

The magazine for members of

The **ARM** *Club*

**The RISC OS 2001 Show
gets a new venue**

**Photodesk Olympic
with all the add-ons**

**Paradise Graphics Tablet
where the pen is
mightier than the mouse**

**PhotoFiler thumbnails
for your graphics icons**



Issue 39 — Autumn 2001

Still Waiting And Hoping

In the last issue, in the expectation that Omega was finally coming onto the RISC OS scene at the Wakefield Show, I optimistically asked if I could junk my unloved Windows PC. That rhetorical question so far gets the answer “No!”

Unless MicroDigital have made the long awaited announcement of an issue date in the few weeks between writing this and Eureka being distributed, we can only hope that the forecast made at the Big Ben Show in Holland in June that Omega deliveries should start in a few weeks will be realised and we will be able to see and buy it at the RISC OS 2001 Show at Bracknell in October.

Meanwhile, the potential market for a new RISC OS machine is getting smaller and less and less new software is appearing as more and more previous Acorn companies find it no longer viable to produce it.

In this issue we are reviewing what, sadly, is expected to be the last

educational program in RISC OS to come from Sherston. Another big name from the first days of Acorn, Beebug, has now completely left the scene and is just supplying Windows computers to schools.

However, there still are good reasons to remain optimistic. Some surprising new hardware has appeared for the educational market, in the form of *Slym* (pronounced *slim*) a RISC OS unit built inside the housing of an LCD screen, with mouse and keyboard linked by radio. Also the amazing new graphics program *Vantage* has been completed and the full release version is now available.

As for Omega, the cheering news from the Holland Show was that, despite RISCOS Ltd's announcement that they would not at present be producing a 32-bit operating system, Omega will be able to run both 26-bit and the more advanced 32-bit software without needing one.

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.

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PhotoFiler

When you buy a collection of clip art the most irritating thing to discover is that the files have all been given numbers preceded by completely uninformative names. You open a directory to find rows of identical icons repetitively titled with

Additional features allow you to replace directory sprites with your own, customised versions (some examples are included) and give you the option to remove the *pling* (!) from the beginning of application names.

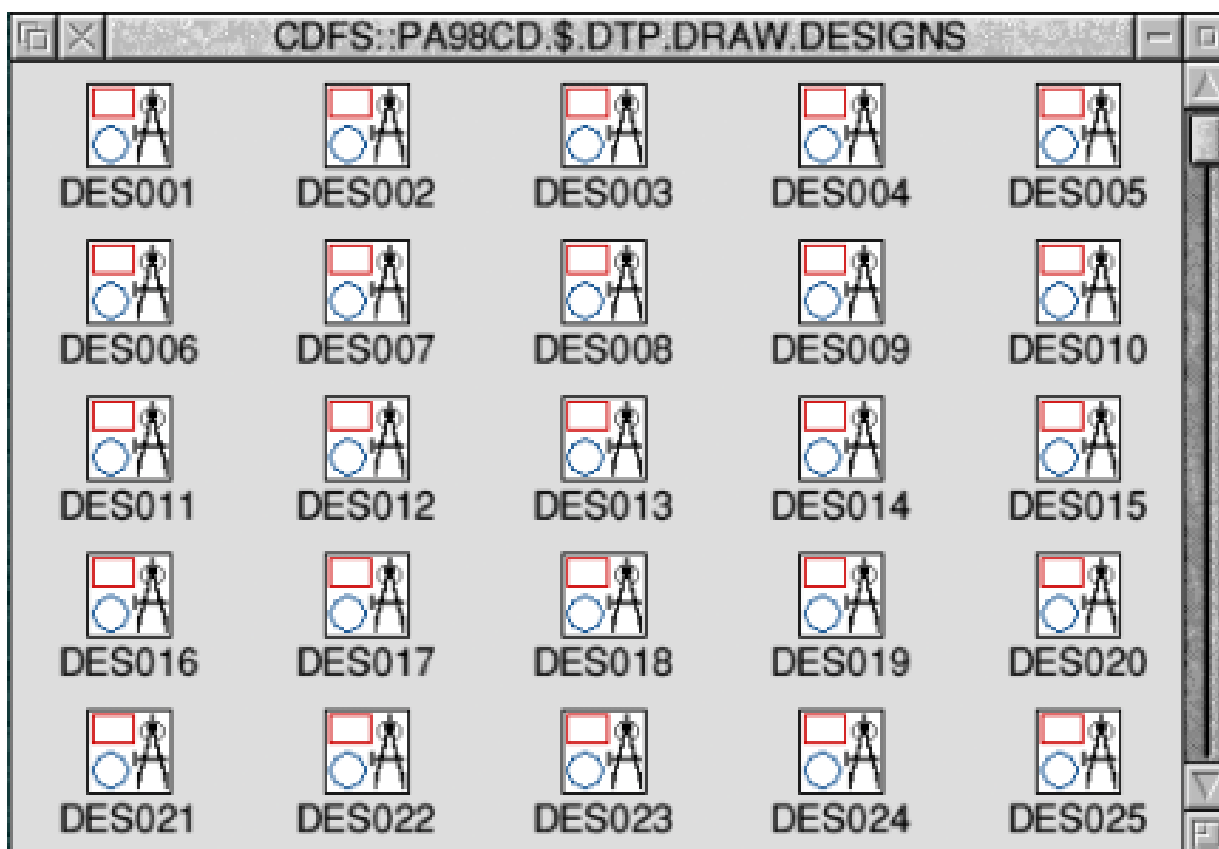
Peter Jennings sees how you can keep in the picture with your graphics icons and give your directories a tidier look by using the latest version of PhotoFiler.

names such as *Image1*, *Image2* and so on. The main culprits are collections which have originated in the Windows PC market and all you can hope is that a fully illustrated catalogue has been supplied.

