

The magazine for members of

The **ARM** *Club*

**The Unbelievable
Life of Phoebe**

Publishing on a CD-ROM

**WIMPBasic and
WIMPWorks compared**

Making Music on an Acorn

Marriage to a Spod

**Meet our
active
members**



Issue 28 — Winter 1998

Stranger Than Fiction

At the time of writing, the future of Acorn computers is shrouded in uncertainty after more than a month of unbelievable events which would strain the credibility of a fictional plot.

The prelude came on this page in our Spring 1998 issue, when the headline read *Acorn Considers End Of Desktops*. We then reported that this idea had been dropped ‘for good, hard-headed business reasons’ (then!).

On Tuesday 15th September the birth of the long awaited Phoebe was jubilantly announced as production-design motherboard booted up RISC OS 4.0 for the first time. Two days later, on Black Thursday 17th September, Acorn’s management brutally ended Phoebe’s brief life with a cold demonstration of the complete lack of sentiment which can govern business decisions.

Acorn’s yellow goddess had met the ancient fate of an unwanted Oriental girl baby and, with the loss of their heiress, Acorn computers seemed to

have come to the end of their dynasty. But was Phoebe really dead or could she rise again as a Phoenix?

Enter the White Knight, Peter Bondar, heading an international rescue consortium including a mysterious Dutch cohort. While others talked of building more-advanced Acorn-type computers or cards to bring Acorn technology to PCs, the consortium negotiated to resurrect Phoebe.

Then in another implausible twist to the plot, came two statements, again two days apart, this time from the consortium. The first announced plans for a New Company to develop and market Phoebe, RISC OS 4 and related products. The second revealed that Acorn had abandoned the negotiations and switched to new discussions with the Dutch group.

The plot continues...

(Or perhaps, by the time you read this, the final twist may have been revealed.)

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 Alas, poor Phoebe

The tragedy of the birth and pitifully short life of Acorn's long awaited baby, Phoebe.

6 Publishing on a CD-ROM

The modern DIY alternative to writing that book. *On disc*

12 WIMBasic v WIMPWorks

Two useful programs for programming the WIMP in BASIC are compared.

17 Making music: Part 1

The start of a new series to get your computer tuneful. *On disc*

20 Gill's Journal: Marrying a spod

Why she did it and how you can get your own spoddess, in the first revealing pages.

27 MenuBar & WorkTop

The two applications to complete Graham Crow's Desktop Suite.

On disc

30 Getting into Video Editing

In the second part of the series we hear about video quality and how to use Videodesk.

34 Sleuth 3

The latest version of Beebug's Optical Character Resolution program finally makes OCR quicker than typing.

38 Tried and Trusted Tips

Solving a problem with a SCSI scanner, placing that important file where you can find it and sorting out your letter files.

40 Using the Toolbox from BASIC

The sixth and final part of the series adds load and save facilities for our diary application. *On disc*

46 Dazzle Plus

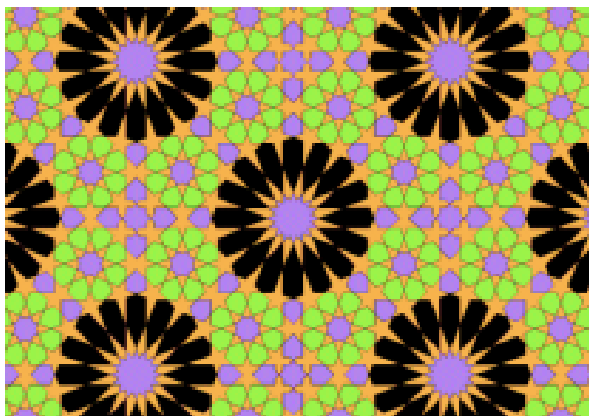
The latest version of the graphics package designed for children, used by professional artists.

50 Acorn Arena: Exodus

The trading and battling in space games, with fond memories of Elite.

52 Site Seeing

In the second of our guides to what's good on the Internet, we travel abroad and drop in on the Royal Family's homepage.



*An Islamic style tile pattern.
See Publishing on a CD-ROM,
page 6.*

55 Online Club Chats

Join the chattering classes on IRC and find if talk really is cheap when your phone bill arrives.

On disc

60 Meet our active members

Get to know the people behind some of the familiar names among Club members.

63 Members' Ads

Hardware and magazines for sale and Acorn computers wanted.

64 Personal Accounts

The latest upgrade to the program that helps you keep see where all the money goes.

68 CueMaster prompt

The Acorn powered prompter that cues Dutch TV presenters.

71 The Acorn Midlands Show

Full details of the Club's Show in Birmingham on November 28.

72 Pocket Book Corner

Three's company on honeymoon when it's bride, groom and a Psion.

74 Worth Reading: Acorn User

The Editor and a regular reader of the magazine celebrating its 200th issue reminisce and look optimistically to its future.

78 News Reports

Demo contest survives Acorn World cancellation and a new name for the new art program.

79 On the Disc & In Eureka 29

What's on the Eureka 28 disc and some of the coming attractions planned for our next issue.

80 Club contacts

Who does what and where to contact them.

Alas, Poor Phoebe

The contrasting emotions of two days when the mood among Acorn workers went from triumph to tragedy as the company's golden hope, Phoebe, was born and killed off are well summed up in these extracts from two emails sent by Developer Support Specialist, Dave Walker.

Hi folks...

Acorn Developer News 15/09/98

Stop Press: "She's Alive!"

You'll be pleased to know that a production-design Phoebe motherboard fitted with an early-silicon IOMD2 ASIC booted RISC OS 4.0 for the first time this morning.

The good news is that the CPU-to-memory bus is runnable at the expected 64MHz, VIDC20R, which is on the end of a 50MHz video bus, is delivering 1600x1200x32K and other resolutions (1024x768x16 million etc) without flicker or glitching, a number of applications (including Replay 3) are running and the new keyboard and mouse drivers check out. However, problems remain in that sound DMA isn't working properly yet and the system falls over every so often at the moment (obviously, these problems will need to be tuned out before we start building shippable prototypes).

Anyway, it's just taken a huge step in the right direction; the podule interface is currently being checked out, and I'll keep you posted with news as it emerges...

Dave Walker, Developer Support Specialist, Acorn Computers Ltd

Hi folks...

Acorn Developer News 17/09/1998

Acorn Reorganisation

There follows a transcript of a letter from Stan Boland relating to changes which have occurred today at Acorn:

“... We have today announced that although Acorn will continue to supply existing product ranges, including Risc PC, A7000+ and NCs, we have reluctantly decided to cancel the proposed Risc PC 2 / Phoebe product development and we will be refunding any deposits taken for Phoebe in full. As a result of this decision, we have postponed Acorn World, originally planned for 16th-18th October 1998 inclusive...”

[end quoted text]

So Long, and Thanks...

This is the last developer missive you will receive from me. As part of the reorganisation detailed above, my position has been made redundant... All that remains is for me to wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavours, thank my former colleagues in Software and Hardware Engineering for all the help they've given me over the past not-quite-5 years in answering some of your more arcane questions, and tell you it's been seriously good fun. It has.

Cheers,

Dave Walker, Former Developer Support Specialist, signing off.

Publishing On A CD-ROM

It is a lot simpler, easier and cheaper to undertake private publication on a CD-ROM than via a conventional book. Moreover, Acorn machines are ideal for such an undertaking. Why is this true, since some publishers appear to think that CD-publishing is

Second, the actual material to be placed upon the CD can be prepared so that it is accessible on essentially every modern computer — the solution is to use HTML. This effectively precludes programs or ‘active’ material, but does include the

Brian Wichmann describes his experiences with CD-ROMs in investigating geometrical shapes (which has taken more time than he would be prepared to admit!).

very expensive? Of course, some publishers like Dorling Kindersley do produce very well-crafted CDs containing many images and lots of avenues to explore which are expensive, but less elaborate material can be produced much more cheaply.

First, some background. CD-ROMs for computers usually use one of two possible standards. The simplest uses file names which are MS DOS compatible, while the more complex standard permits essentially arbitrary file names. If you want to publish so that a CD is readable on virtually any computer, then the simple standard is the one to go for (it is ISO 9660).

analogy of a book (but colour is no more expensive than black and white, and indexing and cross-referencing much superior). Programs could be produced in Java but those can't be developed on a Risc PC at the moment, since Acorn have only released a Java Virtual Machine interpreter, not the Java Development Kit. You can use the JDK on a PC, but that is hardly Acorn friendly!

Writing a CD-ROM is easy these days. You can buy a writer for around £300, or send your material to The ARM Club for the CD-ROM to be written on the Club's machine for a minimal charge. However, the actual

writers are somewhat temperamental due to the synchronous method of writing. I have found it best to write one, then perform checks on the disc, before making further copies (using the CD-writer perhaps in its CD-copy mode). From the cheaper sources, you can purchase the writable gold discs for less than £2.

I have produced a gold disc of four releases of some of my own material and have learnt a lot about the process. The main lessons are below.

Checking HTML

HTML is like a very simple programming language. However, the browsers that display HTML on screen make no checks on the legality of their input. This implies that unless the HTML is correct, different browsers will display them differently. Moreover, the differences are gross, and hence checking the HTML is vital. I do this by means of a program I wrote myself in Pascal which checks the HTML-tags are those defined in the HTML standard, version 2.0. Current browsers support HTML version 3.1 or greater, so that I can be sure that the HTML I have will be displayed correctly, even

through I only check the actual display using ArcWeb on my Risc PC. I did have one disappointment here due to the person having a very old browser, so I have now added a warning on the CD about this. Version 2.0 of HTML is quite primitive but more or less sufficient for my purposes. There are a few things that are awkward: first, the actual material consists of geometric tiling patterns and their properties. In consequence, I refer to the angles of the figures, which I first specified in radians. This then needs the symbol π which I do not have in HTML. My solution to this was to use degrees instead, since the HTML character set (ISO 8859/1, or Latin 1) has a degree symbol ($^{\circ}$). A slight annoyance with version 2.0 of HTML is that it does not have superscripts and subscripts. I now think that it would be better to have an HTML checker which checked for allowable tags, hence permitting superscripts and subscripts (but not some tags that are even in version 2.0).

The HTML that I produce is either hand written using Edit (and then checked) or computer generated. The checking is applied to all the hand

written HTML using an Obeytask which takes about one minute for 150 files on a StrongARM machine. I use David Pilling's Spell utility to check the text — just merge all the HTML text into one file (automatically, of course) edit out the tags by removing all text between < and >. One pass can easily check for spelling errors and I could improve this process by having a dictionary with proper names and other sequences which will not be found in the standard dictionary.

Apart from the tags, the other important check to make is that the hypertext links are valid. This requires that the file names and link names with files are recorded in a large table. This check is also made by a program written in Pascal. The program takes as input the name of a directory, which restricts the scope of the links that are checked, and the name of an HTML which is the first one to be checked. After checking this file, all the remaining files in the table are checked. This takes about eight minutes on my machine, since my entire collection has 12,000 files and about the same number of links. Links to non-HTML files are just checked that they exist and all file names are

checked to conform to the MS DOS rules. The Pascal program needs a lot of memory to store the table — currently 7.6MB. I re-run this program on a completed CD-ROM to check that it has been written correctly and I have not missed anything out.

Note that all hypertext links are relative which is essential since the actual local file name is not known as the CD-ROM could be placed in one of two drives on many PCs. Using relative links has the advantage that the material will work from any media (and the copy I have on my Risc PC). This does imply that the material can be easily copied and hence copyright protection could be problematic.

Images

All the images I have are referenced in the HTML as GIFs. Such images are always acceptable to browsers and are quite compact. This means that the storage required for the HTML and the GIFs is modest enough not to cause problems with my Risc PC having a 400MB disc. Also, the compactness implies that the time required to load from a CD-ROM is

reasonably quick, which is important for searching. For each pattern, two size of GIF file are produced, a large one which will give a high-quality A4 picture and a small thumbnail version for display with many others to allow the user to select a pattern of interest. A small number of intermediate sized GIFs are produced to illustrate the material. I construct my images from an ASCII description using a program, again in Pascal, that writes Drawfiles. The Drawfiles are then converted into GIFs using *Image Conversion Assistant* from Rcomp.

This produces excellent quality images with no apparent loss of resolution. Also, the tool has batch facility (thanks Andrew) which raises another important issue in CD-ROM publishing (see next section).

I have also produced CGM files from my patterns since that seems to be the best vector graphic format for non-Acorn machines. However, the limited experience I have with such files is not good; many PC packages abort when processing the more complex patterns. The fact that modern multi-media PCs don't have an equivalent of Draw I find amazing.

Managing the capacity

The virtue of CD-ROMs is their size compared with any other delivery medium. Perhaps 10 or 20 books for the space occupied by a small leaflet. Colour is essentially free.

The downside of this capacity is the problem in managing it effectively. It is easy to place thousands of images on a CD, but indexing it so that the user can easily retrieve a specific item is another story. Many excellent collections of PD images fail to provide an effective search mechanism.

In my case I handle this problem by two means: first, all my images are in small batches which are handled automatically by the generation software; second, I have cataloguing and indexing software which enables the location of any item amongst the over 4,000 in my collection. The batches are arranged in a tree structure, following the file structure for storing the patterns.

The structure of the system I have developed can be appreciated from a few figures:

Hand produced HTML files: 1MB
Hand produced data files: 4.3MB
Mechanically produced HTML files:
4.3MB
Size of GIF files: about 170MB
Size of Drawfiles: about 120MB
Size of CGM files: about 70MB
Total size of material on CD: 404MB
Total number of files: 21,877

The total amount of material to handle is effectively the hand-produced material which is a comparable size to a book, even though the total amount of material would be about 4,500 pages if printed.

Programming

I have three types of programs:

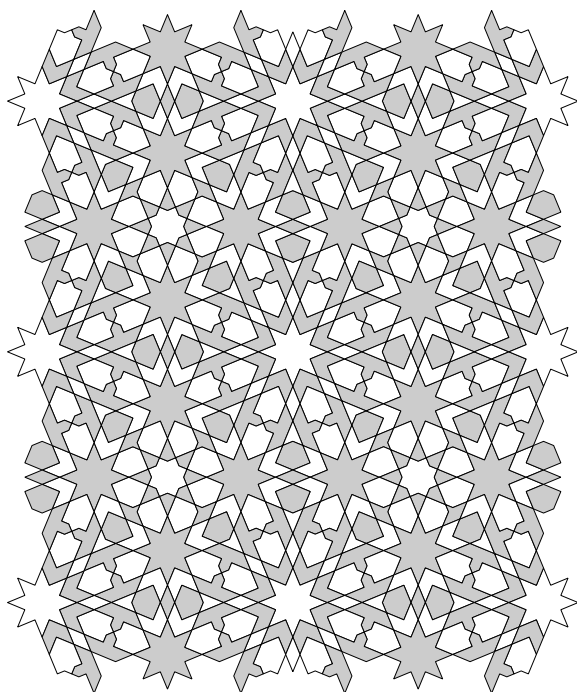
1. The main, complex programs written in ISO Pascal.
2. Small applications written in BASIC. An example is a program which appends '/GIF' to file names to conform to the PC convention for HTML. Another program adds hypertext links to all the patterns in one batch.
3. Very many TaskObey files which invokes the Pascal programs, copy and manipulate files, etc. I have a

work directory in which a batch of patterns are processed, which are then copied over into the main system once they have been checked. This avoids potential problems with inadvertent updates to the system.

I have never attempted to program the WIMP properly — I find I can manage without that. In fact, it is more important to be able to batch jobs — hence the reason for TaskObey files. Another point: I have found the Zip discs ideal to backup my material and also for porting it to a PC in order to undertake the CD-gold disc writing. Six Zip discs contains a copy of the complete system, while the hard disc on my machine merely has the basic HTML material (ie no Drawfiles or CGM files) which amounts to 185MB. Of course, the Zip discs are recorded in MS DOS format.

My collection

The collection that I have now been developing for some time is concerned with tiling the plane with polygons. It is a problem in geometry and also an artistic one to obtain a pattern which catches the eye. Part of the mathematical patterns were

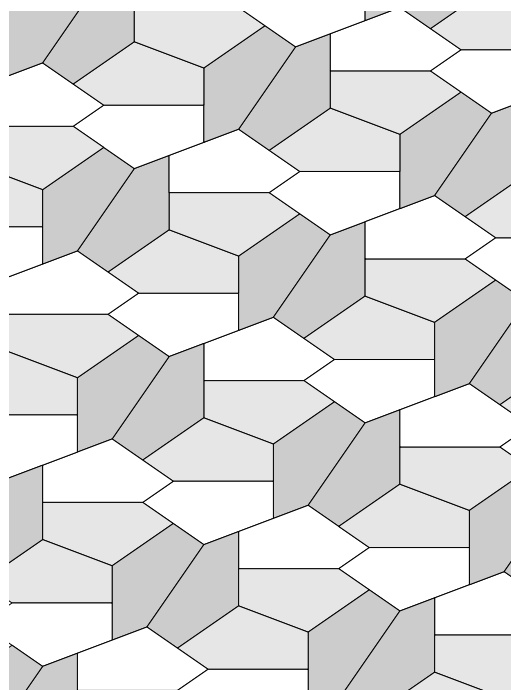


This pattern is from the Alhambra in Granada. James Murphy produced an illustration of this when spending 7 years in Spain studying the Alhambra.

produced by Karl Dahkle which involves filling rectangles with polyominoes. The puzzle corner in *Archive* magazine provide a solution to a few of the mathematical problems. Another part are the artistic tiling patterns from the Alhambra produced by Islamic artists. Two samples are shown here, although they look better in colour!

To appreciate the issues involved, a sample from the collection is on the Eureka disc.

I have a major difficulty with the collection at the moment. Due to copyright problems, I am not publishing this myself and I have yet to find a publisher. Hence I have not actually produced copies in quantity although I did find that this costs about £1,000 for 1,000 copies, including a leaflet and jewel case.



This pattern consists of just one pentagonal shape. It is unknown just how many pentagonal shapes can tile the plane according to the standard mathematical text on the subject (Grünbaum and Shephard). This pattern was found by Rolf Stein in 1985.

