase it—it's money well spent!

TriLink

Price: £15 + £1.50 postage

Supplier: Bajorasoft

59 Marion Crescent,

St MaryCray

Orpington, Kent BR5 2DF

Tel/Fax: 01689 877586

Email:

info@bajorasoft.demon.co.uk

Web:

www.bajorasoft.demon.co.uk/

Using the Toolbox from BASIC

The first task for this instalment is to correct a small bug that crept into the `dayssince1900` function. In calculating the number of days since the start of the century, this incorrectly assumes that 1900 was a leap year, which it wasn't. To correct

OK is clicked, instead of putting the details in a new event.

In the last issue, we set up `PROCedit_showing` with two separate cases depending on whether New or Edit was clicked. We can now

Mark Smith explains how to edit and delete the events created in the diary program, in the fifth part of his series on writing a Toolbox application in BASIC.

this, change the line that reads:

```
DaysPassed%=365*YS1900%+((YS
1900%+3) DIV 4)+OrdBlock%!32 to:
DaysPassed%=365*YS1900%+((YS
1900%-1) DIV 4)+OrdBlock%!32.
```

This will then correctly calculate leap years starting from 1904.

Now that new diary events can be created, we need a method of editing and deleting those events.

Editing diary events

New and edit are functionally similar, except that in the latter case we need to populate the Edit window with the existing setup for the event, and update the details for that event when

fill in the case for Edit as follows:

```
CASE IDs%!12 OF
```

```
    WHEN diary_editevent%
```

```
        REM Change the title
```

```
        SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs
        %!16,window_settitle%,editeventtitle$
```

```
        REM Set up the event name field
```

```
        SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs
        %!16,writablefield_setvalue%,edit_ev
        entname%,Descript$(CurrentEvent%)
```

```
        REM Is the event repeating?
```

```
        IF Start$(CurrentEvent%)=End%(
        CurrentEvent%) THEN
```


REM Set repeating option to
one off, deselect and fade
Indefinitely if event is one-off

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,radiobutton_setstate%,edit_o
neoff%,1

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,optionbutton_setstate%,edit_i
ndefinitely%,0

EndDate%=FALSE

PROCfade(IDs%!
16,edit_indefinit
ely%)

ELSE

REM Work out what the repeat
type is

RepeatOption%=edit_daily%

IF WkDay%(CurrentEvent%)<>0
THEN RepeatOption%=edit_weekly%
IF Day%(CurrentEvent%)<>0
THEN RepeatOption%=edit_monthly%
IF Month%(CurrentEvent%)<>0
THEN RepeatOption%=edit_annually%

REM Set appropriate repeating
option

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,radiobutton_setstate%,Repeat
Option%,1

REM Set indefinite option status
and unfade it

IF End%(CurrentEvent%)=&7FFF
FFFF THEN

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,optionbutton_setstate%,edit
_indefinitely%,1

EndDate%=FALSE

ELSE

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,optionbutton_setstate%,edit
_indefinitely%,0

EndDate%=TRUE

ENDIF

PROCunfade(IDs%!
16,edit_indef
initely%)

ENDIF

REM Set From date (convert to cs
since start 1900 by

REM multiplying day number less
1 by &83D600)

?TempTimeBlock%=0

TempTimeBlock%!1=(Start%(Curr
entEvent%)-1)*&83D6

SYS "Territory_ConvertTimeToOr
dinals",-1,TempTimeBlock%,OrdBloc
k%

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit
_fromday%,OrdBlock%!16

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",IDs%!
16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit
_frommonth%,OrdBlock%!20


```

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs%!16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit_
_fromyear%,OrdBlock%!24

REM If event has a valid end date,
use it to set To Date
REM Otherwise, put a copy of
start date in here and fade
IF EndDate% THEN
    ?TempTimeBlock%=0
    TempTimeBlock%!1=(End%(Curr
entEvent%)-1)*&83D6
    SYS "Territory_ConvertTimeToOr
dinals",-1,TempTimeBlock%,OrdBlock%
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_toda
yl%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_today%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_tomont
hl%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_tomont
h%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_toyear
l%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_toyea
r%)
    PROCunfade(IDs%!16,edit_to%)
ELSE
    PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_todayl%)
    PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_today%)
    PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_tomont
hl%)
    PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_tomonth%)
    PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_toyearl%)