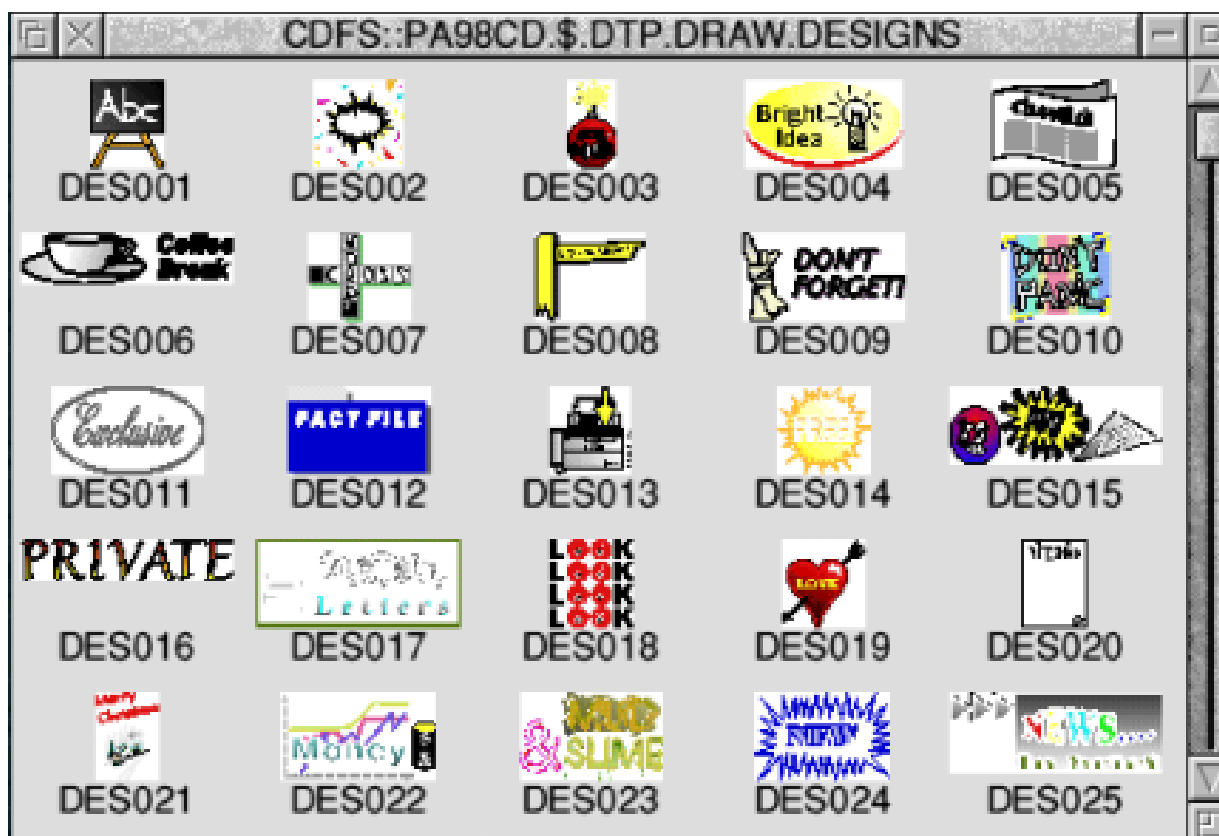
A few years ago PhotoFiler came on the scene, as software for a modest £10 shareware fee, to end this annoying problem. A comparison of the two pictures on the facing page, showing the same directory of Draw files as originally seen and as shown by PhotoFiler clearly illustrates how the problem has been solved. Each icon has now become a thumbnail image of the graphic it represents.

A new upgrade of PhotoFiler has now appeared as a commercial program from Warm Silence Software at the same low cost, plus VAT, as the previous shareware version. It copes with Sprites, Drawfiles, JPEGs and anything which ImageFS can handle.