WIMPBasic V WIMPWorks

Since my family bought our first computer (BBC B) I have always programmed in BASIC in preference to languages like C or PASCAL. But this early start began to work against me when I got my Archie. Like many other programmers, I did not know

WIMPBasic has a StrongHelp manual, and WIMPWorks also has one as well as an excellent 100-page paper manual. It seems that Jaffa can afford to provide one but Clares, who get an extra £15 per purchase, cannot. Neither companies demand royalties,

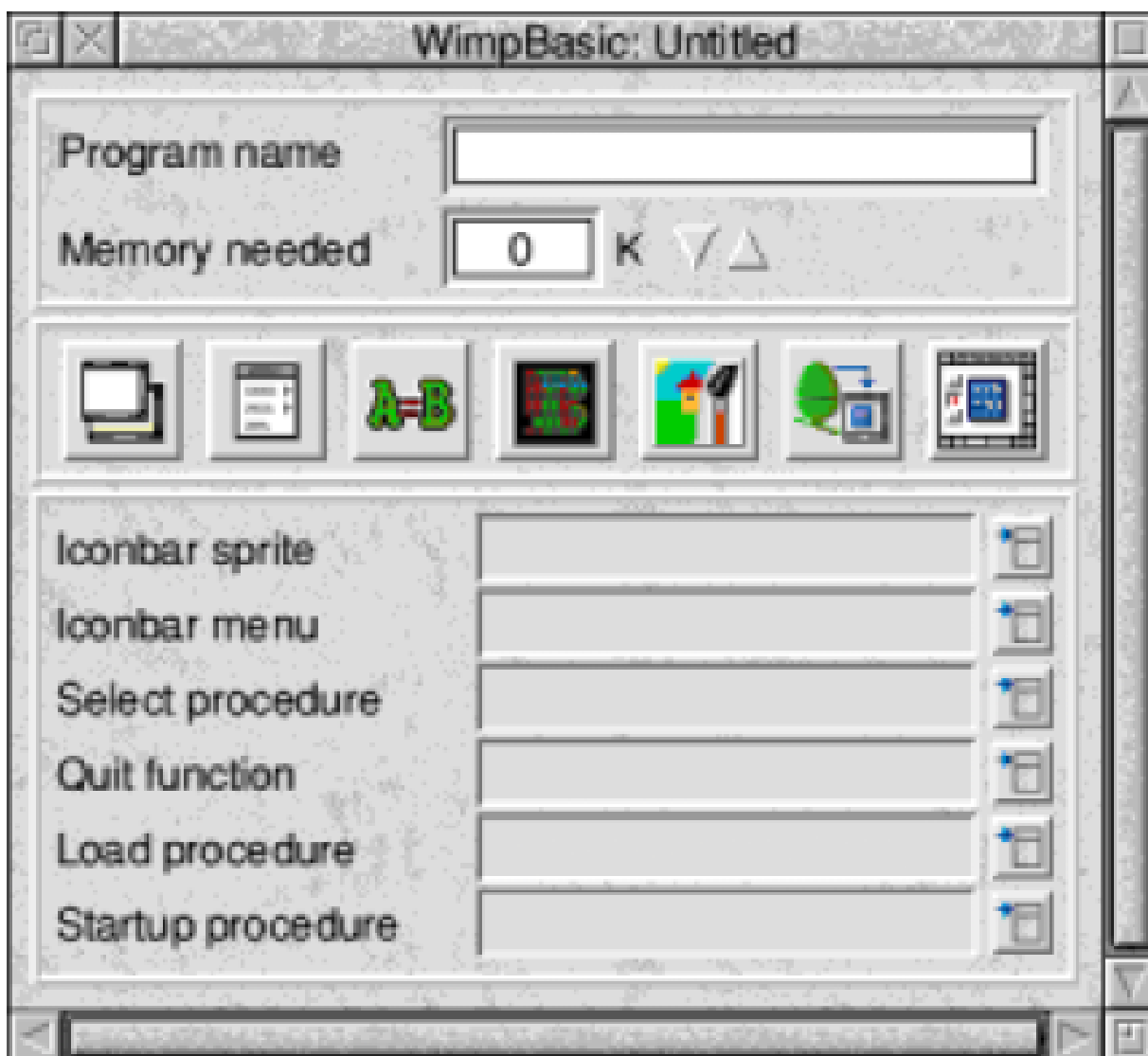
Want to write WIMP programs using your skill in BASIC and aren't sure whether to choose WIMPBasic or WIMPWorks? Garry Taylor has tried both.

much about the WIMP system and experience on platforms such as the Macintosh did not help due to its very different interface and underlying technology.

Users, quite rightly, wanted attractive interfaces to make their work easier and the text interface largely died a quick death. This is where WIMPBasic (from Clares Micro Supplies) and WIMPWorks (from relative newcomer Jaffa Software) come in handy. They allow programmers with little or no experience of the WIMP interface to use their BASIC skills in a more modern way.

which is the norm on other platforms, so commercial developers should not fear.

When I received WIMPWorks, the first thing I noticed was that it was riddled with big, hairy bugs. The program confused windows I had drawn with other windows, which made it useless for anything with windows in it although in Jaffa's defence the program was fixed and on my hard disk within 24 hours. But this made me search around for more bugs and I did not have to look far; buttons were confused with others and the window editor would save windows but sometimes not load them in. Have



The main window in WIMPBasic, where you can choose some ready made components for your program.

these bugs been ironed out? Yes and No.

How well do they work?

I have used WIMPBasic rather a lot over the last few months and WIMPWorks over the past six weeks or so but it took only about an hour for the differences to become apparent.

WIMPBasic is a simpler affair with the coding aspect very well bolted onto the interface designer. The designer is very nice to use, although maybe a little lacking in the features of WIMPWorks. The code editor in WIMPBasic is well thought out with colouring of commands (*PRINT*, *STR\$* etc.), although it is prone to

crashing if you have more than 100 or so lines in it. WIMPWorks's window designer is definitely more powerful with full font control (although this is a little buggy) amongst other things. Its code editor is basically !Edit, which is no bad thing, especially as it is far more stable than WIMPBasic. As far as their editors go, it's a dead heat.

How basic is BASIC?

WIMPWorks uses normal BBC BASIC with some of its own, very useful and powerful, commands such as those for manipulating or moving icons. WIMPBasic on the other hand has some different commands and its brand of BASIC is definitely not as fast or as powerful as BBC Basic. Although the code editor of WIMPWorks is quite separate to the window designer, its more powerful language and speed makes it the outright winner in this respect.

What are the results like?

WIMPBasic applications all require !WBModules to run, which at 60K would take a little time to download off the Internet, but otherwise it's pretty hassle-free. It does seem to me to be a way to advertise their product

free but if that product produces a good WIMP program, why shouldn't people know? WIMPWorks applications need no modules and seem very stable. WIMPBasic applications crashed on quitting occasionally, sometimes taking the whole system with them. This does not seem to happen on Risc PCs, though. There is little to choose between the applications they create, but WIMPWorks's stability, speed and lack of modules makes it the winner here.

In Conclusion

WIMPBasic is easier to use, with a more intuitive way of attaching your code to your buttons and menus, and is probably the better buy for the absolute beginner who wants to make only little programs and where speed is not critical.

WIMPWorks is cheaper by £15, much more powerful, and has a paper manual, but it is more difficult to use, simply because it has more on offer. Extensions to WIMPWorks are available to add capabilities to an already feature-filled program, and allow creation and saving of Drawfiles to name but one.

It may be that you will buy WIMPBasic and outgrow it in several months but Jaffa do offer a cross-grade (politically correct way of saying “Mine’s better than yours!”) from WIMPBasic to their program for a very reasonable £15, although Jaffa does keep your discs, which is a little unusual and some will say unfair. But if you do want to keep WIMPBasic, you could just pay the full price. I talked to Jaffa about this and they said “It’ll stop unscrupulous people selling their copies of WB to get their money back.” I’m not sure what’s so bad about that but it does limit the amount of second-hand software on the market, therefore forcing people to buy new copies and hence support the market.

Programming software was never meant to be easy but WIMPBasic makes this task far easier as does WIMPWorks to a lesser extent. WIMPWorks’s debugging is nowhere near as complete as WIMPBasic (and often does not work at all) which is more hassle for the beginner and advanced user alike. Both take some time to compile. The largest program I wrote in WIMPBasic was a simple database, which took about 10

minutes to compile on my weedy A3010, whereas the largest program on WIMPWorks is a relational database, far larger than the other database, and this takes 25 minutes to compile, Visual Basic on the PC (grr!) and HyperCard on the Mac don’t actually need to compile.

With the version I have, I feel that Jaffa may, in effect, be using its customers as beta-testers (maybe even alpha-testers!) which is OK if it’s made clear at the outset and this would not have put me off getting it. I took advantage of their upgrade offer from WIMPBasic and I found it worthwhile if fraught with sleepless nights.

If you are planning on writing a big, complex, application it’s possible WIMPBasic could not meet your needs. But for anything small and easy, WIMPBasic may be your best buy. However I prefer WIMPWorks. It’s faster, I can live without debugging and it is more capable of letting me do what I want to do rather than work around limitations. But — and this is a big *but* — WIMPWorks is very badly bugged. When it works, it works very, very well, but when it

doesn't, procedures don't save, sometimes adding a window causes the whole program not to work, discarding changes made to windows hangs the computer most of the time, adding submenus often does not work and adding buttons to the standard save window will stop parts of the window not working, Commands often have no effect at all, I really could go on....

I have started to write 'real' software with WIMPWorks and have lost reams of code through its bugs and had many scares of losing 20,000 words of BASIC. Using WIMPWorks is scary. It does not feel anywhere near as solid as WIMPBASIC.

I cannot endorse WIMPBasic or WIMPWorks but WIMPWorks shows the potential of becoming a classy piece of software. I won't write anything else with WIMPWorks due to its 'undocumented features' and WIMPBasic just does not have the power. WIMPBASIC is less guilty of bugs, although it does have some. I think £50 for WIMPBasic is a bit steep especially considering it lacks a paper manual. Thirty-five pounds for WIMPWorks may seem expensive

considering all the bugs it has but if these are ironed out, £35 is a bargain. My search continues for the definitive RAD package for RISC OS. I hope to report back on what I find.

WIMPBasic

Price: £49.95 inc VAT

Supplier: Clares Micro Supplies
98 Middlewich Road, Northwich,
Cheshire, CW9 7DA

Tel: 01606 48511

Fax: 01606 48512

Email:

support@clares.demon.co.uk

WIMPWorks

Price: £35 inclusive

Upgrade from v1 £10

Exchangae for original discs from
WIMPBasic, HelixBasic,
WimpGen or Archway £15

Supplier: Jaffa Software

14 Worthington Close

Henbury, Macclesfield

Cheshire, SK11 9NS.

Tel: 0961 394228

Email: andrew@jaffasoft.co.uk

Making Music: Part 1

In my opinion Oregon Software Developments have always coded good software and Digital Symphony is no exception. Although it isn't as advanced as some more recent music editors, I find it much easier to use and you don't need a MIDI keyboard.

filer window, then press Shift+F6. A list of the nine samples will appear. This list is fairly self explanatory, but if you double click on one of the samples a new window will appear with more detailed information on that particular sample.

In the first of a new series Kieran Simkin gets you drumming on your computer, using Digital Symphony which has a demo copy on the Eureka disc.

StrongARM users will, however, need to press F12 and type *Cache off* at the prompt before loading it.

In this article I will show how to create a piece of music called Echoing using Symphony.

You must first load in some samples, these are usually short recordings of the instruments that you want to use in your piece of music. There are nine samples used in this particular piece of music although you can have up to 63 or 3E in hex (all numbers in Symphony are in hex). Load in the piece of music from the Eureka disc by double clicking on its icon in the

With this window open, you can press 'T' on the keyboard to hear the 'middle C' of the selected sample. Notice that if you press '<' or ',' then you get the note 'C' on the next octave down.

All the keys on a piano keyboard have a corresponding key on the computer keyboard. Try pressing some other keys on the keyboard. The row of keys from 'z' to '/' and from 'q' to '[' are the 'natural notes' (white notes on a piano keyboard), the keys from 'a' to ';' and from '2' to '-' are the sharps and flats (black notes on a piano keyboard).

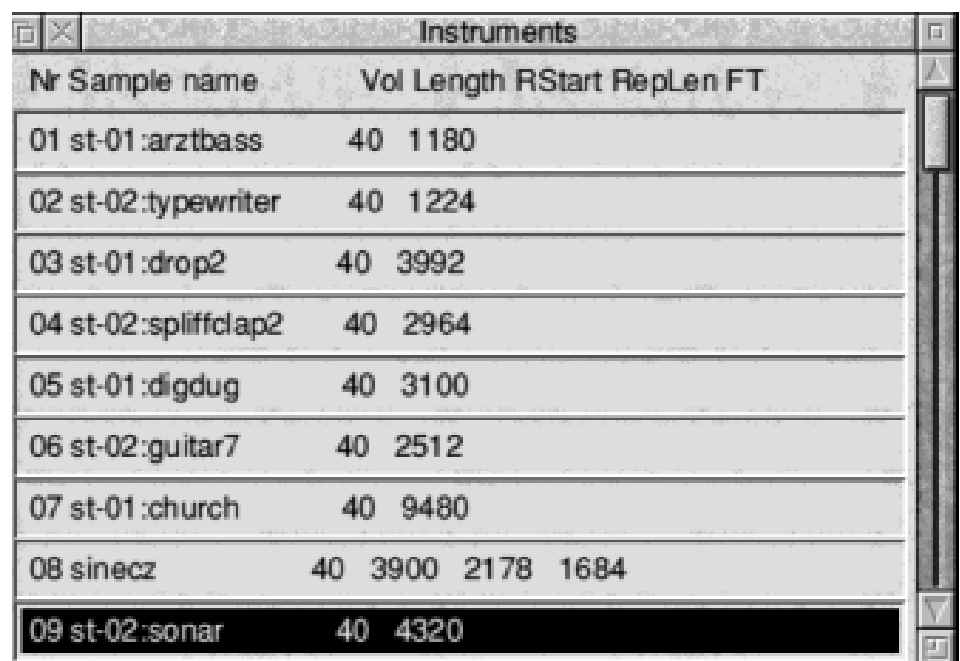
In the top left of the Sample Editor (the window that you have just opened) there is a box with a number in it. This is the number of the sample that you have currently selected. The arrows on either side change which sample you have selected.

Try changing to a different sample and then playing it. If you go beyond number 09 all the samples will be blank. This is because (as mentioned earlier) this piece of music uses only nine samples.

Clear the current track by menu on Digital Symphony's icon on the icon bar, then select: Edit > Clear Workspace. Now try loading in the samples from the Eureka disc. First close all the windows that you have open to clear some space, then press Shift+F11 to open the Sample Editor. Make sure that the selected sample is number one, then drag the

bassdrum sample's icon to the spot on the window with an arrow pointing down saying *Sample*. This will load in the first sample which should be *arztbass*. Now move on to sample two (by clicking on the arrow in the top left of the window) and load in the sample *typew*. Next load in *drop* as sample three, then *snare* as sample four, *bass* as sample five, *guitar* as sample six, *church* as sample seven, *sine* as sample eight and *sonar* as sample nine. Check that you have loaded in the samples correctly by playing each one back individually.

Now that you have loaded the samples, you will need to create your



Nr	Sample name	Vol	Length	RStart	RepLen	FT
01	st-01:arztbass	40	1180			
02	st-02:typewriter	40	1224			
03	st-01:drop2	40	3992			
04	st-02:spliffclap2	40	2964			
05	st-01:digdug	40	3100			
06	st-02:guitar7	40	2512			
07	st-01:church	40	9480			
08	sinecz	40	3900	2178	1684	
09	st-02:sonar	40	4320			

The nine samples loaded into the Instruments window

first pattern. A pattern is a short piece of music that can be played back repeatedly by the computer. The computer can play up to eight patterns at the same time, but this piece of music requires only four. Patterns have to be arranged in order and to do this you must create a sequence. To create a sequence press Shift+F8 and the sequence editor will appear. Then click menu over the sequence editor window and select: Create > At end > 7.

To create a pattern first press Shift+F10. This will bring up a window called the pattern list (in the title bar it just says: *pat*). This window should be empty. For this piece of music you will need to create 12 patterns which is 00B in hex. To do this click *menu* over the pattern list then select: Create patterns > At end > 12. You should see 12 patterns appear in the pattern list, double click on the first one (000). This will bring up the pattern editor.

Your first pattern will be the drum beat. In the section of the window labelled *Current choices* set: *sample* to 01 and *effect* and *value* to 000. Now set *Step* to 02. Click on position 00 in the pattern editor and it should change

colour. This is to show that it is selected. Now press '<' on the keyboard (the mouse pointer must be in the pattern editor). You should hear a bass drum. Next press the space bar five times and then press '<' again. Now set *sample* to 02 and *step* to 04. Click on position 06 and press '<' twice. Set *sample* to 3 and click on position 4, press '<' on the keyboard. Click on position 0E and press '<'. Set *sample* to 04, click on position 08 and press 'w'. Set *sample* to 01 and *effect* to 0C, click on position 02 and press '<'. Click and drag from position 00 to position 0E, to select it. Press Ctrl+C to copy it. Click on position 10 and press Ctrl+V to paste, click on position 20 and press Ctrl+V and do the same on position 30. Now press Ctrl+P to play the current pattern. You should hear the drum beat. You have now created your first pattern.

If you have any problems with Digital Symphony please feel free to e-mail me or visit my web-site, where there is a section on Digital Symphony.

Email:

mail@kierans.demon.co.uk

Web: www.psuedochaos.co/sym/

Gill's Journal: Marrying A Spod

Having managed to get a mention in two different articles in a recent issue of Eureka, I've been given the chance to explain to you why exactly I agreed to marry a 'spod' (I'm not being rude, he does define himself as one).

find attractive in a guy. And, really, car chases are so expensive these days.