```

```

PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_toyear%)
PROCfade(IDs%!16,edit_to%)
ENDIF
SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs%
!16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit_t
oday%,OrdBlock%!16
SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs%
!16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit_t
omonth%,OrdBlock%!20
SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,IDs%
!16,numberrange_setvalue%,edit_t
oyear%,OrdBlock%!24

REM Record which event is being
edited
EditEvent%=CurrentEvent%

```

Note that in order to populate that start and end dates for the event, we need to convert the number of days since the start of the century into the number of centiseconds since the start of 1900 and then use Territory_ConvertTimeToOrdinals to generate day, month and year from that. We can use a similar trick to that we used for incrementing and decrementing the current day to do the initial conversion. There are 8640000 centiseconds in a day, which is &83D600 in hexadecimal. So, by setting the lowest byte of the 5 byte time block to 0 and the top 4 bytes to

number of days multiplied by &83D6 the conversion can be performed fairly easily. Note that we are holding days numbered from 1 (for 1st Jan 1900), so to generate a time at the start of a particular day, we multiply one less than the day number by &83D600.

Deleting diary events

A diary event can be marked as deleted quite easily by setting both the start and end days to &7FFFFFFF (way outside the practical date range). Note that this won't free up the space in the array, but it makes sense to do this at a convenient point such as just before saving the diary (still to be added) instead of every time an entry is deleted.

In order to trap clicks on the Delete button in the main diary window, we need to use ResEd to assign a suitable event number to this action. I've used 7, so PROCtoolbox gets an extra line to check for this event:

```
WHEN 7:PROCdiary_delete
```

diary_delete is a very simple procedure:

```
DEFPROCdiary_delete
```

```
  REM Mark the current event as deleted
```

```
  REM Note that events are not removed from the array
```

```
  REM until the diary is saved
```

```
  Start%(CurrentEvent%)=&7FFFFFFF
```

```
  End%(CurrentEvent%)=&7FFFFFFF
```

```
  REM Update diary display
```

```
  PROCdiary_updatedisplay
```

```
ENDPROC
```

Forthcoming events

The forthcoming event facility will display those diary events due to occur over the next few days at the bottom of the main diary window.

For the forthcoming events we need some global variables to keep track of the previous, current and next events in a similar way to the events for the current day. We also need variables to keep track of what dates the previous, current and next forthcoming events occur on, and a constant to define the maximum number of days to look ahead. These are all defined in PROCinit:

```
  REM Set up time period to check for forthcoming events
```

```
  FEDays%=7 : REM One week
```


PreviousFE%=0 : REM Previous
forthcoming event (or 0)

PreviousFEDay%=0 : REM
Previous forthcoming event date

NextFE%=0 : REM Next
forthcoming event (or 0)

NextFEDay%=0 : REM Next
forthcoming event date

CurrentFE%=0 : REM Currently
displayed forthcoming event

CurrentFEDay%=0 : REM Current
forthcoming event date

The first main stage in adding this facility is to display the first event in PROCdiary_updatedisplay and locate the next event, unfading the next adjuster arrow if one is found. Forthcoming events are to be displayed in date order, earliest first, so the array is searched for each day in turn over the forthcoming events period. The following is added to the end of PROCdiary_updatedisplay

REM Set up forthcoming events
PreviousFE%=0:PreviousFEDay%=0
NextFE%=0:NextFEDay%=0
CurrentFE%=0:CurrentFEDay%=0

REM Work out last day to include in
coming events

LastFEDay%=DaysPassed%+FEDays%

REM Initial value of FEDaysPassed
% is 'today'

FEDaysPassed%=DaysPassed%

REM Search for first forthcoming
event

WHILE FEDaysPassed%<=LastFE
Day% AND CurrentFE%=0

REM Look at next day until one is
found, or we run out

REM of forthcoming days

FEDaysPassed%=FEDaysPassed
%+1

REM Now work out ordinals for
forthcoming day

PROCCalcFEOrdinals(FEDaysPa
ssed%-DaysPassed%,TimeBlock%,
TempTimeBlock%,OrdBlock%)