The program can be added to the Boot file Tasks directory to be automatically run when the computer starts up. It puts an icon on the icon bar which, when clicked on, presents a control panel of choices. Once you have decided on what you want you can click the final option, *Control Panel Auto-quit*, and PhotoFiler will in future load without the icon



Unhelpfully named Draw icons (above) transformed by PhotoFiler (below)



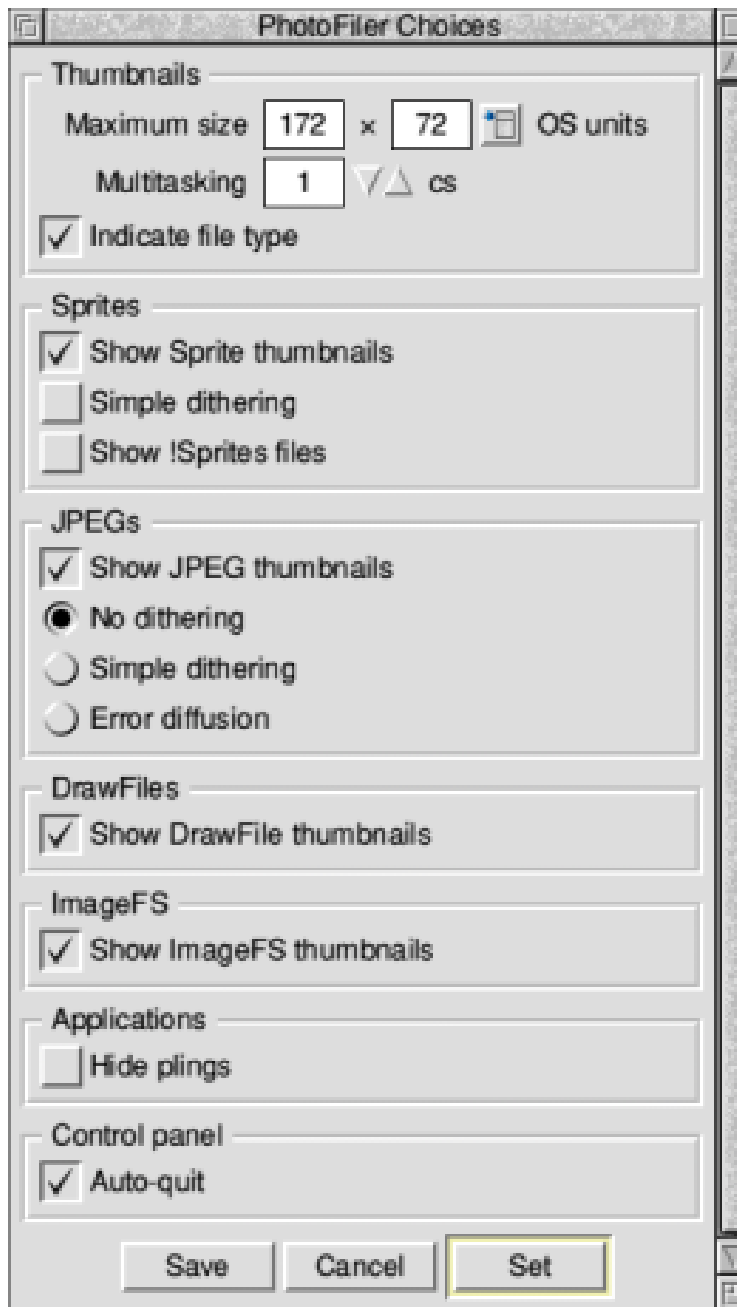
cluttering up your icon bar. If you want to access the Control Panel to make any changes later you just need to hold down the <Ctrl> key when switching on, or click on the icon in

Tasks while holding down <Ctrl> and the icon bar icon will be back.

Should you want to open a directory of graphics with the filetype icons displayed instead of thumbnails you can again hold down <Ctrl> to do this.

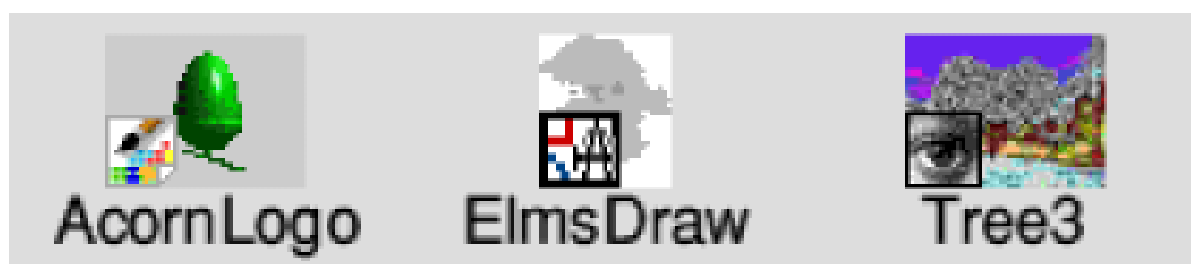
Choices allows thumbnail size, quality and speed of rendering to be set. There are three other settings which you may want to change. In the first *Thumbnails* box if you click on *Indicate file type* the thumbnails will, where possible, have a small file type icon in the bottom left hand corner.

In the bottom two boxes, checking *Applications Hide plings* will remove the ! from application file names and, as already described, a click on *Control Panel Auto-quit* will prevent the icon appearing on the bar when PhotoFiler is run.