I have found out that I'm not the only woman to marry, or be in love with, a spod. I realise that some of you

The former Gill Adkins, newly married to self confessed spod Toby Smith, explains her strange choice and advises how you too can get a computer-user friendly girl.

My father used to joke that women only went to university to meet husbands who'd become suitably rich. These days the job market for graduates isn't so good, so it had to be a lawyer or a computer scientist, and I've never liked those long wigs...

OK, so he's no James Bond; he doesn't have regular high-speed car chases and sleep with a gun under the pillow.

But then he doesn't get the girl, sleep with her, and have to kill her either. And leaving the girl alive at the end of a passionate session, and not letting her get held hostage, is something I

reading this may be spods, still sat waiting for the perfect spoddess, but all is not lost. You just need to demonstrate your talents to someone who'll really appreciate your ability to code in 37 different languages and who gets excited by the size of your hard drive!

Scott Adams, the *Dilbert* cartoonist, has a lot to say about sexy spods (*Windows Magazine*, May 1995) so to make my life easy, I'll let him explain. First, he claims it's a Darwinian thing: survival (and getting the girl) of the fittest. So my hint here is to look out for intelligent women, those of us who've spotted

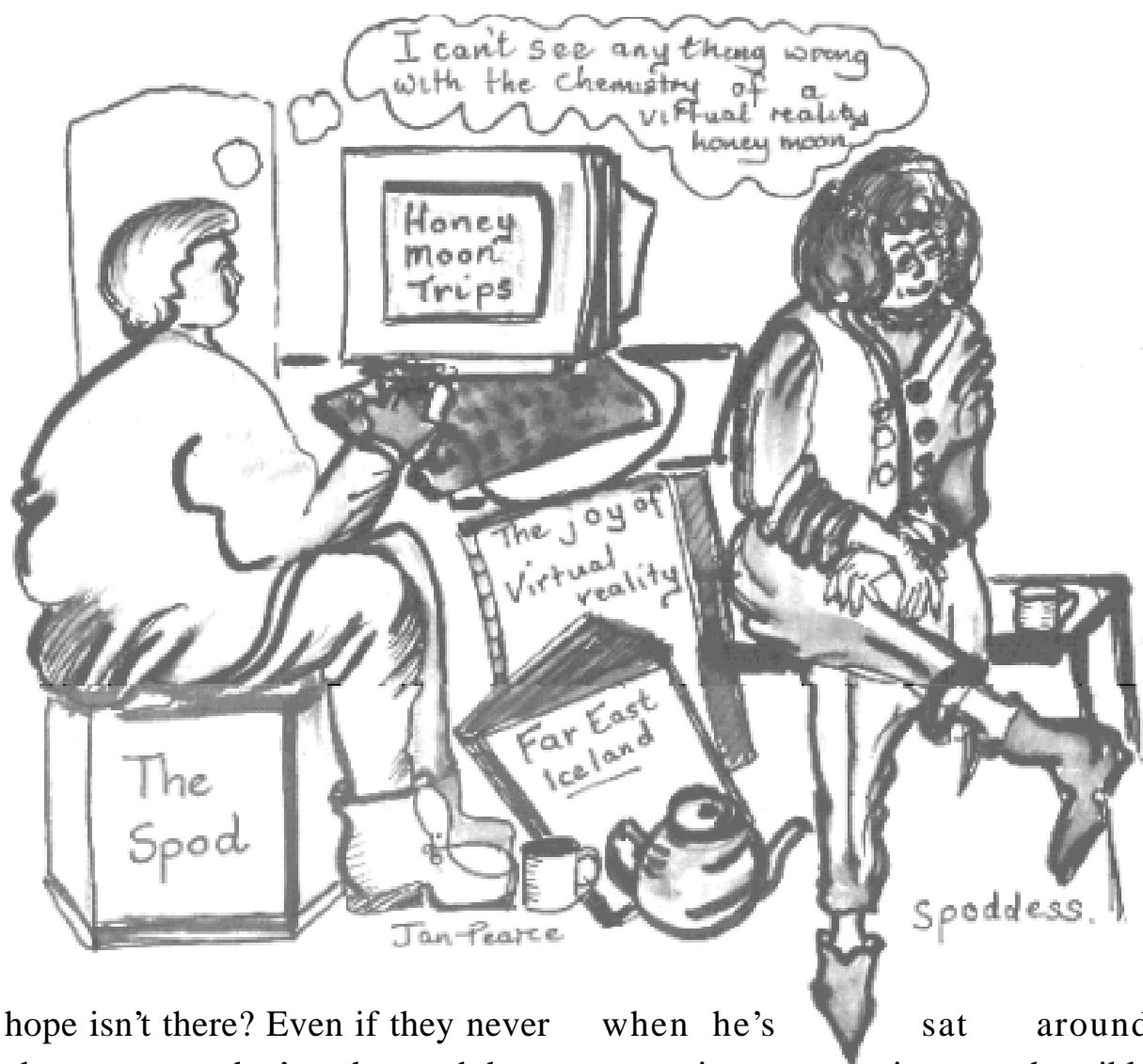
the fact that the genes we pass on to our children need to help them live in today's society. So for the kids' sake, the genetic material that ensures they can reconfigure their hard drives at will is going to be far more useful than being able to hunt down and kill an antelope. As Adams points out "That skill is becoming less important every year."

That implies women pick a man just for the sake of the children, and that's not true. Many do it because their parents like him instead. But then, having a man who can not only point out where the *Bold* button is to your mother, but who can actually retrieve her letter to Aunty Ethel when she misses Bold and somehow hits *Delete* can only be a good thing. No, she won't ever learn and if she does, they'll change the all important *standard protocol*. With clever tricks to make Mother-in-law's attempts at



using a computer extra easy, the pair of them may even manage to get on!

There's a lot to be said for a man whose job is in something like computing that evolves constantly. Maybe, just maybe, some of the stories he repeats to everyone he ever meets will change once in a while. Well the technology does —there's



hope isn't there? Even if they never change or you don't understand them anyway, you'll have the art of nodding, smiling and saying "yes, right" convincingly perfected before you have to try it out on your Father-in-law.

Of course there are different categories of spod and some are more sexy than others. It's amazing how much better looking a man is when he's just saved that 5,000 word essay from disappearing into nowhere, than

when he's sat around muttering incomprehensible UNIX commands. The top 'spod job' for pulling has to be *sysadmin* or 'the guy who fixes everything to do with the computer' as the rest of the world call it. This is your chance to meet all those women who might just like a spod.

Once you've got one, you can happily go into the dynamic career path of programming and see the world... wide web. If you're going to be a Sys

Admin, just remember, however fascinated she seems to be by exactly what it was that caused her screen to lock, and even if she asks relevant questions about it (some of us do know where the *on* button is, you know) if you get her to agree to a date—think! Now, once upon a time, when you interviewed for the job, you had a CV. On it, you put a section on ‘interests’. You may even have had to talk about them. Think of something that isn’t technical and try to talk about it on the date. You must come up with some half-decent conversation before you can revert to the sat still, staring in one direction pose (just like you’re used to, but without the eye strain) of the ‘good-listener’ that she tells her friends about!

Hopefully, I’ve come up with a few half decent points, and some handy hints for desperate spods but I don’t think I’ve really sold you this ‘marry a spod’ plan yet. So I’m going to borrow another point from Scott Adams.

He claims that fast computers have replaced fast cars as the ultimate way to impress women. (Can’t you just see

Danny from *Grease* showing off his boot speed and singing ‘filks’ about it... No?) So this is the way to impress, and to quote Adams again ‘Soon anyone who’s not on the World Wide Web will qualify for a government subsidy for the homepageless.’ Girls, pick carefully; if his web page can be read in Lynx, you’re getting a better quality of spod. A real spod’s spod.

Thankfully something is finally being done to improve the image of spods, so by the time he’s moved into management, marrying a spod will be normal. There’s Natalia, in Goldeneye, who may have been a second-rate programmer but opinion suggests she’s a first-rate kind of girl. Now we’ve got Roz and Beckett in another series of *Bugs*, regularly saving the universe by knowing how to use a computer. Thank goodness. Without them we’d all sound even sadder. (No — *don’t* watch it with a spod unless you really care that ‘that wouldn’t happen IRL’) So now life just needs to mirror art...

If there is anything you haven’t understand just turn to the next page for Gill’s helpful glossary.

art

Pictures, but not just as JPEGs, or whatever they're called.

CV

Bit of paper (you know, a print out) of your skills and past jobs.

Danny from 'Grease'

I'm sure Grease has a web site somewhere.

Darwinian

Darwin wrote a book suggesting we all used to be monkeys. It shows more in some people than others.

desperate

Someone without a partner, who hasn't yet given up and started telling everyone that they enjoy being single. It can last for years.

Dilbert

He's a cartoon engineer for a computer firm, with a pet dog who's more cunning than he is. He's likeable, and has recently found a girlfriend.

fast cars

A useful accessory to show that you have too much money which means

you need a woman to help you spend it. (cf. motorbike)

Father-in-law

Part of the 'getting married' deal. I'm told offering whisky is a good first move. Often found with the dreaded Mother-in-law. (See below)

friends

Other people that you talk to. The old-fashioned way, using your voice. It helps if you like them. Women have lots and shop with them.

genetic material

Slightly different from the stuff you make cushions from. Everyone has lots, and it explains all their oddities. (Well, maybe not all.)

girl

Those people with skirts on from school? They were girls. They grew up and stopped crying all the time. Try to spot a few differences developed since those playground days.

good-listener

Usually this is a good point, if a woman says it about you. Sometimes it can mean she can't think of any good points, and goodbye.

half-decent conversation

Managing to talk (again, not electronically) to another person, on a topic that interests (ideally) both of you.

hard drive

The first thing to remember, is that where women are concerned, size doesn't matter. It's not what you've got, it's what you do with it.

home-pageless

Do spare a thought for all those who haven't yet got a homepage or suffer overcrowding of homepages. Some wait years for their council web site. Not everyone is as fortunate as you.

interests

A section of a CV that can get you a better paid sysadmin job. Think of an activity and browse relevant websites so you can talk about your 'interest' to employers and to women.

IRL

'In Real Life' If someone says this to you they probably don't have a life, so beware. I suggest you ROTFL (Roll On The Floor Laughing) to distract them, and make a hasty exit.

James Bond

A film character. Bond instantly understands any technology and stops a catastrophe by doing so. He also gets lots of women.

life

An interest (as above), if picked carefully, can come with a free 'life' but not all of them do. Make your choice carefully.

Lynx

An entirely text based web browser only used by people who've been looking at web pages since back when the Electron came out.

management

Where spods go once programming languages have changed too many times for them to be much use to anyone.

Mother-in-law

An unfortunate side-effect of finding someone to marry. There's nothing you can do about it, except learn which bit to take out of the car engine whenever you're due to visit them.

Natalia

A woman in the Bond Film *Goldeneye*.

A Russian programmer, who saved the world by being able to hack into an invincible computer network.

‘on’ button

Usually the big button on the bottom right of the box under the screen of your computer. It switches it off too.

parents

Your own are usually OK. They improve when you don’t live with them.

passionate session

Left as an exercise to the reader...

reconfigure

Something that gets done to the hard-drive. Don’t ask me what!

Roz and Beckett

Some more amazing people that run around looking great, and solve all the world’s problem in just three key presses.

sexy

If you don’t know this one, I don’t know why you’ve bothered to read this far. Go away and program something.

spod

A spod is male, pale skinned, and lives on junk food and coffee from

machines. Habitat is a small cubicle with a computer in it.

spoddess

Usually, a female spod is called a spodette, but that implies being small and clueless. In computing, being female and capable of writing code in C++ deserves the implications of ‘goddess’ that I rather like!

standard protocol

An excuse for why you can’t do things another way. The idea has alternately been exploited and ignored by Microsoft.

‘sys admin’

A person who fixes everything to do with the computer, and is worshipped during this, only to be forgotten once the problem is solved.

World Wide Web

The WWW is an exiting place to meet new people, discover interesting things, job hunt, develop a hobby, and do whatever you like. No, it’s not a bar in Soho, it’s electronic. Sorry to disappoint anyone.

There will be more revealing pages from Gill’s Journal in our next issue.

MenuBar and WorkTop

Graham Crow was renowned for writing very useful applications to make life using the Acorn computer so much easier. The two, that I have pleasure in reviewing are !MenuBar and !WorkTop.

down menus. Each button can be modified by altering its text to indicate the topic associated with it. Adding an application to a menu is done by simply dragging its icon onto the menu window, which is then

Just before his recent untimely death, Graham Crow completed two new programs to be added to Tiger in his Desktop Suite. John Stonier has been trying them out.

MenuBar

Wading through directories on a hard drive, looking for an application can be very tedious. Using the pinboard to place icons on the screen is one way to get around the problem. However, this can clutter up a nice looking backdrop and text windows can obstruct you from seeing them. Help is at hand in the shape of MenuBar, which sits quietly at the top of the screen, waiting for you to bring it to life when you need to launch an application or access a directory.

The bar itself consists of a button menu, for configuring the software and ten user-definable buttons, allowing access to a number of pull

displayed. However, before you start dragging icons from all over your hard drive, it's advisable to think how you want your buttons to be categorized, otherwise it could get very confusing, trying to locate an application. I had no trouble in making use of all 10 buttons, but it does frustrate me that they can't all be seen on the screen at one time, having to scroll across to view the end ones. Up to 30 bars can be created if you run out of buttons.

Once set up, it's simply a case of selecting the relevant button, dragging down a menu and clicking on the desired application, directory or file. Couldn't be easier! MenuBar



Part of MenuBar with its pull-down menus at the top of the screen

seems very flexible in that you can treat each menu like a filer window, re-position icons and even drag a file to a non-native application in another menu. For instance, loading a text file into Ovation Pro.

Other features include being able to save and re-load system variables and sprites. With password protection and short-cut keys, this software has just about everything anybody would want and is simplicity itself to set up.

All in all, MenuBar is well worth considering, if you' re looking for some software to organise your desktop life in an orderly manner.

WorkTop

The !Boot file can be very confusing to understand, yet is extremely powerful, allowing you to customise your desktop environment when the computer boots up. WorkTop takes the confusion out of setting things up, by a drag and drop method, rather

than having to type lines of text into the !Boot file.

Delving into the software reveals that you are able to configure up to 30 worktops for different needs. For instance, you might well want to load a suite of comms related programs at the same time. By dragging a mixture of applications or directories to a worktop editor window, you can customise your desktop, so everything is available at your fingertips. Once a number of worktops have been set up, you can switch between any of them by selecting one, which results in the screen being blanked, tasks closed and selected applications being launched. It' s almost like rebooting your computer, except that WorkTop affects your desktop environment only.

One particularly useful facility is the ability to load a file into an application. This is achieved by



WorkTop is ideal for somebody who needs a number of applications to be loaded at the same time. For instance a DTP application, printer driver and other document processing utilities. A complete environment loads up without having to resort to executing them individually.

Demo versions are on the Eureka disc. Tiger (price details as below) was reviewed in Eureka 26.

Customising with WorkTop

dragging the file into the *load to (app)* field and the application into the *object* file. There are more bells and whistles with this software than you could ever hope for. Everything is done via buttons, which means that even the computer novice can customise the software without much difficulty.

MenuBar & WorkTop

Price: £15 each, no VAT

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

Supplier: APDL

39 Knighton Park Road

Sydenham, London SE26 5RN

Tel: 0181 778 2659

Fax: 0181 488 0487

Email: info@apdl.co.uk

Getting Into Video Editing

Probably the key questions a potential buyer will ask are “How good is the sampled video quality? How does it compare with VHS on TV or SVHS?” I have addressed this subject specifically because it is the most important question for me too!

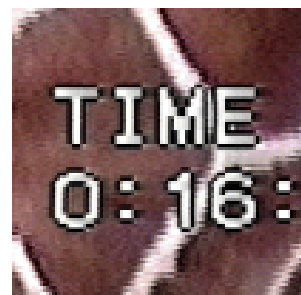
effect of the different video sampling rates, that is the result of the different rates of video compression during the recording to disc. Videodesk works so that, for example, 1500K/sec recording rate may correspond roughly to 15:1 compression of the

In the second part of his series on computer-based video editing, Mike Sherwood begins by considering the quality of sampled video.

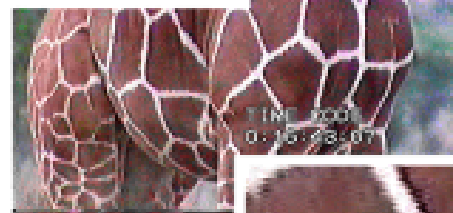
I played some original Hi8 video and grabbed a single frame from it via RiscTV as my quality reference (I could have done this via the Videodesk *Output Viewer* menu).

I had arranged for time code to be displayed on the original video and you can see from the illustration (*at right*) that the pixel definition is sharply defined. I was able to record the same Hi8 clip at video rates between 1000K/sec. and 2000K/sec. via the Videodesk software onto the hard disc. From playback of each sample I then grabbed the *reference* frame, using Videodesk’s facilities. Comparing the sprites one can see the

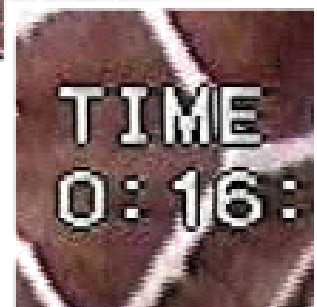
original signal. If, therefore, you can record at a faster rate than the source material need not be compressed so



Snapshot from original video



Snapshot from Videodesk recording at 1500K/sec



much and the recording will be a more faithful reproduction. Conversely, if the hardware standard of your system restricts the recording rate to, say, 1000K/sec then the compression ratio would be increased to $(1500/1000) \times 15$, or about 22½:1, implying a reduction in quality.

The magnified images of the time code show only slight evidence of compression-related *artifacts* around the sharply defined lettering from the sample taken at 1500K/sec and these pass unnoticed when the video is played back normally.

At 1100K/sec. the same video frame shows more noticeable degradation of the image whilst that recorded at 1900K/sec (not shown) is very little different from the source material.