A%=1

WHILE (A%<=Events%) AND
(CurrentFE%=0)

IF FEDaysPassed%>=Start%(A
%) AND FEDaysPassed%<=End%(A
%) THEN

IF WkDay%(A%)=0 OR
WkDay%(A%)=FEDayWeek% THEN

IF Day%(A%)=0 OR
Day%(A%)=FEDayMonth% THEN

IF Month%(A%)=0 OR
Month%(A%)=FEMonthYear% THEN


```

        CurrentFE%=A%
    ENDIF
ENDIF
ENDIF
ENDIF
A%+=1
ENDWHILE
ENDWHILE

REM If a forthcoming event was
found, display it
IF CurrentFE%<>0 THEN

    REM Get the day in string format
    from TempTimeBlock% set up
    REM by CalcFEOrdinals
    SYS "Territory_ConvertDateAndTi
    me",-1,TempTimeBlock%,TimeString
    %,TimeStrLen%,"%W3, %DY %M3
    %CE%YR"

    REM And display it in the window
    SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,dia
    ry_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%,
    diary_eventdate%,TimeString%

    REM Display event description
    SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,dia
    ry_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%,
    diary_event%,Descript$(CurrentFE%)

    REM Record Day at which Current
    Forthcoming Event occurs

```

```

    CurrentFEDay%=FEDaysPassed%

    REM Search for next event
    WHILE FEDaysPassed%<=LastF
    EDay% AND NextFE%=0
        WHILE (A%<=Events%) AND
        (NextFE%=0)
            IF FEDaysPassed%>=Start%(A
            %) AND EDaysPassed%<=End%(A
            %) THEN
                IF WkDay%(A%)=0 OR
                WkDay%(A%)=FEDayWeek% THEN
                    IF Day%(A%)=0 OR
                    Day%(A%)=FEDayMonth% THEN
                        IF Month%(A%)=0 OR
                        Month%(A%)=FEMonthYear% THEN
                            NextFE%=A%
                        ENDIF
                    ENDIF
                ENDIF
            ENDIF
            A%+=1
        ENDWHILE

        REM If we've completely
        searched the current day without
        REM success, move on to the
        next day
        IF NextFE%=0 THEN
            FEDaysPassed%+=1
            PROCCalcFEOrdinals(FEDays
            Passed%-DaysPassed%,TimeBlock
            %,TempTimeBlock%,OrdBlock%)

```


<pre> A%=0 ENDIF ENDWHILE ELSE REM No forthcoming events where found so empty the date REM and description fields SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,diary_ ry_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%, diary_eventdate%,"" SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,diary_ ry_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%, diary_event%,"" ENDIF REM Grey out previous today event button, as it shows first REM to start with PROCfade(diary_objectid%,diary_ astevent%) REM If there is a next forthcoming event, unfade the next REM forthcoming event button and record day. Otherwise fade it. IF NextFE%<>0 THEN PROCunfade(diary_objectid%,diary_ y_nextevent%) NextFEDay%=FEDaysPassed% </pre>	<pre> ELSE PROCfade(diary_objectid%,diary_ nextevent%) ENDIF ENDPROC </pre> <p>An additional local variable is now used by this procedure. FEDaysPassed% should be added to the LOCAL statement at the top of the procedure.</p> <p>The procedure FECalcOrdinals simply calculates the date ordinals for a given offset from the current day, using Territory_ConvertTimeToOrdinals:</p> <pre> DEFPROCCalcFEOrdinals(DayOffset%,TimeBlock%,FETBlock%,OrdBlock%) REM Calculate Ordinals for a forthcoming day ?FETBlock%=?TimeBlock% FETBlock%!1=TimeBlock%!1+DayOffset%*&83D6 SYS "Territory_ConvertTimeToOrdinals",-1,FETBlock%,OrdBlock% FEDayWeek%=OrdBlock%!28 FEDayMonth%=OrdBlock%!16 FEMonthYear%=OrdBlock%!20 FEYear%=OrdBlock%!24 </pre>
---	--