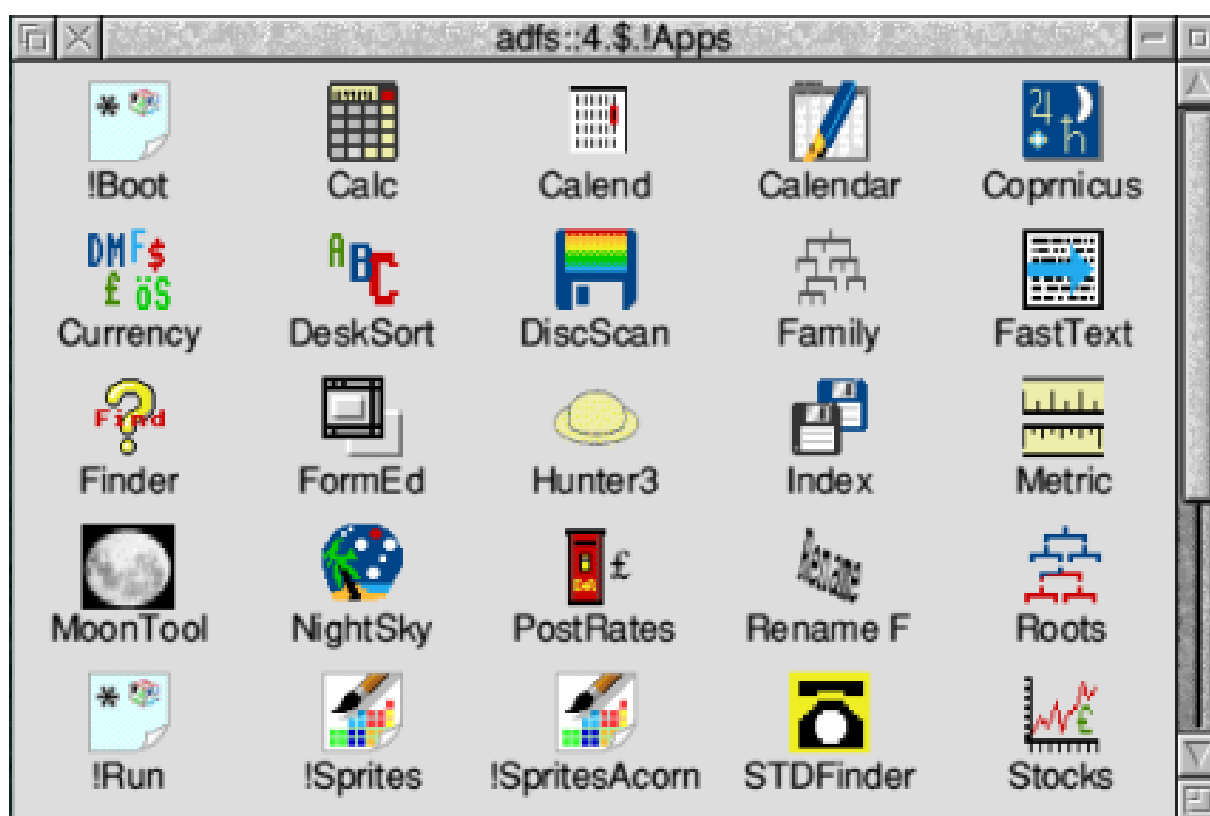


The Control Panel to set your choices

When opening a directory while PhotoFiler is active



Thumbnails including optional file type icons



you will see any graphics displaying greyed out file type icons, which will quickly change to thumbnails. This will be done in the background so you can continue with whatever you want to do. Only those visible will change. Other thumbnails will be generated as you scroll them into view on screen.

For graphics users this is a must-have program at a bargain price.

A tidier look for directories when application names lose their pling

PhotoFiler

Price: £11.75 inc VAT

Supplier: Warm Silence Software

PO Box 28, Woodstock

Oxfordshire OX20 1XX

Tel/Fax: 01608 737172

Email: support@wss.co.uk

Web: www.wss.co.uk

Photodesk Olympic

As regular readers will know, I'm a bit of a Photodesk fan. Any time Peter (our Editor) has a few pages to fill, I've often come up with some ramblings on graphical issues, normally involving using Photodesk or some part of it. If you have been

upgrade prices reflect which version you have come from, so they are still a good deal even just for the new Olympic features. Rather than reviewing the entire package, I'll outline what has been included in Olympic in addition to the features in

Photodesk fan David Ruck enthuses over the latest version of his favourite graphics program and offers some good advice from his own experiences of it.

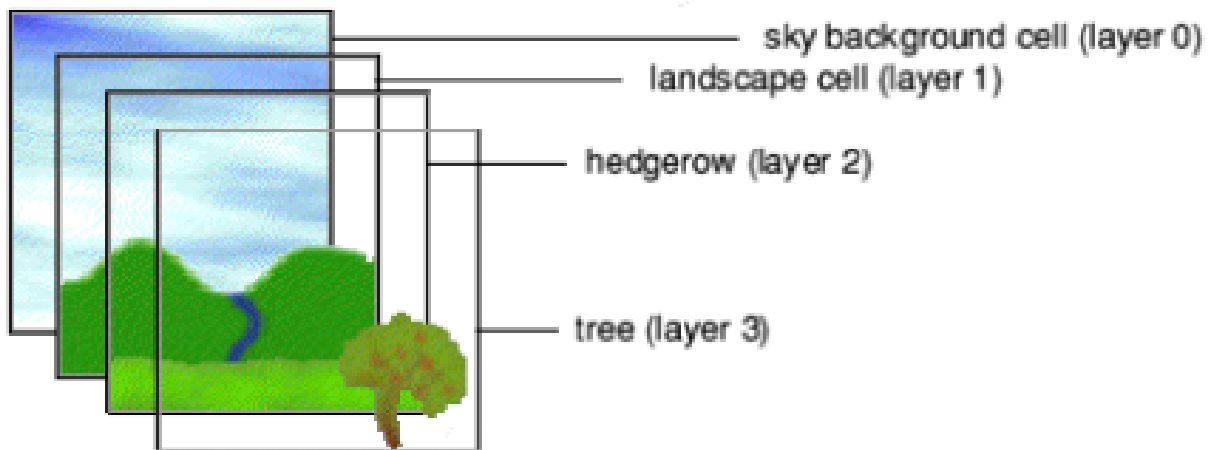
tempted to get into image creation and photo retouching but been put off by the price, the latest version of Photodesk, Olympic, has to be the bargain of the century. Just like the Olympics, everything under the sun has come together in one place, as it incorporates the full feature set of Photodesk 3, all the plug-in components and a few new features too, all for the same price as the old *lite* version.