The less detailed subject background shows far less effect of sampling rate. This tells me that edited video approaching SVHS quality is obtainable with an average Videodesk recording rate around 1500K/sec, but there will obviously be exceptions depending upon the amount of detail rendered in the original video film.

Videodesk Operation

In routine use the first step is to set up a directory for a *New Project* which is an item from the icon bar menu to take care of this. Note that video and audio sampling rates are definable, the latter permitting digital quality sampling at up to 48khz. I mostly use 16khz (U-Law) audio rate which produces quite acceptable results for live background recordings and minimises the total bandwidth (recording rate) requirement. Videodesk automatically sets up project files for video/audio clips, scene files and rendered special effects etc. and appropriate windows are opened on screen.

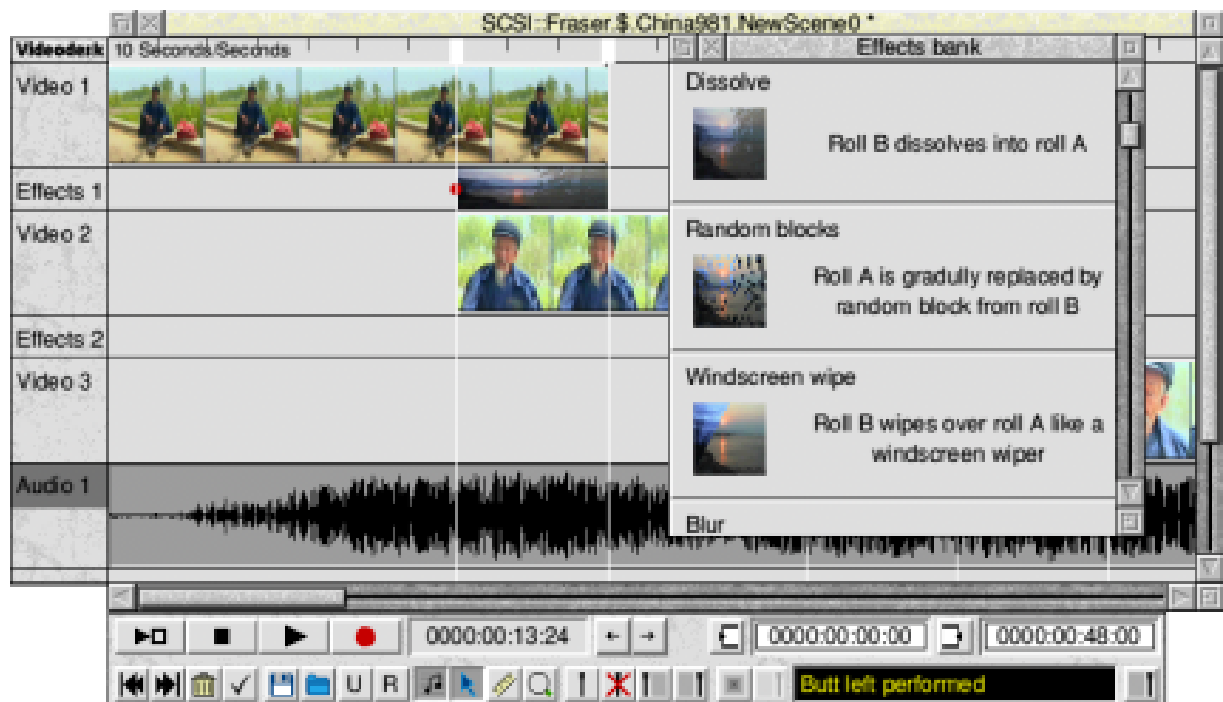
Recording a series of video clips from the source material is very easy. There are several ways of calling up the *New Clip* menu which leads to a *RecordMJPEG* window. After setting the parameters for the first clip the window stays on screen for further use and then requires only a decision to start and stop. The software will maintain the sampling rate and increment the file number to avoid accidental overwriting of a previous recording. One can input unique values for each sample if necessary. A

feature of the software is that there are often several ways of carrying out frequent tasks by clicking on appropriate icons in various windows. You can decide which method suits you best. After the initial reading of the manual I soon found myself navigating around the various functions without further reference.

The recorded clips can be dragged to a *Clip Bank* window where they may be customised into an appropriate list. Thumbnails can be selected from anywhere within the clips to identify them clearly and notes appended as desired. A typical *Scene*, which is an edited assembly of clips, is shown below and can be compiled from the

Clip Bank at a mouse click or you can drag clips onto the required tracks in the Scene window one at a time and build up a sequence as you go. Editing the start and end-time of each clip is frame accurate, for example “01:43:13” indicates “one minute, forty three seconds and thirteen frames from the start of the clip”. Left and Right editing arrows make this process quick, easy and accurate. A system of track and clip, time and position markers adds precision to moving, editing and joining clips. The principal control menus are accessible via a convenient *Project View* window.

Clip playback is accessible from the Transport or Scene Windows either



within a Viewer Window or Full Screen. Videodesk plays only the topmost video track but will automatically mix parallel sound tracks (polyphonic audio). Playback from disc via the Scene window permits rapid assessment and refinement of the editing process. Wipes and Dissolves etc. can be incorporated in seconds. You have only to drag video clips on adjacent tracks to set up an overlap for the duration of the dissolve or wipe etc. The *Effects* icon is then dragged from its window to lock the Effect into the overlap space on the effects track. A mouse click then initiates the rendering process. It is quicker to do than to describe! Typically, StrongARM renders special effects sequences at about two frames per second, so it is no chore to review alternative three-second wipes. Each one will take only about 45 seconds to render the 75 frames —not even enough time for nail varnish to dry!

When you are satisfied with an assembled, edited scene, which can be of any length, it is a simple matter to play back with a black *leader* and record the output direct onto your video recorder. If you want a small

number of copies then you will get identical results by recording each time onto a new tape and your copies will only be second generation and very close to the quality of the original. The result will of course depend on the quality of the original video and the rate at which your system can record onto disc.

I did experience a few program lock-ups with the version 1.05a software but in no case did they cause other than a few minutes' delay. Needless to say, you need to employ the discipline of saving your work frequently just as if you were writing a novel. You would never dream of waiting until the last page before thinking about making a lasting record! On following up these problems via the built-in diagnostic error messages I have been reassured that all the cases I have seen have been addressed by Irlam in the latest software issue and regular automatic backups are now a software option.

In the concluding part of the series, in our next issue, Mike Sherwood will be looking at 'still movies' and titling.

Sleuth 3

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is one of the less known and used applications available for Acorn computers. Put briefly, it is a program which will convert a file of scanned text from a graphic into editable words and the most

typefaces and being better able to distinguish poorly printed characters.

Sleuth 3 is a really substantial advance. Beebug has now cracked it! One big drawback to Sleuth has always been its inability to be user-

Version three of Beebug's successful Optical Character Recognition program has now appeared, six years from Sleuth's debut. Peter Jennings has used each version.

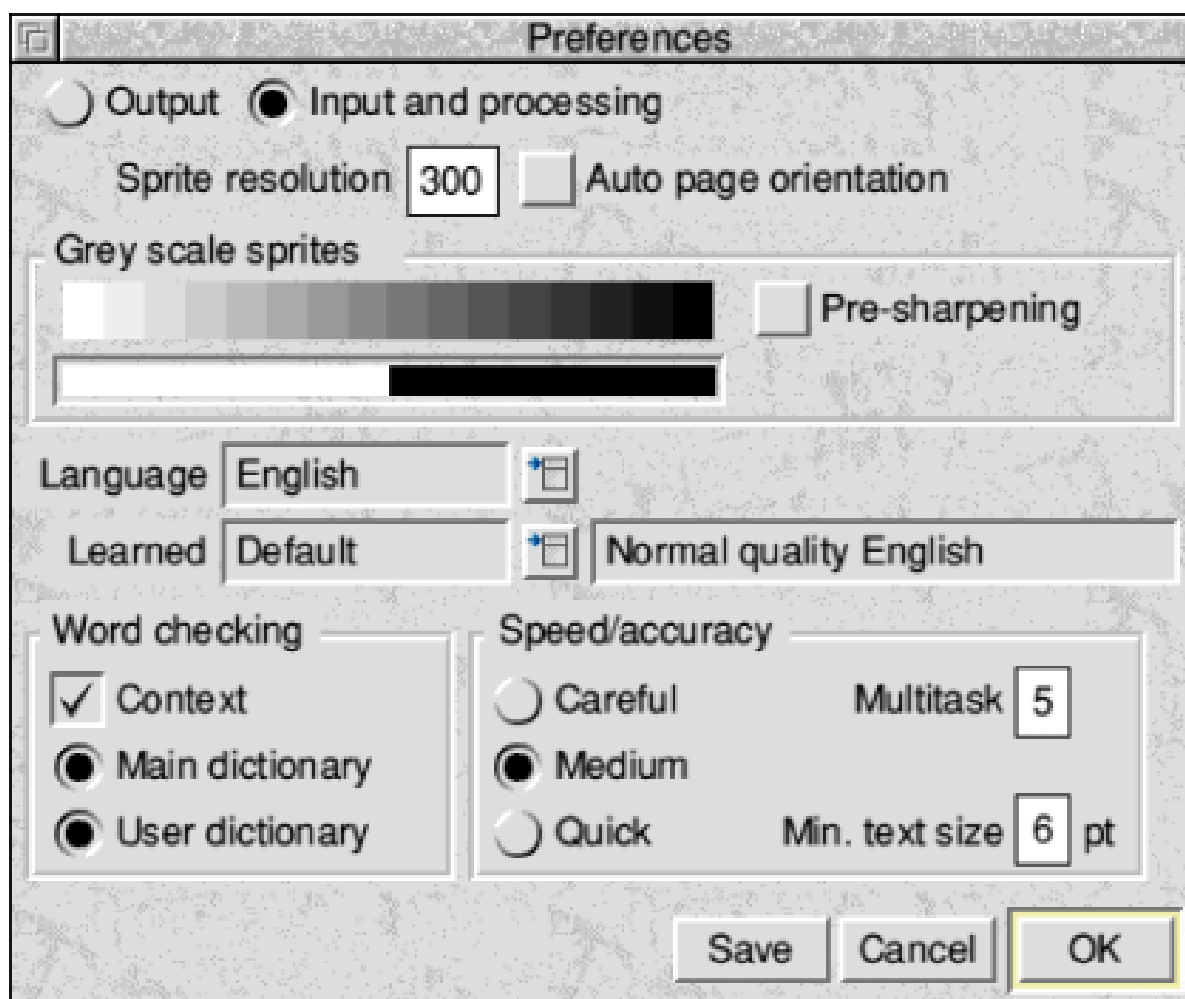
successful of the four or so which have appeared on the Acorn market is Beebug's Sleuth.

The first version of Sleuth appeared in 1993. There was a major upgrade to version 1.5 in 1994 and Sleuth 2 followed a few months later. Since then there has been a lot of development work behind the scenes, an announcement that version three was coming, then a long wait before its final release in time for the Wakefield Show.

As well as having new features, each new version has improved the quality of its output by recognising more

trained to recognise different fonts. Each version has added to the number of fonts that can be read and each named font has also encompassed the wider range of near-clones known by other names.

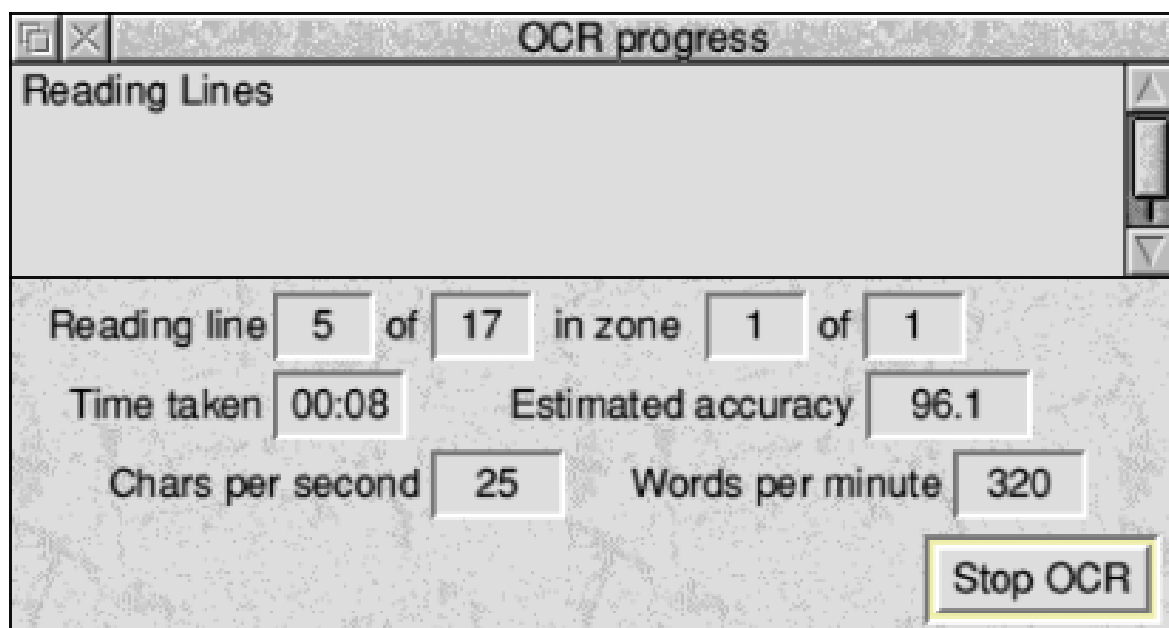
Anyone who has used an earlier version would notice that this one is different as soon as they begin using it. First there is now a batch option, allowing up to 75 sprites to be processed in succession and the results saved into a directory to await your attention. Previously, a single sprite would be dragged in and its image would appear on screen where areas could be defined for processing.



As this went ahead, the output would appear a line at a time allowing any corrections to be made while the program continued working. Now the program can usually sort out for itself which are the text areas in the image, although you can still mark out zones if necessary, and you just sit and wait until the complete text is revealed. As before, words which are not recognised by Sleuth's built-in spell checker are marked in yellow for possible correction. There is now a user dictionary for adding your own commonly used words and French,

German and Dutch dictionaries have been included to help with foreign texts.

Sleuth can recognise characters from 9pt to 24pt ($\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of an inch) in size and will convert text at speeds from 80 to 400 words a minute, depending on various factors; one of the most important being the quality of the sprite it is given. There is a trade off between speed and accuracy and this can be set from the Input Preferences window (*see above*).



A progress report during conversion

The speed, in characters per second and words per minute, along with an estimation of the accuracy being achieved is shown in a progress report giving you some assurance (and something to watch) while Sleuth is working.

The various tests I made with Sleuth 3 all produced very similar results, which are well represented by the example shown alongside (the original scan) and on the facing page (Sleuth's output). The errors highlighted at the bottom have clearly been caused by the less than perfect hand scan.

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

A sprite, with a scanning fault in the last line, resulting in the OCR'd text opposite.

Annual General Meeting
of The ARM Club
held 1 st 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.

A-tark Snith, Itarzorary C'hairman

Output from Sleuth 3, highlighting the doubtful text caused by poor scanning.

Sometimes, when using a hand scanner, it is necessary to scan text upside down or sideways. This can be rotated by the scanner's own software or by Sleuth. After carrying out a number of tests successfully I was surprised when a section scanned from the Sleuth 3 User Manual would output only the larger, bold, crossheads. Even marking out zones did not improve the situation.

I was using a sprite which had been scanned sideways with Scanlight Plus and rotated with the Computer Concepts software. I had saved a

sprite of the original, sideways, scan so I dragged this into Sleuth and rotated it there by 90 degrees. The result: a near perfect output. So, the moral seems to be let Sleuth do any necessary rotating if it doesn't recognise text rotated by your scanner's own software.

When using OCR software (of all types) on Acorn computers in the past I have usually felt that it would be quicker just to type the copy in. With Sleuth 3 I finally feel

that the software can be a real time saver, however fast you can type.

Sleuth 3

Price: £151.58 inc VAT

Upgrades: from Sleuth 2 £49.95

from Sleuth 1 £104.59

Supplier: Beebug Ltd

117 Hatfield Road, St Albans

Herts AL1 4JS

Tel: 01727 840303

Fax: 01727 860263

Email: sales@beebug.co.uk

Web: www.beebug.com/

Tried And Trusted Tips

I have an Epson scanner connected to my Risc PC and use both David Pilling's *ImageMaster/Twain* and Irlam Instruments' *ProImage* software applications. Having not used the scanner for a little while, I went to use it recently and found that while *ProImage* worked fine,

Making it first

If you have a particularly important file — of any type — in a large directory and want to be able to locate it quickly you can make it the first file in the directory by renaming it with a hard space as the first character of the filename.

Having problems with your SCSI scanner or need to sort out your correspondence files? Here are some tried, trusted and recommended tips which may help.

ImageMaster resolutely refused to work with an error message complaining that the 'Scanner is not responding'.

It took me some little while to work out that I had recently changed the scanner's SCSI ID (to avoid a clash with another SCSI device) and that there is an *ImageMaster* menu option (Source>Device) which *must* reflect the scanner's SCSI ID. In fact I had to resort to referring to the original documentation before identifying and resolving the problem!