ENDPROC

The next step is to add the code to PROCadjuster_clicked to respond to clicks on the previous and next forthcoming event adjusters. This is again similar to the code for handling the current day's diary events but is slightly more complicated due to the fact that forthcoming events occur over several days. The following should be added before the two ENDCASE statements at the end of the procedure:

```
    REM Click on previous
forthcoming event adjuster
    WHEN diary_lastevent%

    REM New forthcoming next
event is old current event
    NextFE%=CurrentFE%
    NextFEDay%=CurrentFEDay%
    PROCunfade(diary_objectid%,di
ary_nextevent%)

    REM New forthcoming current
event is old previous event
    CurrentFE%=PreviousFE%
    CurrentFEDay%=PreviousFEDay%

    REM Get date string for new
current forthcoming event
    ?TempTimeBlock%=0
```

```
    TempTimeBlock%!1=(CurrentFE
Day%-1)*&83D6
```

```
    SYS "Territory_ConvertDateAndT
ime",-1,TempTimeBlock%,TimeString
%,TimeStrLen%, "%W3, %DY %M3
%CE%YR"
```

```
    SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,di
ary_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue
%,diary_eventdate%,TimeString%
```

```
    REM Display event description
```

```
    SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,dia
ry_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%,
diary_event%,Descript$(CurrentFE%)
```

```
    REM Search for a previous
forthcoming event
```

```
    PreviousFE%=0
    A%=CurrentFE%-1
    FEDaysPassed%=CurrentFEDay%
    WHILE FEDaysPassed%>DaysP
assed% AND PreviousFE%=0
        WHILE (A%>0) AND (PreviousF
E%=0)
```

```
            IF FEDaysPassed%>=Start%(
A%) AND FEDaysPassed%<=End%(
A%) THEN
```

```
                IF WkDay%(A%)=0 OR
WkDay%(A%)=FEDayWeek% THEN
                    IF Day%(A%)=0 OR
Day%(A%)=FEDayMonth% THEN
                        IF Month%(A%)=0 OR
Month%(A%)=FEMonthYear% THEN
```


<pre> PreviousFE%=A% ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF ENDIF A%-=1 ENDWHILE REM If we've completely searched the current day without REM success, move on to the previous day IF PreviousFE%=0 THEN FEDaysPassed%-=1 PROCCalcFEOrdinals(FEDay sPassed%-DaysPassed%,TimeBlock %,TempTimeBlock%,OrdBlock%) A%=Events% ENDIF ENDWHILE REM If we've found a next event, unfade to next REM event button. Otherwise fade it. IF PreviousFE%<>0 THEN PROCunfade(diary_objectid%, diary_lastevent%) PreviousFEDay%=FEDaysPas sed% ELSE </pre>	<pre> PROCfade(diary_objectid%,dia ry_lastevent%) ENDIF REM Click on next forthcoming event adjuster WHEN diary_nextevent% REM New forthcoming previous event is old current event PreviousFE%=CurrentFE% PreviousFEDay%=CurrentFEDay% PROCunfade(diary_objectid%,di ary_lastevent%) REM New forthcoming current event is old next event CurrentFE%=NextFE% CurrentFEDay%=NextFEDay% REM Get date string for new current forthcoming event ?TempTimeBlock%=0 TempTimeBlock%!1=(CurrentFE Day%-1)*&83D6 SYS "Territory_ConvertDateAndT ime",-1,TempTimeBlock%,TimeString %,TimeStrLen%, "%W3, %DY %M3 %CE%YR" SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,di ary_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue %,diary_eventdate%,TimeString% </pre>
--	---


```

    REM Display event description
    SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",,diary_objectid%,displayfield_setvalue%,diary_event%,Descript$(CurrentFE%)

```

```

    REM Search for a next forthcoming event
    NextFE%=0
    A%=CurrentFE%+1
    FEDaysPassed%=CurrentFEDay%
    WHILE FEDaysPassed%<=LastFEDay% AND NextFE%=0
        WHILE (A%<=Events%) AND (NextFE%=0)
            IF FEDaysPassed%>=Start%(A%) AND FEDaysPassed%<=End%(A%) THEN
                IF WkDay%(A%)=0 OR WkDay%(A%)=FEDayWeek% THEN
                    IF Day%(A%)=0 OR Day%(A%)=FEDayMonth% THEN
                        IF Month%(A%)=0 OR Month%(A%)=FEMonthYear% THEN
                            NextFE%=A%
                        ENDIF
                    ENDIF
                ENDIF
            ENDIF
            A%+=1
        ENDWHILE
    ENDWHILE