I started off with Photodesk 2 lite, bought the plug-ins and then moved to the full version of Photodesk 3 when that came out and so have many of the components already. But the

the version of Photodesk 3 lite which it replaces.

Photodesk 3

The full version of Photodesk 3 introduced the excellent layers system, allowing far better control when producing montage images built up of several pictures. Previously, each picture would have to be built up in a separate window and then composited together at the final stage using masks and cut and pasting with various levels of opacity. If any alterations needed to be made to any of the original images, the composition would have to be repeated each time. Layers solve this



The layers system introduced in Photodesk 3

by allowing each separate image to be worked on while being able to see how the final montage will look with various transparency effects applied. You can perform all the normal editing effects while just looking at one layer, or view it and any or all the ones underneath. Parts of each layer can be made see-through allowing layers underneath to show as easily as painting with a colour, layers can be moved relative to each other and the order swapped.

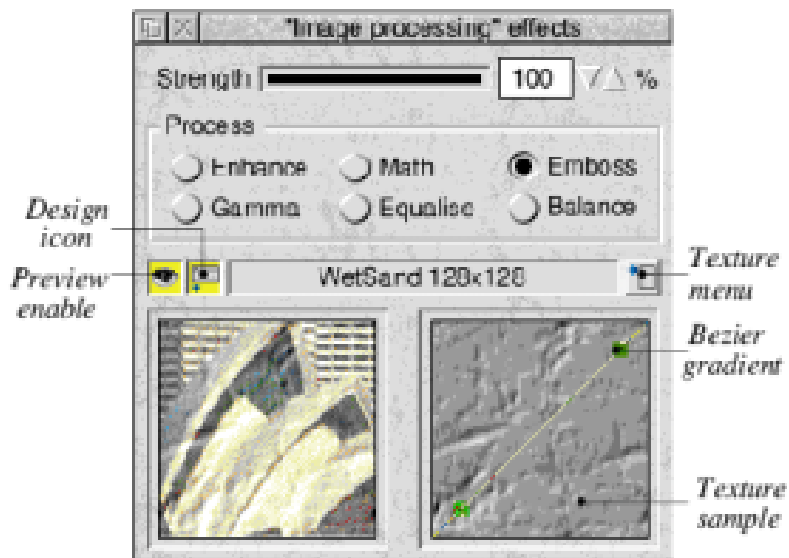
Layers can be used for overlaying text contained in a draw file on to pictures in adverts, allowing the text to be edited and reimported at a later date. Also, it is useful for more fancy effects such as using the mapping tools to take one image and distort it on to a surface on another, such as

putting a different logo on to someone's t-shirt. Layering allows you to keep experimenting with the technique until you are happy with it.

The other features the full version had in addition to lite, were the ability to use ink calibrations for professional printing and various effects when overlaying one image over another, such as adding, subtracting or differencing. The lite version also lacked the ability to produce drop shadows around irregular images pasted from the clipboard, which is quite a useful feature.

Photo Textures

The Photo Texture disc was the first add-on to be released. It supplemented the textures available in the image processing emboss



The required embossing texture can be chosen from the menu accessed from the *menu icon*. The current choice will be identified in the *selection display* to the left of this icon, as usual, along with the dimensions of the *tile*.

Clicking on the *design icon* extends the window downwards to reveal the preview area along with a *Bezier gradient* superimposed over the chosen texture.

Choose a texture for a bit of embossing

section and tool styling settings. These are full symmetrical textures, meaning they can be tiled with no joins at the edges. They can be used to make plain areas of colour more interesting in diagrams, or subtly applied over a whole image to make it look as if it has been painted on to a surface. My favourite is hessian, which gives a printed on cloth appearance. The textures supplied are various stone and rock effects, grasses, bark, bricks, leaves and rivets.

Photo File Formats

Olympic now has all the standard and additional file importers and exporters, handling a range of both bit

map and vector formats. ArtWorks and Draw files can be imported, scaled and rendered with full anti-aliasing, either on to the image or as a mask, which is useful for painting fancy effects through on to a picture. Sprites, JPEG's, Windows BMP, GIF, TIFF, Targa, PBMPlus and Photoshop bitmap formats can be read and written, the latter including full support for layers.