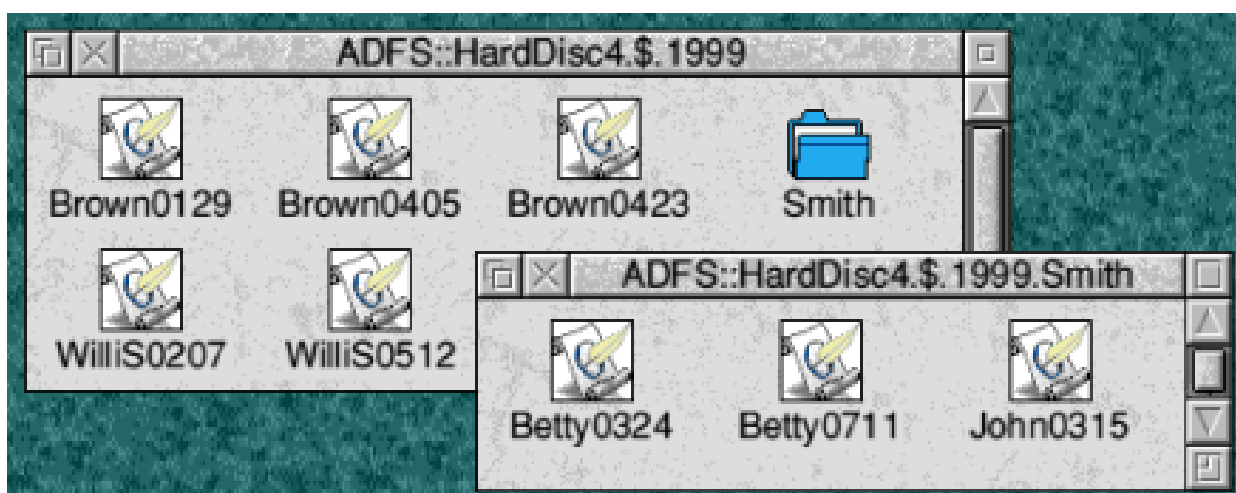
Rob Brown

A hard space is made by holding down the *Alt* key while pressing the space bar.

Organised letter filing

Resolving to have a better organised year in 1999? Here is the simple way to make your word processor correspondence easier to file — and find. You can arrange to have copies of all the letters you write filed under each recipient's name in alphabetical and date order.

Create a directory named after the year. Name the file for each letter with the first six letters of the recipient's



Letters filed by name and date and with a sub-directory for the Smith family

name (or the full name if shorter) followed by the date of the month and day, in that order, in figures. Use a zero to start the single figure months (01 for January and so on) otherwise the October to December letters will be mixed up with the January ones.

So, for example, a letter to S Williams & Co written on the 7th of February next year would be called Willia0207 and would be saved in the 1999 directory. If you have more than one correspondent with the same name, use the first five letters followed by the first initial in capitals. So the example above would become WilliS0207.

If you have a number of people sharing a family name you can set up a sub-directory, called by the first six

letters of the surname, inside the 1999 directory and use the first name of each person for their file. Or, particularly if it is your own family, you could just use their first names in the main directory.

When the 1999 directory becomes full, there are two possibilities. You can rename it 1999A and create a new 1999 or, if you have a number of letters to the same correspondent you could create a sub-directory for them, while there is still room to do so, to make more space. So, for example, the letters to S Williams & Co could then be transferred into a 1999.WilliamsS directory.

Send your tried and trusted hints and tips to The Editor at the usual email or Freepost addresses.

Using The Toolbox From BASIC

I've chosen &88 as the filetype for diary files, that being one of those in the chunk of filetypes reserved for user. Note that you should register a filetype with Pineapple Software if you wish to distribute a program either commercially or as freeware.

!Diary application. Bring up the prototypes window using the option from menu attached to the resources window that appears. Drag the *SaveAs* prototype into the resources window and double click on it. Change the filetype to &088 using the menu option.

In the final instalment of his series, Mark Smith explains how to add load and save facilities to the Toolbox application. First we need to allocate a Filetype.

The filetype I've used here hasn't been registered, so it could potentially clash with other software.

One of the first things you'll need in the !Sprites and !Sprites22 file is a sprite of the name file_nnn where nnn is the filetype in hexadecimal, that is file_088 as we're using a type of &88. I've included an example one in the application on the disc, but you may be a little more creative.

The first stage in allowing the user to save a diary is to add the necessary functionality to the Toolbox resources using ResEd. Load !ResEd and double click on the Res file inside the

Change the filename to *Diary* (or some other suitable default) and click on the *Client Participates* button. This will enable us to weed out the deleted diary events first and also allows greater flexibility in the way in which the file can be saved.

Having OKed that, double click on *IcMenu* and add a new menu option with a submenu above Quit. The text for this should read *Save*. The click action should be left as *Default* and the submenu action set to *no event* and *Show object SaveAs*. Now save the resources back to disc.

The following data structures need to

be saved out when a diary is saved:

```
Start%()  
End%()  
WkDay%()  
Day%()  
Month%()  
Descript$()
```

For each of these, we need to save array elements from 1 to Events% inclusive, though when saving we first need to remove all the deleted events, that is those with Start% and End% set to &7FFFFFFF.

When the user drags the icon from the Save window to a directory, the toolbox event SaveAs_SaveToFile is raised. On receiving this, the application should save its data and respond using the SaveAs_SaveToFile method.

To implement this, we first need to respond to the SaveAs_SaveToFile event by adding the following to the toolbox procedure:

```
REM  
SaveAs class  
&2BC2:PROCsaveas_savetofile
```

We can now create a new procedure

to handle this:

```
DEFPROCsaveas_savetofile  
  REM User is saving file. First,  
  remove any deleted entries  
  LOCAL DstEvent%,SrcEvent%,File  
  Name$,Handle%,state%,flags%
```

```
  DstEvent%=1 : REM New event  
  number for next undeleted event
```

```
  REM Loop  
  through removing deleted events  
  FOR SrcEvent%=1 TO Events%  
    IF Start%(SrcEvent%)<>&7FFFFFFF  
    OR End%(SrcEvent%)<>&7FFFFFFF  
    THEN
```

```
      Start%(DstEvent%)=Start%(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      End%(DstEvent%)=End%(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      WkDay%(DstEvent%)=WkDay%(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      Day%(DstEvent%)=Day%(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      Month%(DstEvent%)=Month%(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      Descript$(DstEvent%)=Descript$(SrcEvent%)
```

```
      DstEvent%+=1
```

```
    ENDIF
```

```
  NEXT
```

<pre> REM New total number of events is DstEvent%-1 Events%=DstEvent%-1 REM Now get the filename FileName\$=FNgetstring(Block%+16) REM And Open to output file SYS "XOS_Find",&8F,FileName\$ TO Handle%;flags% REM Check that file was opened successfully IF (flags% AND 1)=1 THEN SYS "Wimp_ReportError",Handle %+4,1,TaskName\$ REM Issue FileSaveCompleted Method - Failure (Error returned) SYS "XToolbox_ObjectMiscOp",0,I Ds%!16,saveas_filesavecompleted% ,FileName\$ ELSE IF Handle%=0 THEN SYS "Wimp_ReportError","Unable to open file "+FileName\$+" for writing",1,TaskName\$ REM Issue FileSaveCompleted Method - Failure (Null Handle) SYS "XToolbox_ObjectMiscOp",0,I </pre>	<pre> Ds%!16,saveas_filesavecompleted% ,FileName\$ ELSE REM Enter a loop saving out each element of the array sets REM in turn after writing total number of elements PRINT#Handle%,Events% FOR SrcEvent%=1 TO Events% PRINT#Handle%,Start%(SrcEve nt%) PRINT#Handle%,End%(SrcEven t%) PRINT#Handle%,WkDay%(SrcE vent%) PRINT#Handle%,Day%(SrcEven t%) PRINT#Handle%,Month%(SrcEv ent%) PRINT#Handle%,Descript\$(SrcE vent%) NEXT REM Close file CLOSE#Handle% REM Set Filetype OSCLI "SetType "+FileName\$+" &"~FileType% REM Issue FileSaveCompleted Method - Success </pre>
---	--

```

SYS "Toolbox_ObjectMiscOp",1,
IDs%!16,saveas_filesavecompleted
%,FileName$

```

```

ENDIF

```

```

ENDIF

```

```

REM Refresh diary display if it is cur-
rently showing

```

```

SYS "XToolbox_GetObjectInfo",,dia-
ry_objectid% TO state%;flags%

```

```

IF (flags% AND 1)=0 AND (state%
AND 1)=1 THEN PROCdiary_update
display

```

```

ENDPROC

```

In addition, we need to add the following to the Misc constants section of the initialisation procedure to define the filetype.

```

FileType%=&88

```

And to the method definitions section of the initialisation procedure, we need to add the following:

```

saveas_filesavecompleted%=12

```

Diary Load

Loading a diary is a much simpler process. The application needs to

respond to one of two WIMP messages:

Message_DataLoad (3) - Sent to the application when a file is dragged to it

Message_DataOpen (5) - Sent to all applications when a file is double clicked

These two messages can be handled in the same way - by checking that the filetype (Block%!40) is correct (that is equal to FileType%), then responding to the message with a Message_DataLoadAck (4) so that that the Filer knows that the file is being loaded and finally loading the file with the pathname at Block%+44 onwards.

The first stage is to add the following two lines to the message procedure (PROCmessage):

```

WHEN 3:PROCmessage_dataload
WHEN 5:PROCmessage_dataload

```

The message_dataload procedure then needs to look something like:

```

DEFPROCmessage_dataload

```

```

    REM First, Check the filetype
    IF Block%!40<>FileType% THEN
ENDPROC

```

```

    REM Now, respond to the originator
    of the message

```

```

    Block%!12=Block%!8 : REM Copy
    my_ref to your_ref

```

```

    Block%!16=4          : REM Messa
    ge_dataLoadAck
    SYS "Wimp_SendMessage",17,Blo
    ck%,Block%!4

```

```

    REM Finally, load the file
    FileName$=FNgetstring(Block%+44)

```

```

    REM Open the input file
    SYS "XOS_Find",&4F,FileName$ T
    O Handle%;flags%

```

```

    REM Check that file was opened
    successfully
    IF (flags% AND 1)=1 THEN
        SYS "Wimp_ReportError",Handle
        %+4,1,TaskName$
    ELSE IF Handle%=0 THEN

```

```

        SYS "Wimp_ReportError","Unable
        to open file "+FileName$+" for
        reading",1,TaskName$
    ELSE

```

```

    ELSE

```

```

    REM Enter a loop reading each
    element of the array sets in turn after
    reading total number of elements

```

```

        INPUT#Handle%,Events%

```

```

        FOR SrcEvent%=1 TO Events%

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,Start%(SrcEv
            ent%)

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,End%(SrcEve

```

```

            nt%)

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,WkDay%(Src
            Event%)

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,Day%(SrcEve
            nt%)

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,Month%(SrcE
            vent%)

```

```

            INPUT#Handle%,Descript$(Src
            Event%)

```

```

        NEXT

```

```

    REM Close file

```

```

    CLOSE#Handle%

```

```

ENDIF

```

```

ENDIF

```

```

    REM Refresh diary display if it is
    currently showing

```

```

    SYS "XToolbox_GetObjectInfo",,dia
    ry_objectid% TO state%;flags%

```

```

    IF (flags% AND 1)=0 AND (state%
    AND 1)=1 THEN PROCdiary_update
    display

```

```

ENDPROC

```

Finale

The one remaining thing that is still required just to tidy up is that we need to define a list of which Wimp Messages and Toolbox Events our application is interested in.

By doing this, we can stop the Window Manager wasting time, offering messages and events to our application that it isn't interested in.

To define the list, look at the top of the program. At the moment there are two lines which read:

```
!WimpMess%=0
```

and

```
!ToolEvent%=0
```

We can now change them to be as follows:

```
REM List of Wimp Messages to
receive, 0 terminated
REM 0 on its own means all
messages (default)
!WimpMess%=3
WimpMess%!4=5
WimpMess%!8=0
```

```
REM List of Toolbox Events to
receive, 0 terminated
```

```
REM 0 on its own means all events
(default)
```

```
!ToolEvent%=1
ToolEvent%!4=2
ToolEvent%!8=3
ToolEvent%!12=4
ToolEvent%!16=5
ToolEvent%!20=6
ToolEvent%!24=7
ToolEvent%!28=&FFFF
ToolEvent%!32=&44EC0
ToolEvent%!36=&44EC1
ToolEvent%!40=&44EC2
ToolEvent%!44=&82880
ToolEvent%!48=&8288C
ToolEvent%!52=&82890
ToolEvent%!56=&82BC2
ToolEvent%!60=0
```

The line which defines the size of these two structures, just above this, also needs to be altered so that they are the right size to hold the lists:

```
DIM WimpMess% 12, ToolEvent% 64
```

And that's it for this series. I'm sure that you can find plenty more to add to the diary, so why not experiment?



When an experienced professional artist such as Christopher Jarman writes what he admits is a rave review for a graphics program designed for children —and describes it as “the application that !Paint should have become” —then

used to manipulate digital camera images and will accept pictures from Photo CD.

Most users will probably be more interested at first in its more traditional abilities (if the facilities

Peter Jennings looks at the latest version of a graphics program designed for use in schools but advanced enough to be on the desktops of professional artists.

you know it must be something exceptional.

provided by any computer program can be described in those terms).

Christopher was writing (in Eureka 20) about Silica Software’s *Dazzle*, Published by SEMERC (now part of Granada Learning) so I was particularly interested to receive a copy of its latest version, Dazzle Plus.

Clicking on the icon bar icon brings up a small window offering a default *canvas* with 256 colours. This can be changed to 16, 32 or 16 million colours and, if you wish, an extension opened allowing you to define a precise shape and size and a choice of units from the default pixels to millimetres, centimetres or inches.

The big advantage of Dazzle is that it is designed to be simple enough for use for educational Key Stages one, two and three pupils while having a range of advanced features that you might expect only from the most sophisticated and expensive graphics packages. It is up to date enough to be

The canvas has a detachable tool bar displaying up to 30 available icons. These are mostly self explanatory but, if you have a moment of doubt when positioning the arrow to select one, a

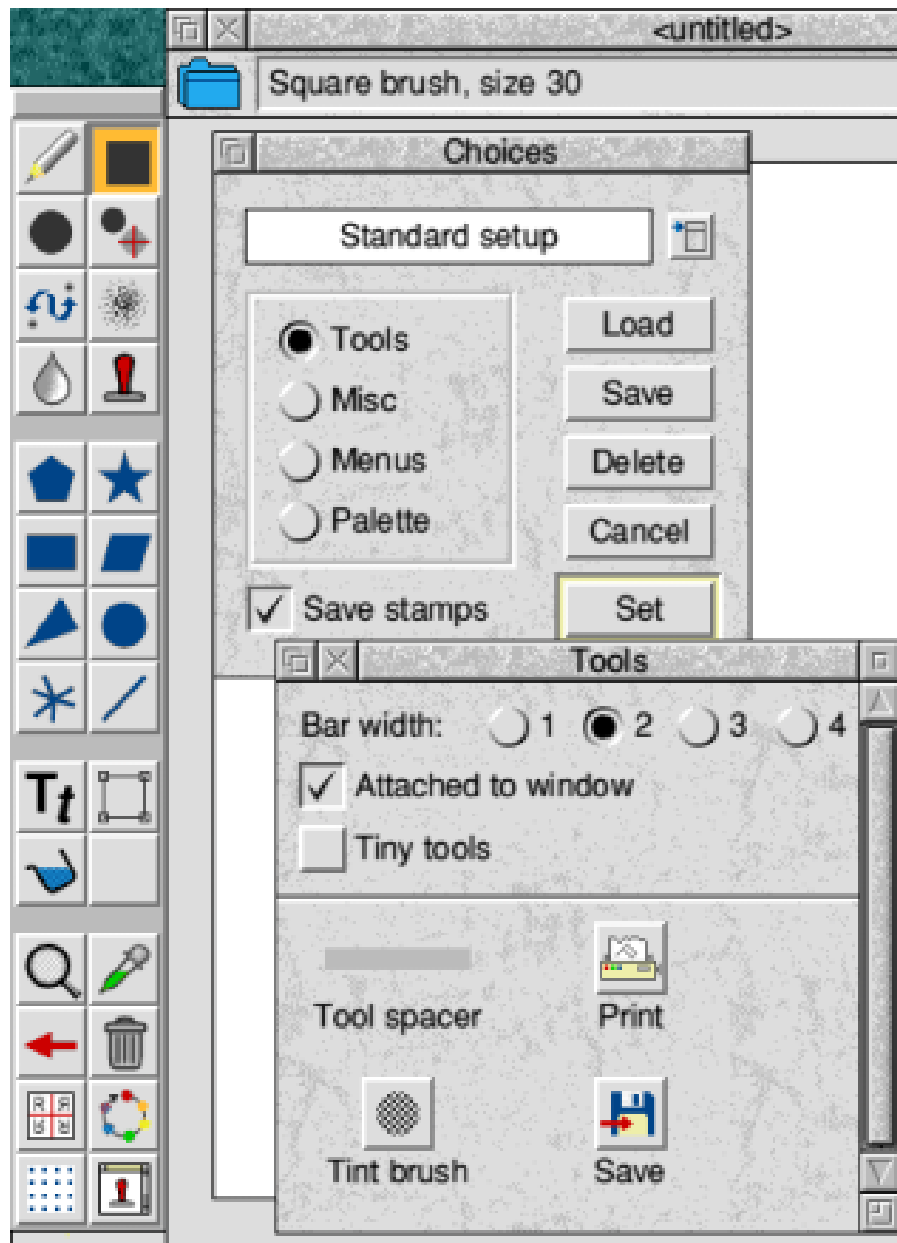
second's hesitation will trigger a pop-up label identifying the tool's purpose. The selected tool's name is displayed at the top of the window.

The tool bar will probably be the first example of the program's amazing flexibility that a new user discovers. It can be detached and shift-dragged to a new position and tools and spacers added or removed by dragging them to or from a tool palette window, so making the program easy to customise for the ability or needs of the user.