```

```

    REM If we've completely searched the current day without

```

```

    REM success, move on to the next day
    IF NextFE%=0 THEN
        FEDaysPassed%+=1
        PROCCalcFEOrdinals(FEDaysPassed%-DaysPassed%,TimeBlock%,TempTimeBlock%,OrdBlock%)
        A%=0
    ENDIF
ENDWHILE

```

```

    REM If we've found a next event, unfade to next event button.
    REM Otherwise fade it.

```

```

    IF NextFE%<>0 THEN
        PROCunfade(diary_objectid%,diary_nextevent%)
        NextFEDay%=FEDaysPassed%
    ELSE
        PROCfade(diary_objectid%,diary_nextevent%)
    ENDIF

```

This procedure should also have a local declaration at the top which reads:

```

    LOCAL FEDaysPassed%, A%

```

That's everything for this issue. Next time, we'll add save and load facilities to the diary.

Doom Trilogy

Well it has finally happened: an Acorn company have released a port of the infamous PC game Doom. It's about time too! A Doom port to RISC OS has been on the go now for quite a while and, as you will see, it has been worth it.

Installation is simply run and follow the prompts.

All you need then do is run the !Doom application. You will be given a setup window, one option being video, and from here you will set

Gary Parr finds Doom, with its high res graphics and realistic sound, was well worth the wait for the RISC OS version and thinks it will make the PC users envious.

Well the release date arrived, being at the Acorn SouthWest show in Somerset where R-Comp brought many shiny boxes with the well known Doom logo printed on them. These boxes contained the ingredients for an excellent package which would cost the buyer many hours engrossed in the atmosphere of both Doom and Doom II.

The box itself is the standard PC packaging containing an instruction manual, three CDs (Doom, Doom II and Master Levels), two HD discs containing the Acorn software and Acorn instructions.

Doom to the desired mode, either Normal Res 320x240 or High Res 640x480 or higher. You can then run in either 8-bit or 24-bit and set it to full screen or windowed.

First you drag the Doom version you want to use: either Ultimate or Doom II. You also have three editable windows, into which you can drag extra *pWad* files which you may want to use. There are more than 3,000 of these on the Master Levels CD, so you have plenty to experiment with. One which I tried was the Beavis and Butthead *pWad*. This changed the Doom sound to one you would expect in the famous animation.

Many of you are probably asking ‘How fast is it?’ Well all I can say is *fast*. As I have mentioned, you are able to use many screen modes, whereas Doom on the PC will run only in the 320x240 mode. I like 800x600 although larger screen modes can be achieved, especially for those with 2MB VRAM.

Now for the subject of sound. This topic has split the views on comp.sys.acorn.games because R-Comp took the decision to use midi for the music, thus giving a more realistic feel and crisper sound. The other option was to convert it to tracker format, which would have meant going from eight track midi to four track tracker files, and on hearing the music I think it was the best solution. It would have spoilt the hard work on the visual side to have it ruined by poor quality sound. I don’t have midi and so don’t have the joy of background music. This doesn’t though make the game less enjoyable.

The visual side is amazing. Those used to the smooth textual nature of Quake will not feel out of place in the world of Doom. If you compared ArcQuake to PC Doom, ArcQuake

would look the more realistic. Happily, I can now say that about RISC OS Doom. With High Res graphics you will find them very smooth. No more of those large pixel screens where you wish it would look like your mate’s PC. This time it will be him envious of your computer.

I won’t bore you by telling you what the keys are, but just say that they couldn’t be simpler. If you find that you are starting to struggle, you can still use those handy cheats, such as IDKFA for happy ammo mode.

All in all, the game is well worth the money and will be one of the best games released onto the RISC OS platform. So don’t just sit there, get that well-saved cash out of your wallet and buy it. Well done R-Comp and let’s hope there are more to come.

Doom Trilogy

Price: £35 inc VAT and postage

Supplier: R-Comp Interactive

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Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6PS

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Fax: 01925 757377

Email: doom@rcomp.co.uk

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