Photo CDs can also be read at any of the supplied resolutions. So there won't be many graphics files that Photodesk can't handle, including those such as 32-bit CMYK TIFF's that even !ChangeFSI chokes at.

Photo Special FX1 & FX2

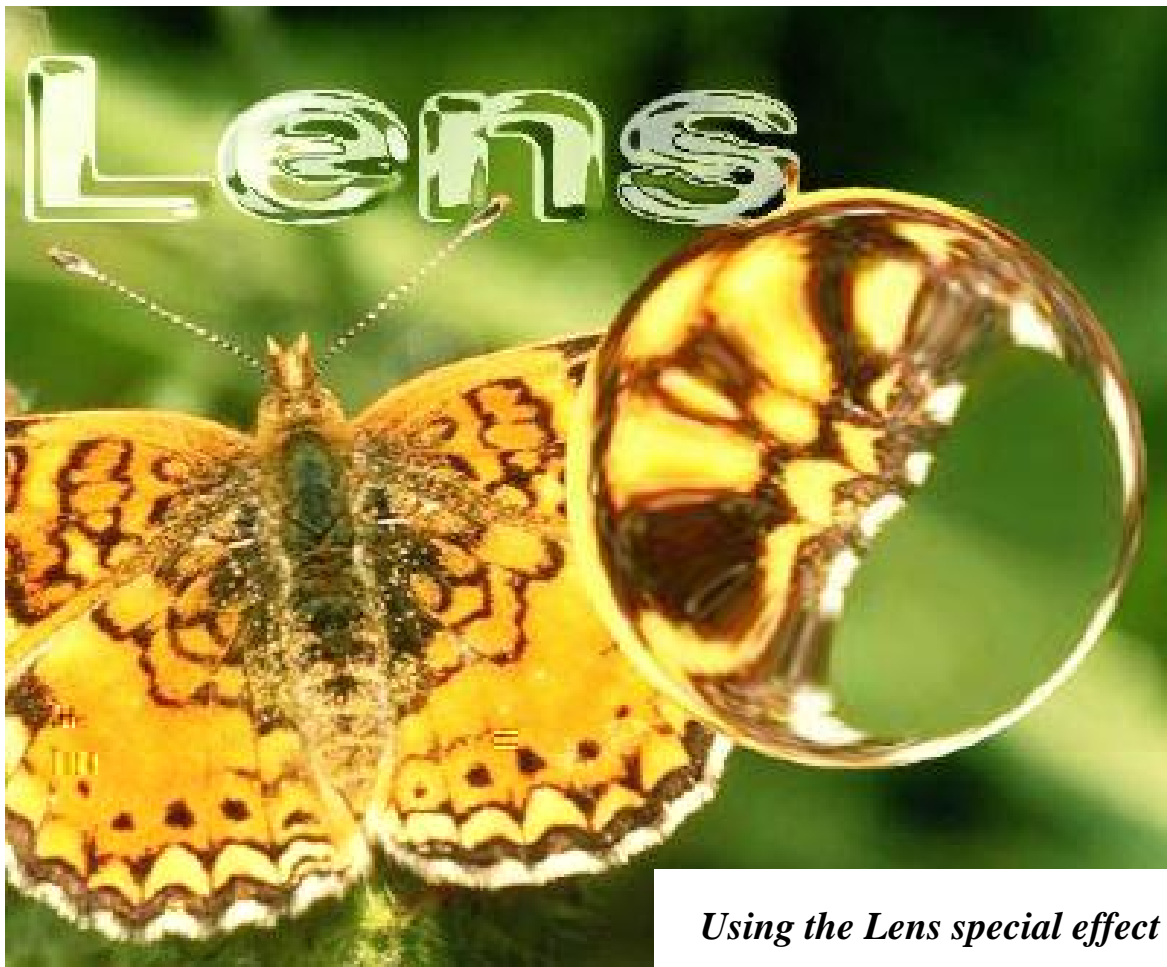
The best add-ons were the two packs of special effects, although some are of more practical use than others. All have many adjustable parameters and are great fun to play with.

Spin Blur: progressive circular blurring from the centre outwards, useful for giving an impression of movement to wheels, gears and clock hands, etc. It applies to the whole image, so you need to cut the object to the clip board, apply the effect just to it and paste back.

Zoom Blur: progressive radial blurring from the centre outwards, giving dramatic emphasis to the centre of the image by giving the impression you are rushing towards it.

Lens: has the effect of placing a convex lens over the entire image, magnifying the centre and distorting the peripheries

3D Ripple Map: the effect of a scene reflected in water that has been disturbed by a stone dropped in it, with circular ripples emanating from the centre.



Using the Lens special effect



Add a touch of Chrome with special effects

Diffuse Map: speckled effect, can be applied to a photograph giving a very artistic sprayed on look.

Channel Map: uses the an alpha channel to lighten and darken parts of an image. If, for example, a line is drawn with a large soft edged airbrush, it will look as if a glass tube is placed over the image. If first the same alpha channel is used to perform a displacement map, the area under

the tube is distorted as if looking through highly refractive glass.