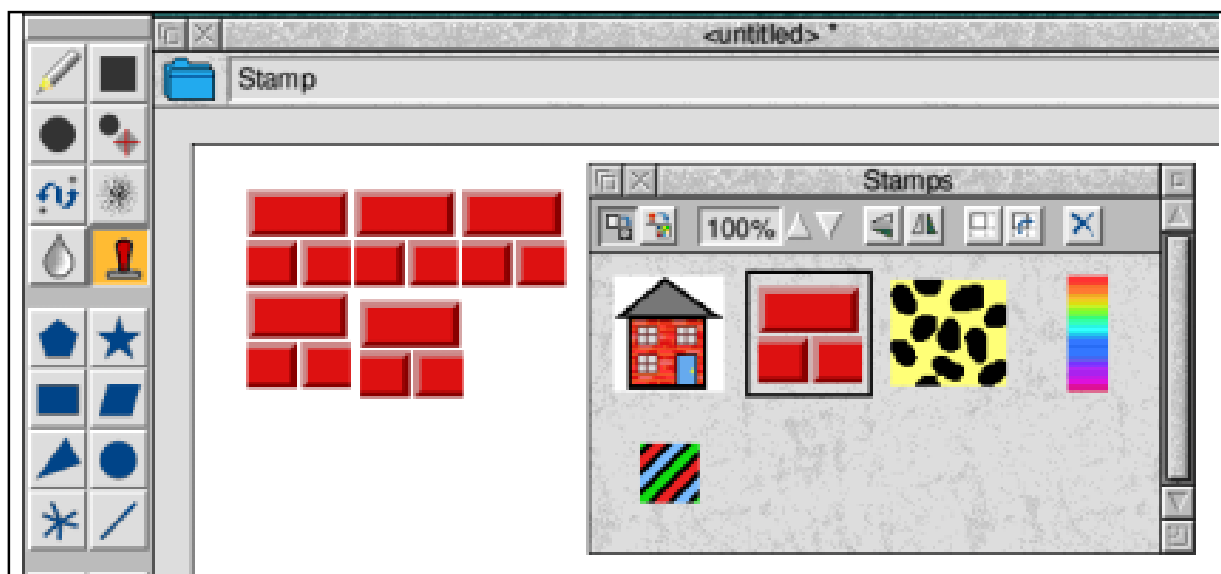
The tool icons can be shift-dragged to new positions on it and individual icons can be enlarged and returned to normal size by shift-double-clicking on them. Most icons have individual menus to adjust

their attributes, such as line size, thickness or density.

All the expected tools are included, for drawing various shapes, painting, colouring and adding text along with stamps and (in this Plus version) a



The toolbar and palette window tool store.



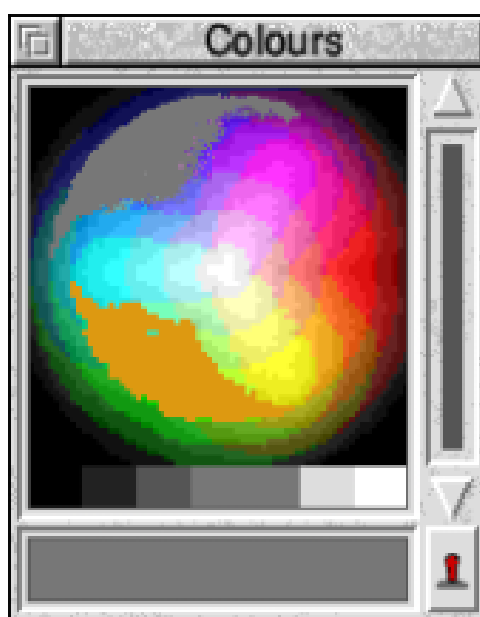
Build your own wall with the stamp tool.

clone brush. You can make your own stamps using a *select area* tool to drag a box around a rectangular or to define an irregular shape.

The stamps might seem, at first, to be a feature which only small children would use but, like the clone tool, you can often find it a simple solution to an awkward problem.

A *pipette* tool allows any previous colour used on a canvas to be matched for continued work

and there is a *rainbow* brush that changes between a chosen range of colours as you paint. This, surprisingly, can be used to make some effective patterns, even for reproduction in black and white, as on the facing page.



The palette as a colour wheel

Colours can be chosen from a choice of palette types: arrangements of 10 squares, in a simple straight line or attached to the tool bar; a standard 16-colour desktop palette; 256-colour palettes in a choice of sizes or a 16-million colour wheel (subject to your computers ability to

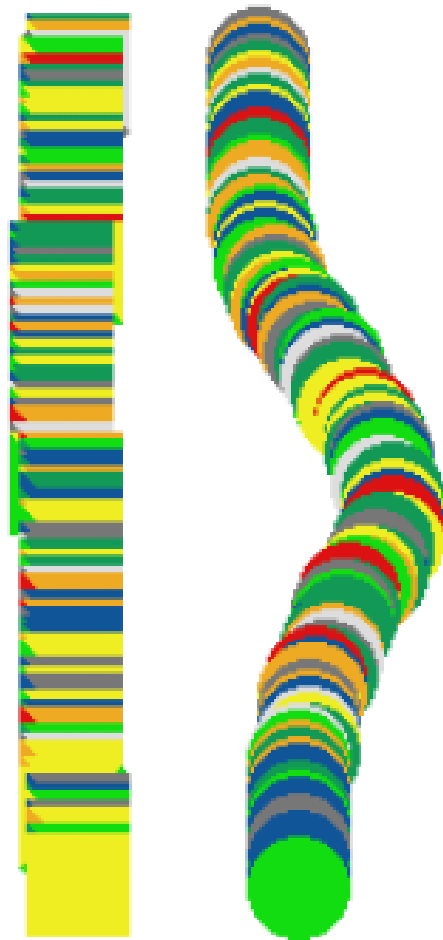
display this number). The colours in all palettes can be changed and remixed and individually lightened or darkened to alter their transparency by clicking on up/down arrows.

Tips

Manuals are often taken for granted and the ability to use a program without reading the instructions is invariably taken as a big point in its favour. Dazzle does pass this intuition test but the well illustrated and clearly written manual is worth a favourable mention for the way it explains all the finer points of what Dazzle can do, with a series of tips in the margins of each page.

Dazzle also follows the growing trend with an option to have random tips on its start-up banner. This is a good way to discover something you may have missed and can be turned off when you think you know all.

With Dazzle, you can create pictures from a blank canvas or enhance images from other sources. So, if you have any aspirations to create better bitmap graphics, this is a program well worth considering, whatever your present artistic ability.



*The Rainbow tool — effective even
in black and white!*

Dazzle Plus

Price: £75 +VAT

Site licence: £150 +VAT

Supplier: SEMERC

1 Broadbent Road

Watersheddings

Oldham OL1 4LB

Tel: 0161 627 4469

Fax: 0161 627 2381

Email:

sales@semmerc.demon.co.uk

Exodus Space Strategy Game

Elite was one of best games (some even say *the* best) of the BBC era. I have very fond memories of this and I hoped that I would find Exodus was up to the same standards.

Once loaded I was unimpressed by the standard of the graphics. These

down and re-read the manual and started again.

Once you have chosen your home it's time to start building. This is no *Sim City*. Building is basic; homes, bases, construction buildings etc. The colonisation of your planet will

Matthew Cook goes trading and battling in space but finds the new strategy game doesn't live up to his nostalgic memories of the BBC days' Elite.

are in a low-res mode compared to what is now becoming the norm with titles such as Syndicate+ from R-Comp. Despite this the music was very pleasing and I actually turned off my hi fi system to listen to the game music.

The game starts with the player as leader of a fleet of spacecraft greeted by the Space Guild, which is the council or governing body for the galaxy.

I found it really hard to get established in the game, which may be because I lacked a strategy. I sat

hopefully lead to the colonisation of more and in the end . . . to take over the world!

Exodus provides the games player with lots of information, with yearly planet updates and more statistics than the average government department.

Trade takes place when you have enough goods that others require. This took a very long time for me to achieve. Mined minerals and weaponry are examples of goods that may be traded with other planets and other lords in the game. You may not



There are some nice touches to the game which make it a worthwhile addition to the Acorn game market. The Stardust Bar is a must! Unfortunately I did not enjoy Exodus, perhaps because I was

always get the chance to trade. The first time I attempted it, some kind lord decided to launch a full scale attack on my vessel. After that, defending my goods became a top priority.

Spending some of that hard earned money on better space craft commanders is worth every penny. That way you do not get dragged in to remote radar battles every time you get attacked.

The game can be played by more than one human player, although this is a turn-based procedure rather than a more realistic network play.

looking for it to live up to something else. The graphics let the game down enormously but would have been adequate if the gameplay had been good. I found it was just too hard for me to get into. Perhaps the more hardened gameplayers would disagree.

Exodus

Price: £21 inc VAT and UK delivery
 Supplier: R-Comp Interactive
 22 Robert Moffat, High Legh
 Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6PS
 Tel: 01925 755043
 Fax: 01925 757377
 Email: exodusgame@aol.com
 Web: www.rcomp.co.uk/

Site Seeing

Welcome to Site Seeing — your Eureka guide to the Internet. In this issue, we take a trip to Little Norway, pay a visit to Her Majesty and surf the high seas of the Napoleonic navy.

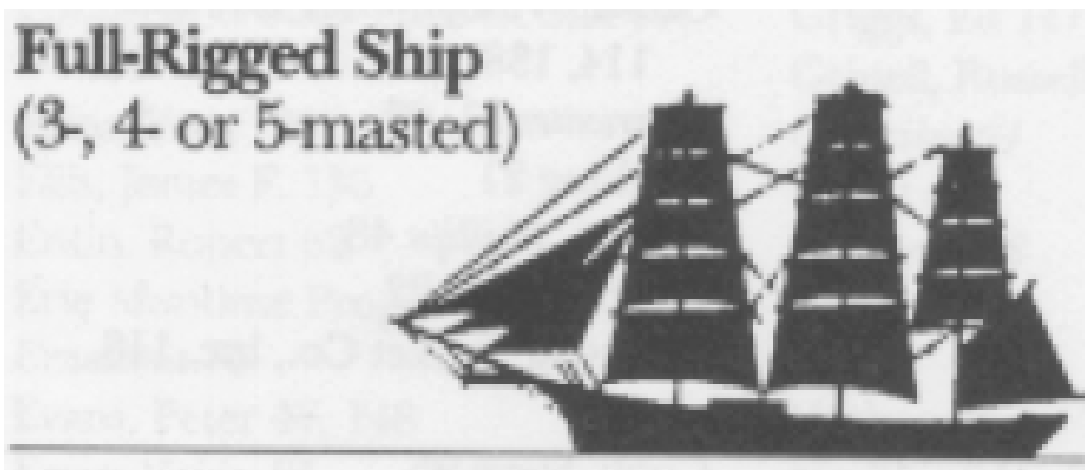
no-one has a chance of collecting all the pages of a certain genre on the Internet but this is as close as it gets. With a particular emphasis on the ‘good old days’ of sailing in the

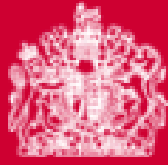
In the second of his searches around the Web sites worth seeing, Luke Stutters goes to sea, visits an Acorn enthusiast in Miami and drops in on the Royal Family.

Hornblower

Most have probably seen the epic series Hornblower on ITV in October, and if you now feel the need to go Internet surfing 19th Century-style, the Maritime History Information Web site is the place to go. The webmaster, Peter McCracken, has been collecting links to all things Maritime since 1995 and it has snowballed from there. Of course,

18th-19th Centuries, there is everything from online museums to magazines, from sea shanties to sailing in the South Pacific. The site is unbelievably up-to-date, considering its size. It came as a surprise that this is not the biggest electronic Maritime resource available, but it is definitely the clearest and most user-friendly, which counts for a lot on the Internet. Continuing to sail the high seas of the





THE BRITISH MONARCHY

THE OFFICIAL WEB SITE

Information Superhighway, here's a site for fanatics of the original C S Forester Hornblower series. The C S Forester Society Homepage, though spare in graphics, contains how to become a member of the C S Forester Society, has reviews of all Forester's writings and a biography of the writer. There is also a link to a Hornblower Quiz, akin to the Unseen University Challenge on Terry Pratchett's Discworld.

If you think the Hornblower series was 'Admirable' then this is the place to go, but if you think swashbuckling is wishy-washy, I'd give it a miss.

Frode M Wells

On a rather less nautical note, we hop over to Miami, USA, to visit Frode M. Wells. A site which has already spread among the Acorn Online Community, the Homepage of Frode M. Wells is one of the best Acorn-oriented computer sites on the Internet because of the wealth of information it offers.

Frode not only covers the latest software releases and updates but the latest developments on PC and Mac platforms as well. Oddly, the site does not get a mention very often in the Acorn Newsgroups so it is invaluable to Internet 'newbies'. Wells covers all sorts of Acorn software, from Internet utilities to Boot sequence add-ons to desktop 'sillies', and that's not all!

Aside from bragging about his computer setup, there's a 'For Sale' page, clip art resources, the latest news on the computer technology scene and a guide to Norway! Frode also offers a professional web site design service and has a very impressive portfolio.

Little Norway

This site is definitely worth a look, if only to discover what sort of beans Frode has in mind, or who the mysterious Jackie really is.

Royal Homepages

The Royal Homepages of the British Monarchy is a surprisingly new site on the Internet and is part of the new Royal PR programme. This site will pleasantly surprise you as it did me. Unlike the Acorn-unfriendly Number 10 Downing Street site, these pages are well laid out and extremely well written. There are no flashy and unwieldy frame displays and graphics and a pleasant lack of animated GIFs and chatrooms.

The whole look of the site is best described as elegant, with fast loading, comprehensible pages which are properly categorised. Most of the site is a huge resource which details the histories of all the current members of the Royal family with plenty of pictures and information. This information is of great use to anyone who is studying the Royal family as each biography on the site is far more detailed than any found in an encyclopedia or such. The fire and restoration of Windsor Castle is also described in museum detail with many pictures of the restoration process. There are also links to all the other government and Commonwealth sites, including all

the charities funded by the Royal family and the Westminster Abbey Homepages. However, the site is more of an official display than an Homepage of the Royals, which is probably a good thing.

Roundup

That's all for this issue! Next time, I'll be reviewing land-lubbing sites from the crème de la crème of the Internet.

Due to the complications concerning the last issue of Eureka, I haven't had a great deal of feedback on my first article. Hopefully, that will not be the case again. If you know a good site, give me a shout!

I can be contacted by emailing lukestuts@mcmail.com or at the Penguin BBS: 01705 254244 ringback.

Sites to see

Maritime History on the Internet

ils.unc.edu/maritime/home.html

Horatio Hornblower

www.teleport.com/~vamberly/

Frode M. Wells Web Site

home.earthlink.net/~frodemwells/

The British Monarchy

www.royal.gov.uk/

Online Club Chats

With the long cold nights upon us, how does the thought of an AGM from the comfort of your own living room appeal? How about a club extraordinary general meeting arranged and conducted from your own home or a good chinwag (or is it

being able to lecture to students from different locations.

It is a means of communicating whereby two or more persons can have a keyboard chat using someone else's service via what can best be

Geoff Lane explains how you can confer, or chat, on line from the comfort of home and reminds you to switch the computer off when you've run out things to say.

a fingerwag) with friends without having to step foot outside? Interested? Then read on.

Internet Relay Chat, or, IRC as it is more usually referred to, is one of the older Internet services but least understood by today's newer surfers. IRC was originally written back in 1988 by Jarkko Oikarinen from Finland and has since been used in more than 60 countries. It was made popular by the US universities and colleges as a means of easy and cheap communication. It allowed quick exchanges of messages for research and also allowed a form of conferencing with learned professors

described as a gateway. Discussions take place in what are known as *channels* which can be likened to entering a room. You can enter established channels and join in a chat or create your own channel and allow others to join or keep it private for invited guests only. It takes a bit of getting used to with many people chatting amongst themselves and with all the text appearing you have to concentrate on who's talking to whom. Touch typing is an *absolute* boon here.

So, how can you use it? Let me take you through a connection. For simplicity of explanation; I have

supplied a *very* simple IRC program with this article. It is very basic and has none of the frills available with many of the other IRC programs but is ideal for a first time IRCer.

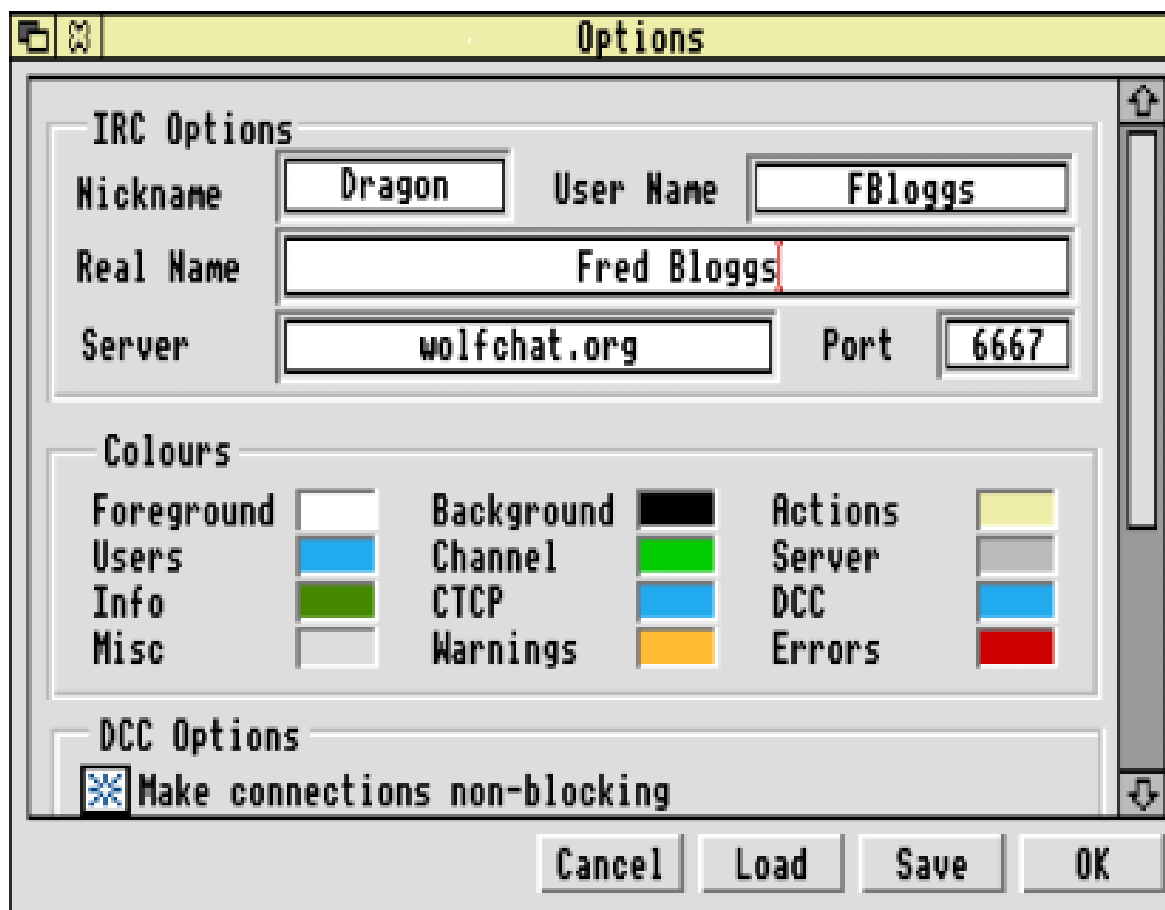
Set Up

Load up Torque (talk —get it?) and then press the menu mouse button over the icon; select options and then choose a nickname you wish to be known by. The reason for nicknames is that it will not allow duplicates so if, for example, there were two Johns, then only one would be allowed to connect. Nicknames are not permanent so if your chosen nickname isn't allowed now it may be later. Also, you can change it every time you log on but you would have to go through this options procedure (with Torque, anyway).

You can change your nickname while connected by means of a simple command. The user name is the bit before the @ in your email address and the real name is —well, you've guessed it —your real name. Server leave as *wolfchat.org* (more on that later) and port leave as 6667. Now save your choices.

I'm not sure now if this bit is essential but shut down Torque. Connect to the Internet and then load up Torque and click on the icon to start it up. A text window will open and display a 'Welcome' message from wolfchat if the connection is successful. If not, click on the icon and try again. The welcome message will be displayed in a text window and at the bottom of this will be a one-line text input window. Now type */join #whcc* (don't forget the hash) and a new window will open denoting whcc, which is the Welwyn and Hatfield Computer Club's chat channel or room. Once again a welcome message should appear.

Anything you now type in the bottom of the #whcc window will appear to all others within this channel (preceded by your nickname) as soon as you press return. Clicking the menu mouse button over the #whcc window will show who else is in it. A little tip here: people can be in a number of different channels at the same time so if it appears someone is there but they don't answer then try a different channel. Type */list* for a list of channels within wolfchat and try to join some of the others and see what



is going on. The channel list may appear in the original window and not the #whcc window.

Some new users do find it confusing with so many people exchanging comments at the same time and you can lose the thread of what is being talked about. Don't let this put you off as a private chat window can be opened to keep conversation between two people.

You can start your own channel but you would be the only one in it! This is useful for pre-arranged meets.

Connect as described above but instead of typing `/join #whcc` type `/join #arm`. This would create a channel called *arm*. Type `/join #carchat` and a channel called *carchat* would be created. Type `/join #zxplr` and a channel called *zxplr* would be created. Any subsequent person who types `/join #<any-of-the-above>` (substituting the appropriate name for *<any-of-the-above>*) would enter the channel rather than create it so you can then all chat away to your heart's content. To leave a channel type `/part #<any-of-the-above>` and the channel closes. Type `/quit` I'm off to

bed and IRC disconnects and gives the message to all channels you were entered in: 'I'm off to bed'.

It is best to keep nicknames and channel names to about eight characters as some servers don't like long ones.

When you get more experienced, you can create a permanent channel name. Names such as *chatroom*, *nightchat*, *boychat*, *girlchat*, *carchat*, etc may get hijacked by others so you can apply to the server operator for a permanent channel name and, by using a password, you authorise yourself as channel operator when you log on. If you become a channel operator you then have control over the channel. You can set it to *private*, *invite only*, kick people off, ban them from joining and any number of other things. This is primarily to prevent bad behaviour by some users.

About Wolfchat

Wolfchat was chosen to be the *#whcc* IRC provider as the operator, Anthony Fratto, was very helpful with queries about IRC when I posted some questions on the Internet. He also has principles and will not knowingly allow insults, porn or

blatant advertising on his server. As a result, Wolfchat is ideal for younger users to try out as the likelihood of them joining some porn chat circle is remote.

Anthony's server is based in the USA and there are many fixed channel names with very friendly helpers available. But do remember, the US is at least five hours behind UK time so users may be at work. He also encourages older surfers to give his server a try as IRC has a reputation as a teen craze. However, all ages are just as welcome.

Wolfchat is available 24 hours per day and IRC programs for Acorn and PCs are available from Anthony's website, which has some really beautiful pictures (address below). Although port 6667 is the default used by most IRC servers Wolfchat can also use ports 6660 to 6669 if the IRC program you eventually use has facilities for port alternatives. This enables service to remain quick even if many users are logged on at the same time.

A history of IRC and explanation of commands used can also be obtained from Wolfchat's web page and

Anthony is quite happy to answer any queries about his server via email. There are many other IRC servers which are linked world wide and if you type */list* on them you may get hundreds of channels, some with erotic or porno sounding names. Also, the name may not be an indication of the subject as as with real conversation it can start on one subject and end on a completely different one. That's half the fun really.

When to log on

The Welwyn and Hatfield IRC meet every second Friday from about 8pm and dates can be obtained from our web page, shown below. The Suffolk Acorn Risc Club also have a regular meet *every* Tuesday from about 8pm and use the same server as described above but type */join #SARC* in the one-line text window. Roy Moore is the administrator for SARC and welcomes any new IRCers. Our clubs share ideas and are not competing so try either, whichever day is convenient.

Also, as interest grows, many users connect to *#whcc* and *#SARC* whenever they log on to the Internet — you can be in both simultaneously — and as such you may find someone there at any

time. Give it a try and have fun.

Recently I enjoyed a pleasant hour connected to IRC and then quit the program, leisurely read a few emails, answered a few and wrote a few more. I played with a couple of program files and eventually decided to switch the computer off at which point I realised that I had indeed disconnected from IRC but *not* the Internet. Arghhhhh!!!!!! Over an hour's wasted dosh to BT. Yes I realise modems can be configured to disconnect when there's no throughput for a set time but 'closing the gate after the horse has bolted' springs to mind.

Contacts

Wolfchat Web page:

www.wolfchat.org

Welwyn and Hatfield Computer Club page:

www.argonet.co.uk/acornshow/whcc

SARC page:

www.octosys.co.uk/sarc

IRC help from Anthony Fratto:

wolfgar@wolfchat.org

Geoff Lane: online@zetnet.co.uk

Meet Our Active Members

Geoff Lane

Anonymity is one of the attractions of computing but I had my arm twisted to send a photo and put a face to the name of Geoff Lane.

I was born in Cricklewood, North West London in 1949 (work it out for yourself), married my wife Marianne in 1969 and have a daughter Claudia, who is nearly 18 and shares my

In a new series, we meet some of the active members we rely on to keep the Club running. All help, unpaid, in their spare time from jobs and other interests.



interest in computers.

I currently live in Edgware which is North West of London and about 6 miles North of where I was born.

After leaving school in 1966 I worked in betting offices for about 15 years and then became a driving instructor working initially for myself and later for the Metropolitan Police at the famous Hendon Driving School.

In 1994 at the ripe old age of 45 I joined the Police as a constable and am currently posted to Finchley in North London. My present location actually covers

the place where I was born
and where I now live.

I enjoy driving, running,
photography and
collecting cacti and have
practised Aikido attaining
an orange belt grading.

My interest in computers
started in 1981 when I
bought an A3000 for
Claudia as they were the
machines used at her
school.

I started programming in
Basic and later moved on
to Assembler language and am
fascinated manipulating the computer
to carry out various tasks.

I started writing for Eureka in 1995
and have compiled the *Well, I never
knew it did that!* articles over that
period and have thoroughly enjoyed
doing so.

My association with The ARM Club
has been most enjoyable. I have made
many friends and hope to continue my
involvement with the magazine and
the Club.



Rilla Paterson

Rilla Paterson jacked in housewifery
and relaunched herself at the working
world in 1994. She decided on a break
from science teaching and took a
course in Supervisory Management
which led to a placement at a
publishing company, working with a
Paradox database.

Having cut her (rather long) teeth on
the Acorn, in particular the music
program Rhapsody and the Desk Top
Publisher Ovation, her new
acquaintance with business software

was straightforward. The firm kept her on and what started as a data-entry exercise grew into something more akin to systems management, which is a posh way of saying she has found numerous uses for her experiments with WordPerfect, Word, DBase4, and Quark Xpress. She is now trying to build them new databases in Access.

She was for 10 years secretary of Stanmore Choral Society, a role which found outlets for word-processing, scanning, DTP and score origination.

Rilla's compositions are mostly silly songs, her latest creation being The Amorous Earthworm, but she has also written more serious stuff, in particular a children's environmental musical which enjoyed several public performances.

Her interests in education and music have found an avenue in some of Eureka's review columns.

She pretends to get inspiration from the beach, and is a frequent visitor to the Dorset coast, but only to sit on it, since she finds (almost) all forms of physical exercise loathsome.



John Stonier

I've been an enthusiastic member of the Acorn community since 1984, when I bought a BBC B micro. Since then, I've run the Digital Databank BBS, which became one of the largest Acorn Bulletin Boards in the UK.

It was always my ambition to organise an Acorn computer show, so it was with great delight and excitement that

the Acorn Southeast Show took place in June 1997. With other shows under my belt, The ARM Club offered me the opportunity to organise their special show in Birmingham on November 28.

I'm currently in the process of organising Training Days as an ARM Club venture. This is aimed at home users and will provide an opportunity to learn and get to grips with various software packages.

I'm also Chairman of the Welwyn Hatfield Computer Club in Hertfordshire, which is mainly Acorn orientated. Our meetings are informal, friendly and we enjoy such delights as playing network Quake.

Outside of computers, I'm employed as a landscape gardener, which means I don't spend all day on a computer. Besides that, I enjoy travelling at weekends, listening to music and support my local church on Sundays.

There's not much time for anything else, except eat, drink and sleep!

***Caricatures by
Beth Rogers***

Members' Ads

For Sale

Risc PC, PC Card 586 133Mhz 512k (PC Pro & Exchange). Offers invited.

Acorn - IDE Card from APDL (New style 4 device EIDE). £35. Telephone 0115 946 8281 and ask to speak to Tim.

Acorn A3000, 2MB RISC OS 2 or 3.1. £50 ono.

Telephone 07050 611 978 and ask to speak to Matt.

Back issues of computer magazines, from 1986, for sale: The Micro User, Acorn User, Archimedes World, Beebug, Archive.

For details phone 0181 445 2126

Wanted

Computers for primary school in Kent, preferably A5000 or above. Write: Christopher Price Merton Court School, 38 Knoll Rd Sidcup, Kent DA14 4QU. Or telephone 0181 302 4078 and leave a message.

Personal Accounts

I have been using Personal Accounts version three for some time now (*reviewed in Eureka 18*). I never felt that it could be improved, but how wrong could I be? Version 4.11 arrived a while back.

Personal Accounts will run on all RISC OS computers, from the A3000

over 75 pages long followed with an excellent section on the more advanced features available. Finally, a section of Hints & Tips gives such advice as how to get around the problem of entering a post-dated cheque. This is one of the best manuals I have read; in fact it is one of the first that I have read for some

Ralph Sillett upgrades his accounts program and finds it an even better way of keeping track of the way his money comes and, all too quickly, goes.

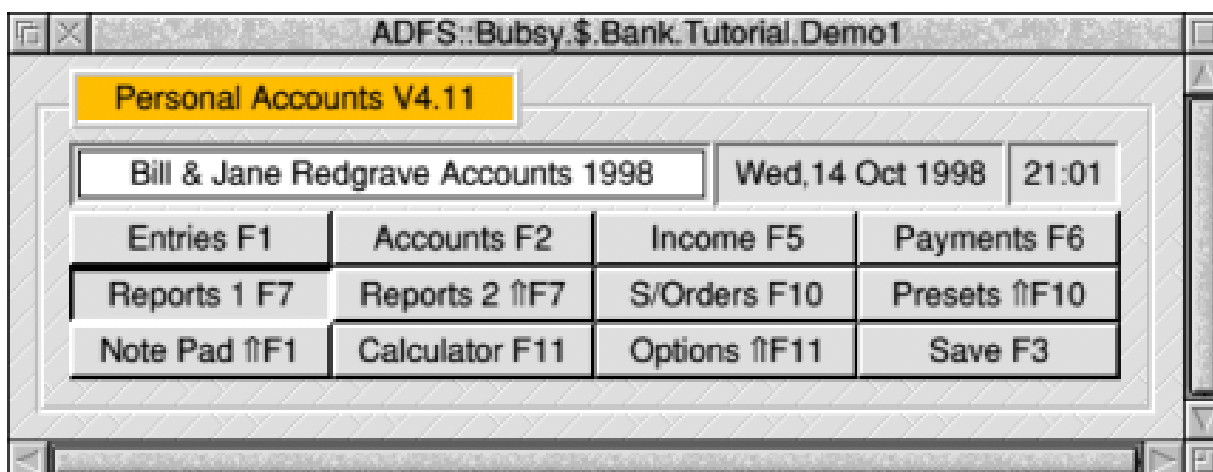
up to the current machines with StrongARM. No special memory requirements are needed. The program installs to your hard disc and is loaded in the usual Acorn way but floppy only machines can just save the files to another floppy disc.

The manual comes as an A5 ring bound volume of 122 pages and there is plenty in the tutorial section to get you on your way. The manual is an easy read so whether you are a qualified accountant or not it will take you through in easy steps and even explain in English! The tutorial is

time! There are files, associated with the tutorial section, on the discs supplied. Even with all this the program is very intuitive to use.

The first changes that I noticed was the use of colour within the window titles. When you start a new account or load an existing file the window title bar displays the correct file title, whereas version three displayed the name of the program and the author with the copyright symbol.

To create a new account you need first to enter the details such as the name



Opening an account

you wish to give the account. Other information, such as the bank sorting code and address and telephone numbers, is optional but handy as a reference.

The main control window is set up to be displayed on loading the program, or you can set the program to open all the windows that were open on your last save, by means of the options window.

Just about everything in Personal Accounts is accessed from this window. Each of the buttons are of the 3D type which will open various windows when clicked on. Alternatively you can use the keyboard short cuts which can be accessed from anywhere in the system. The Escape key is very useful

in that this will close the current window and take you back to the previous one. This is one of those short cut operations that I tend to use a lot.

I started my account from a statement received from the bank along with the records I had been keeping in a little black book. The statement balance is entered as the first entry and the accounts window is updated as entries are added. All entries are editable at any time and this is reflected in the Accounts window.

The *standing orders* feature is as easy to set up as the rest of the program and caters for all periods of a standing order. A printout of the following months S/O can be done in the Reports 1 window or by pressing F7 and entering the start and end dates

Date	From	To	Reference	Total	Description
01.04.98	1# "Bank Account	C1# "Car	00001	15.00	Petrol
03.04.98	1# "Bank Account	E1# "Electricity	00002	25.00	
05.04.98	A1# "Wages	1 Bank Account		500.00	
06.04.98	b1# "Interest	1 Bank Account		10.00	

The transactions window

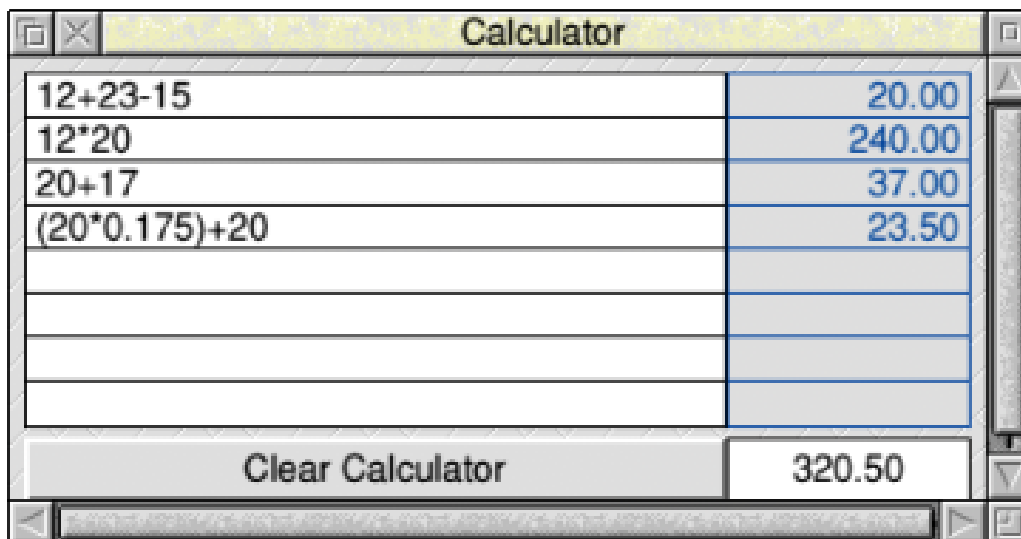
which would be for the first and last days of the required month. You can have up to 96 accounts which can be grouped together. Also 92 headings are allowed. Headings are so that you can see at a glance the total you have spent, say on food, for any given period. Examples are given in the tutorial.

The Reports 2 window will allow you to print out whatever you want from your account whether it be all entries, reconciled entries or those entries not reconciled. The last option can also be used to create a new start to your account especially if you have

run out of memory. This option would also be used if you want to restart at the beginning of each financial year.

A calculator and notepad are also included. The calculator allows up to eight calculations with the total of all

Ordering a report



CueMaster Acorn Powered Prompt

One of the unexpected interest generators at the recent Dutch Show (*reported in Eureka 27*) was a large plate of dark glass, on the end of a metal pole, at a rather rakish 45 degree angle.

The company behind the project, X-Ample Technology, told us the history behind the project, developed initially for Dutch television.

NOP (the Dutch equivalent of the

Toby Smith finds out at the Big Ben Show how Acorns have taken over from Amigas on cue to prompt Dutch presentations and TV shows.

On closer inspection this turned out to be an autoprompt screen. The carefully positioned reflective glass allows a speaker or TV presenter to read their script from a concealed, upward facing, TV screen snug in a box at the bottom of the pole, while still looking at their audience or camera.