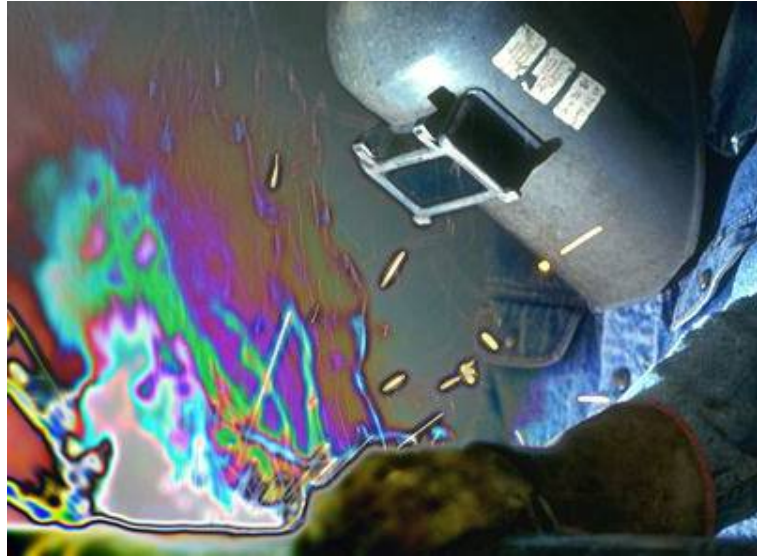
Twirl Map: progressively rotates the image around its centre, a definable amount. Produces either a striking effect or a real mess, depending on the image!

Outline Glow: creates a white glow around the outline of objects, for that genuine *ReadyBrek* look as featured

in 1970's TV commercials for porridge.

Sharpen Edges: exactly what it says. Can make pictures look as if they are etched onto the surface.

Hatch: smears the image at a 45° angle, as if it has become wet and the colours have run slightly.



Surreal colours with the Contour effect

Pixelise: makes the image blocky, useful for applying to just a face for that photo of the accused look!

Crackle Texture: produces a pattern of dark spots, as if the image were painted on to a rough metal sheet and has started to abrade off.

Median Filter: very useful filter for removing isolated spots of noise from an image, such as dust on a scan or transmission noise in a video capture.

Chrome: turns a coloured surface into a shiny metallic one. Especially good for taking a picture of a car and turning it into stainless steel Delorian from the *Back To The Future* films.

Contour: works best on coloured highlighted surfaces to produce a sort of heated titanium rainbow coloured look, or can be used on arbitrary images to produce a surreal cacophony of colour.

Crystallise: turns pictures into simple but effective paintings using large brush strokes.

Dimple: as if printed on a dimpled acrylic sheet.

Glaze: a kind of stained glass effect, with an area of colour acting like a separate pieces of glass distorting the light coming through it.

Posterise: reduces the number of colours used in an image, giving pictures an artificial look, as if painted in water colours.

Raindrops: if set too large it can look a bit like rain drops on the image but if too small and too many it looks more like an acetate film that is blistering in the heat.

New for Olympic

Olympic has several new features. The package now comes with an on-line manual in HTML format that can be run directly from the CD, or copied to hard disc. It has a *getting started* section for new users and contains plenty of useful illustrations of the various tools and dialog boxes used to configure them. It is well worth a read for even experienced Photodesk users as, in such a full featured application, there are bound to be areas that you have not yet exploited to the full.

For professional users, there is now a greater range of named colour definitions provided, covering a range of Pantone variations, DIC, Focoltone, Munsell and Trumatch schemes, plus colour sets from other applications such as PageMaker.

These are essential for anyone producing accurate matches to real objects, that are specified in terms of these schemes.

Photodesk can now load and save PNG files. This format is becoming popular on the Web as a new standard for graphics to replace GIFs. Like GIFs and unlike JPEGs it is a lossless compressed format that means there is no degradation of image and the uncompressed version is identical to the original. But their advantage over GIF's are that they support more than 256 colours (24 bits per pixel and beyond) and support a full 8-bit alpha channel for producing transparency effects, rather than a simple bi-level scheme in GIFs and sprites.

This means Web graphics can be saved directly from Photodesk without needing any third party tools that may not honour the alpha channel. It also makes an ideal storage format for normal work, gaining over Sprite and TIFF formats in that it is compressed and will use less disc space but still preserve both image quality and the mask. Although if you are working with multiple masks, you still need to save as TIFF

format, or Photoshop format for multiple layers.

There are also new loaders for Postscript and printout files but these are a bit of a mystery, as they are shown in a screen shot in the manual but there is no documentation on them. I know Photodesk does not contain a full Postscript render but I suspect it is supposed to extract bitmaps from Postscript files. However I was unable to get it to make sense of any files printed via the !Printers generic Postscript driver, so I'll have to get in touch with PhotoDesk Ltd about that. The printout loader seems to want a file suitable for the Primera dye-sub printer but as I don't have a driver for that type, I was unable to try it out.