Dutch television

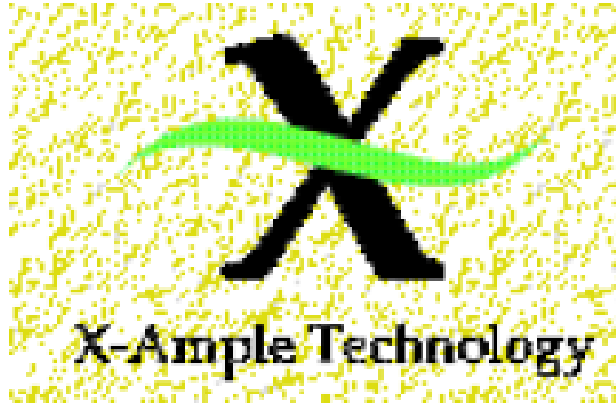
This is not new or novel technology. Readers will have seen, if not used, many similar set ups at conferences of any reasonable size, and at least the effects of the autocue on television programs. What makes this system different is that it is powered by an Acorn.

BBC) had been happily using a cue system based on the Amiga computer for many years. With the problems at Amiga a few years back, which eventually led to the demise of the computer, they needed a new system.

Acorn based

In stepped X-AT with an Acorn based system that beat all the competition. Many of the features we Acorn types are used to really help an Autocue system. Anti-aliased smooth fonts at any size are a real bonus, the ability to read almost any floppy disc (PC, Atari, Amiga, Mac etc) is unmatched. The *TV Centric* technology of Acorn makes this kind of system very simple. In fact the entire package is

based around software, with a hardware card being added later in the development to provide extra PAL and RGB TV outputs and input switches, that has now become standard.



NOP refusing to work with anything else. Text can obviously be displayed in any font at any size and these preferences can be saved as specific for particular presenters and, given a simple network, such preferences can be applied to all the systems in the studios.

The text for a script is typed in, or imported from disc from plain text or from many other common autocue systems. It then scrolls past the display at a rate selected by one of many input devices, including the normal mouse, special foot pedals, hand switches and so on.

Extra views

The system provides for a monitor for the autocue controller, a monitor on the camera autocue or glass screen, and some extra views for the control room. The additions to the package are what have made it become the *de-facto* standard in Holland, with the

***‘ In stepped X-AT
with an Acorn
based system that
beat all the
competition. ’***

Font sizing can also be changed dynamically during the playback of the script, allowing bigger text to be used with the press of a function key should the camera move further from the presenter.

CueMaster also includes a special ‘popup’ bar at the bottom of the script screen, allowing special messages to be passed direct to the presenters, such as the latest news or answers to quiz questions, or showing a live clock.

Mystery guests

The display text can also be coloured. The standard display is white on black, as the monitors used on autocue systems are usually black and white only, so such coloured information is hidden from the presenters but visible to the control room, so allowing cues for video sections to be included.

X-AT also mentioned one example where colour had been used to hide the names of 'mystery' guests from the audience. The surprise would have been spoilt if the names had been spotted on the autocue of cameras pointed at the audience before the guests were announced.

LCD screens

X-AT seem very keen to add any features that their customers want; a classic example being a special mode for LCD autocues. Portable cameras often use LCD screens for the autocue, as hanging a normal monitor off the front as with normal mounted cameras is a little impracticable. Such LCD screens are much smaller, having fewer lines to display (usually due to being made in the USA to the smaller NTSC standard).

Previous systems had to be hand-tested by obscuring some of the screen with card to check that the script was viable on a reduced screen but CueMaster can be switched into LCD display and it automatically reduces its visible area.

Ultimate portability

X-AT supply varying forms of the package, from software and card for addition to an existing machine up to packages with various different types of Acorns pre-fitted.

For ultimate portability, they even supply an A7000, shock mounted in a special case with space for the keyboard and other bits, that can be easily transported around.

CueMaster

Price: According to requirements
Supplier: X-Ample Technology bv
PO Box 77, 5340 AB Oss
The Netherlands
Tel: 00 31 412 634433
Fax: 00 31 412 643884
Email: info@xat.nl
Web: www.xat.nl/



Supporting users in Central and North England

SATURDAY 28th NOVEMBER

The National Motorcycle Museum
Junction 6 on the M42
Birmingham

- Special show discounts
- Latest products
- Hobbyist / Games area
- Competition
- Charity Bring & Buy
- FREE floppy disc
- Meet fellow enthusiasts

DOORS OPEN AT 10am UNTIL 4.30pm

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/>

And Psion Makes Three

It cannot have escaped the notice of observant followers of this magazine that yours truly has just had a trip up the proverbial aisle, with a suitable accompaniment of fellow Club types in the audience. My new wife also appears to have been assimilated

I could perhaps venerate my ability to write up this article and email it off down a mobile phone to my Editor but, alas, I do not have the cabling to do so and, even given so, mobile reception is yet to reach these craggy reaches. It will be, in fact, printed out

Q: What does a true spod do on honeymoon?

A: He unholsters his Psion and writes his column for Eureka of course. Toby Smith reports.

into the Club machine as yet another columnist and I write this missive from the comfort of our Welsh honeymoon.

So, you ask, what does this have to do with Pocket books? Is this article going to cover the merging of address books from PB2 Cards and Psion5 Data? Is it going to point out that with the twin serial ports of a clone PC one can connect two Pocket Books to the same machine (for backup etc) without too much scrabbling about the back with cables? (Though PsiWin will only talk to one at a time, it will 'look' at all COM ports you tell it to in order.) It could, and in fact it just has, but that is not my main strand.

on paper and sent using a quaint old system called The Royal Mail. I only hope its retyping has served to remind our erstwhile Editor of the joys of the electronic age and not lose me too many Brownie points... *[No problem. I OCR'd it with Sleuth3. Ed]*

My point is that my Psion has, over the past few months, been invaluable in the organisation of the aforementioned wedding of the century. Spreadsheets of costings have been mused over, lists of guests compiled, speeches written and swapped (my Best Man, who bears a remarkable similarity to your Club Chairman, having password protected

his against the groom's prying eyes). Databases of who sent what present compiled, for creation of thank you letters. In short my Psion has (as ever) known everything.

(I wasn't, before you ask, allowed to go down the aisle with it holstered to my waist though. The mobile phone also got switched off for the duration on pain of 'I Don't'...)

To pull some semblance of sense out of this rambling, my point is that there is a lot to be said for the small size of a pocket book in any form of group discussion such as the organisation of a wedding, business meetings etc. While all of the calculations and costings could easily have been done on a desktop machine, having one sat on the dining table would have been invasive and moving to cluster round one would have moved the emphasis from the subject (wedding) to the object (computer). Gently tapping things into a Psion, occupying not much more space than a polite teaplate on the table, proved very successful and not at all over technological, the point being a boon considering that certain of the parties involved prefer backs of envelopes to

constant use of technology.

In this way a Psion can bring the power of a computer (note taking, calculation, information store) to such group discussions, without getting in the way due to its fantastically small size, lack of lots of cabling and so on. One of my other recent investments to supplement all this wedding stuff has been a Psion Printer cable. These aren't exactly cheap beasts coming in at £35, and often rather hard to find until you can convince someone that they're the same as the 3c version, but for me well worth it. I've had a small 'luggable' Cannon BJ10 printer for donkey's years, which occupies about the same space as a conventional laptop. This, my trusty Psion, and the brand new cable, are being pressed into service to write up thank you letters and name change forms for banks and so on, providing quite an adequate mobile office for my wife and me (just had to get that in!).

Until next time, keep sending in those letters, keep using one of the very few British made successful computers still around today and send in any tales of places where Psions can go that normal machines fear to tread!

The Editor's view

by Steve Turnbull

Acorn User is the mainstay of Acorn-related publishing. From its birth shortly after the BBC Micro first appeared in 1982 through 16 years to

from IDG Media, an idea they were completely happy with, so I set about organising the whole thing. It's a pity that Stan Boland couldn't have been so sympathetic to the internal Acorn moves to buy-out the Workstations Division before making the incredible

Our series on Acorn magazines now looks at Acorn User, which has recently celebrated its 200th edition. Its Editor, and now Publisher, looks ahead with optimism.

its 200th issue in November 1998, it has always been, and continues to be, the biggest selling Acorn magazine. Through half a dozen different publishers: Wiley, Redwood, BBC Publications, Europress, IDG Media and now Tau Press.

I've been editing Acorn User for a couple of years now. Before that I had Acorn Computing (nee The Micro User) and before that I programmed BBC Micros for a living, so I know something about the machines and their history.

It was about a year ago that I first discussed buying-out Acorn User

decision to destroy it just as it was about to generate some income.

The news of the disbanding of the Acorn Workstations Division came during the first staff meeting of Tau Press. You have to smile. There I was confident of the future viability of the company and it apparently came crashing down with the remarkable decision of just one accountant.

I say *apparently* because I, for one, am not down-hearted.

Production and distribution of the existing machines is assured with the intervention of Castle Technology

and this deal does not preclude the eventual arrival of a successor machine —and the Peanut and Medi are on the cards, though I personally cannot claim great enthusiasm about the latter machine.

So here I am, with a new company to look after and a magazine that's sitting in the middle of a maelstrom of rumour, anti-hype and despondency.

Perhaps you have access to the Internet and watched as day-by-day the news of the Acorn debacle broke and splashed across the newsgroups. And perhaps you felt as if you were drowning in a thousand denials and counter-denials. Rejoiced in the rush of hope as a rescue attempt was made, suffered the pain as the attempts failed on a storm-tossed sea of emotion.

Maybe it would have been better to be disconnected and ignorant. But either way only the careful journalism of a News Editor such as Acorn User's Ian Burley can provide the detailed truth and educated prediction that you can never get on an Internet newsgroup. He, for example, has the ear of all the major Acorn players, he can call them

and they will tell him what they think and what they are doing. Even if they tell him not to print it, he knows and that influences his other news items.

It is claimed by those who think the Internet killed newsprint that the instant feedback of newsgroups makes any magazine redundant. It is true that there is more immediacy — but what do you get for that immediacy? More than 99% of what you read is nonsense, and how can you tell the true from the plausibly true and the untruth? Unless you can talk directly to those who are making the news. The magazine may be less immediate, but it is definitive.

Specialists

And the other specialists you find in Acorn User: Graphics, Comms, Public Domain, PC card, Portables, Games, Music and Hardware. Perhaps you don't want your news of the world filtered —but how can you be sure you haven't missed something that the dedicated Editor will have found and will present in the context that is important to you?

So what of the future? I would not have bought Acorn User from IDG if

it were not viable on its own, and Acorn's unusual business decision does not specifically affect that viability.

New magazines

It is true that Tau Press intends to start new magazines in any field that needs one. In fact we are not even limited to magazines we have a Millennium Bug video and game CD in the pipeline, perhaps even available by the time you read this.

Does that mean we are just using Acorn User's initial viability as a stepping stone to success? Yes and no. Yes of course we are, the opportunity to have an operating magazine with virtually no competition in an established market from Day One was too good a chance to miss. But the term 'stepping stone' implies we would leave it behind once it had served its purpose.

However that's accountant-think and not a concept to which we subscribe.

Acorn User enables Tau Press to move forward and carry Acorn User forward with it. The success of Tau Press will be reflected in the

production quality of the magazine; as we expand so will Acorn User.

It is a business principle of Tau Press to make every product as good as we can. There are things that can be improved in the service of Acorn User to its readers; overseas subscriptions, for example, will soon be under the direct responsibility of Tau Press so that these readers no longer have to wait months to receive their copies. Just one minor change but it demonstrates a principle.

Expertise

We believe in the Acorn market and we will use all of our influence to make that market survive. We are both realists and idealists, we understand how things are now and we know how we want them to be. The clever bit is getting from one to the other and the expertise that now stands behind Acorn User can help that come true for both the magazine and the market.

Acorn User provides stability and certainty in the current turmoil. The magazine is run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts and we are on your side.

A reader's view
by Simon Burrows

Acorn User magazine has always had close links with Acorn itself, and just like Acorn there have been a number of distinct phases in its life.

Looking back at the very first issue of Acorn User (yes, I do have a copy!), there is a welcome written by Chris Curry, co-founder of Acorn. The magazine was set up as the official Acorn users' magazine and this has been reflected in its ability to publish information ahead of other magazines or in a more authoritative manner.

Each issue of the magazine has typically around 100 pages of news, reviews and adverts. Regular pages include News, Public Domain, Comms, Graphics, PC Page, Game Show, Letters page and The Regan Files (a one page interview with a well-known figure from the Acorn world). One or two cover discs are included, periodically replaced by a CD-ROM, but I still have fond memories of the good old days when the *yellow pages* in the magazine contained program listings to type in!

The News pages are undoubtedly the most informative and authoritative in the Acorn world, edited by long-time News Editor Ian Burley. The news is highly readable with significant amounts of original material not seen in other magazines —reading a set of Acorn User magazines effectively gives you a complete picture of the mainstream Acorn market and everything going on within it.

The Comms section, written by David Dade of Arcade bulletin board, is also a definitive column for anybody interested in comms, networking and the Internet.

The biggest strength of Acorn User comes from it being a newsstand magazine, traditionally most popular with Acorn's large educational community. Articles are written to be understandable by the ordinary user, not a techie. This doesn't mean that articles are over-simplistic, rather special care is put into writing the articles and including glossaries, help pages and other useful information.

If you want to keep up with what is going on then you should definitely buy, borrow or scrounge a copy.

New Plans, New Names

From Revelation to Evolution

The planned Revelation demo party, announced in our last issue, has been left without a prize (Phoebe) or a venue.

Project Avante becomes Vantage

Probably the most keenly anticipated software to be announced this year has been the Project Avante graphics program.

Two of the eagerly awaited events planned for Acorn World and which are still going ahead have both announced their revised arrangements and a new name.

However, although the party can no longer take place, the contest for the best Acorn demo program will still go ahead, as the Evolution Demo Competition.

The rules remain the same except that the closing date is now December 1 and entries submitted by that date will go on a CD to be put on the cover of the February issue of Acorn User.

For a copy of the full rules or any other information, contact Paul Wheatley by email at: unclepaul@arcade.demon.co.uk or write to him at:

26 Dale Park Rise,
Cookridge, Leeds, LS16 7PP

Two new names have now been announced in connection with this. A new company, Cerilica Ltd, has been formed to handle the program, which has now been named *Vantage*. Other RISC OS projects are to follow.

The software is due to go on sale in January or February at £200+VAT but an advance £30 deposit will earn a £15 discount (both + VAT).

Further information can be obtained from Nicholas van der Walle, email: cerilica@astutegrfx.demon.co.uk or phone (Mon-Fri 08.30-16.30) 01989 576350.

We hope to have a review of Vantage in our next issue.

On the Eureka Disc

There are some larger than usual magazine programs this issue, which unfortunately means a sparser amount of PD on the 800K disc. The 1600K version contains Sums, a freeware program which creates basic mathematical sum sheets very quickly, and Rename2, a powerful file renamer which allows many different files to be 'intelligently' renamed. There is also the latest version of raFS, the excellent long filenames filing system, and WebGet, an application which can download whole Internet sites for offline viewing.

In Eureka 29...

Reviews

In our Spring 1999 issue we hope to have a review of the eagerly awaited Vantage graphics program, which is already being seen as the successor to ArtWorks. This is among a range of new software, intended to be launched at Acorn World, which we now expect to receive for review in the coming weeks.

Personalities

More of our active members will be caricatured in our new series about their real life jobs and other interests away from the computer and Gill continues her Journal as a married Spoddess.

Regulars

There will be the final instalment of Getting Into Video Editing. We'll be Making Music again and Site Seeing will suggest another batch of interesting places worth visiting on the Internet. Pocket Book users will have their regular Corner, there will be more hints and tips and the usual disc full of programs.

...And, why issue 27 was late

We are sorry for the late arrival of issue 27 of Eureka and for the poor quality of some of the illustrations. The problems were caused by holidays at the printers and by the loss, again, of the magazine master discs when sent to the duplicating company. We hope we have now cleared up the problems.

Club contacts

Email:

General queries	info@armclub.org.uk
Membership queries	membership@armclub.org.uk
Members' technical help	support@armclub.org.uk
Product sales	sales@armclub.org.uk
Magazine	eureka@armclub.org.uk

Mail: FREEPOST 'The ARM Club'

Telephone (higher rates):

General queries 07010 709849

Technical help line 07010 708098

Fax: 07020 954018

Alternative telephone (normal rate but subject to delays):

General queries. Also fax for technical help only 0181 302 2316

Web site: <http://www.armclub.org.uk/>

Published by The ARM Club

- Chairman: Mark Smith • Secretary: Chris Price • Treasurer: Simon Burrows
- Membership Secretary & Discount Scheme: Matthew Cook
 - Public Relations & Graphics Designer: Phil Jones
 - Internet & Products Co-ordinator: Tom Hughes
- Open Days Advisor & Quartermaster: Ralph Sillett
 - Open Days Organisation/Support: John Stonier
 - Technical Help Co-ordinator: David Ruck
- Eureka Despatch Co-ordinator: John Bancroft • Disc Editor Luke Stutters
- Without portfolio: Steve Arnold Martin Ebourne Gary Parr Toby Smith

Editor: Peter Jennings

© 1998 The ARM Club. All rights reserved

Benefits of membership

*The national club for all users of 32 bit
Acorn computers and Pocket Books*

***The ARM
Club***

- The Club's magazine, *Eureka*, written by members, is published and sent free of charge four times a year.
- 1.6MB disc of quality software accompanies each issue of *Eureka* and 800K discs are available for those who have older machines.
- Free Technical Help Service. We will do our best to solve any problems which you may have, by email, letter, telephone or fax.
- Special discounts for Club members from well-known companies.
- Regional open days and shows are regularly organised by the Club. Other events can be arranged on request
- Special offers at shows and open days
- Regional contact lists of other members, available on request.
- Opportunities to get involved in the running of the Club itself.
- School and Affiliate Membership available on request.
- Joining pack includes an extra copy of recent magazine and disc.

Annual membership only £12

Europe £16 and rest of the world £19

FREEPOST 'The ARM Club'

Email: info@armclub.org.uk Tel: 07010 709849 (Flexitel)