One thing that I am surprised has not been updated are the copies of cjpeg and djpeg within the JPEG loader. The ones supplied are quite old versions and are not compatible with the new 32bit Shared C Library released by Pace to developers. I did not notice the problem at first because I saved fairly small images in JPEG format and it is not until they are of a greater size (something above

768×576) that these routines are used, causing the images to be corrupted. Luckily I spotted this while I still had the original images. I reported this to Photodesk some time ago but perhaps it was too late to make the release of Olympic, so I hope to see it in the next version. If any other Photodesk users (of any version) experience similar problems, they can be solved by replacing these two programs with the latest versions which are on the Web.

DigiSnaps CD

Accompanying the main Photodesk CD, is the DigiSnaps CD, consisting of 113 copyright free TIFF images. Using TIFF format means they take up more space but are free from JPEG artifacts which can often interfere with further processing. Although some of these images have come from a digital camera which produced JPEGs originally, these include Chris Hornby's (the proprietor of Photodesk Ltd) photos from the Sinai Desert and underwater shots in the Red Sea. The images are grouped into the following categories: animals, desert, flowers, general, insects, misc, people, places, skies, textures and underwater. Disappointingly the textures are not the tileable type that

can be used directly in Photodesk but rather just pictures of textured objects. You'll have watch out for TEX10/JPG as it is actually a TIFF not a JPEG and needs to be copied off the CD and retyped before you can load it.

While the images may not be directly useful to you, they are a great way to learn to do the various effects available in Photodesk, which are always more difficult if starting from a blank canvas. A good one to experiment with, and one that has a good mix of colour and detail, is SWTAIL/TIFF. This is a stunning picture of a swallowtail butterfly feeding from a flower in perfect focus in the foreground, standing out from the out of focus background.

I don't know if this was good photography using a large aperture or if the effect was applied in a graphics package, but you can try to archive the effect on TEX8/TIFF. This is a picture of some plants in the foreground with rocks behind that are both in sharp focus and lacks a centre of attention. By masking off the plants and blurring the background, they jump into prominence in the

picture, giving a more pleasing composition.

Conclusion

If you are not already a Photodesk user, there is no better time to buy and get everything together on CD. Existing users of anything less than the full Photodesk 3, can now catch up to the full spec far cheaper than before. Only those who already have Photodesk 3 and all the add-ons may want to consider if they need to upgrade for PNG format import and export and the convenience of an online manual.

Photodesk Olympic

Price: Full copy £135

Upgrades: from 2.xx lite £100

from 2.xx full £85

from 3.xx lite £70

from 3.xx full £20

Supplier: Photodesk Ltd

1 The Courtyard,

Southwell Business Park

Portland, Dorset DT5 2NG

Tel: +44 (0) 1305 822753

Fax: +44 (0) 1305 806483

Email: chris@photodesk.ltd.uk

Web: www.photodesk.ltd.uk

Quick On The Upgrade

In his very favourable review of Martin Wuerthner's TextArea Module in our last issue, Christopher Jarman made the following criticism:

"The shape of the TextArea cannot be changed, nor will it export into Impression or OvationPro. I also found that the file would save out as an ArtWorks EPS file but that it would not then transfer to the PC in Corel Xara like the normal ArtWorks files."

No sooner read than acted upon by Martin who has issued a version 1.08 upgrade to include these features.

ArtWorks TextArea module

Price: £35

Site licence: £87.50

Supplier: Martin Wuerthner

Mannheimer Str. 18

67655 Kaiserslautern, Germany

Tel: +49 (0)631 3608205

Fax: +49 (0)7034 928915

Email: martin@mw-software.com

Web: www.mw-software.com/

Free A5000 On Offer

Good home required for Acorn computer surplus to requirements.

A5000. RISC OS 3.11.162MB + 41MB hard drive. 4MB RAM. 14" VGA monitor. Armadillo sound recording card.

Offered free to collector.

Contact Rilla Paterson

31 Rousebarn Lane, Croxley Green

Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 3RL

Tel: 01923 245338

Email: rilla.p@argonet.co.uk

Free ads ...

...just one of the Club services

Remember, if you have something to buy, sell or give away you can advertise it free in Eureka.

That's just one of the free services which come with your Club membership.

Check them out on the back cover of every copy of Eureka.

Number Plane

Teachers and parents of six and seven year olds will welcome the arrival of the Number Plane.

Those who have already travelled on the Number Train will be accustomed to the format. Murphy Mouse is

waiting at the airport, ready to guide you on your journey.

At the Departure Gate, which can be one of three depending on the level of difficulty chosen, there are seven different characters waiting to travel

Did you take the Number Train? Now you can go by air to brush up your mathematical skills (although it's really intended for children) as Di Hillage reports.



Take your choice at the departure gates

with you. Each of them leads you to a set of activities which are closely linked to those found in the Numeracy Strategy.

Mr Flopear covers recognising and matching numerals and their number names. The Doughnut Dragons cover the concept of division and its link to repeated subtraction. As a teacher of older pupils who have difficulty with maths, I often find that children have never grasped this concept fully and subsequently have great problems with division.

The Zogs offer practice with addition and subtraction facts for numbers up to 10, while Florrie Flutter extends this to number pairs for 20.

Dr Prickle and his family of hedgehogs cover multiplication and its link to repeated addition. Debbie Diamond checks on place value in two-digit numbers and The Cooky Spooners and their various pizzas and pieces of chocolate introduce the concept of fractions.

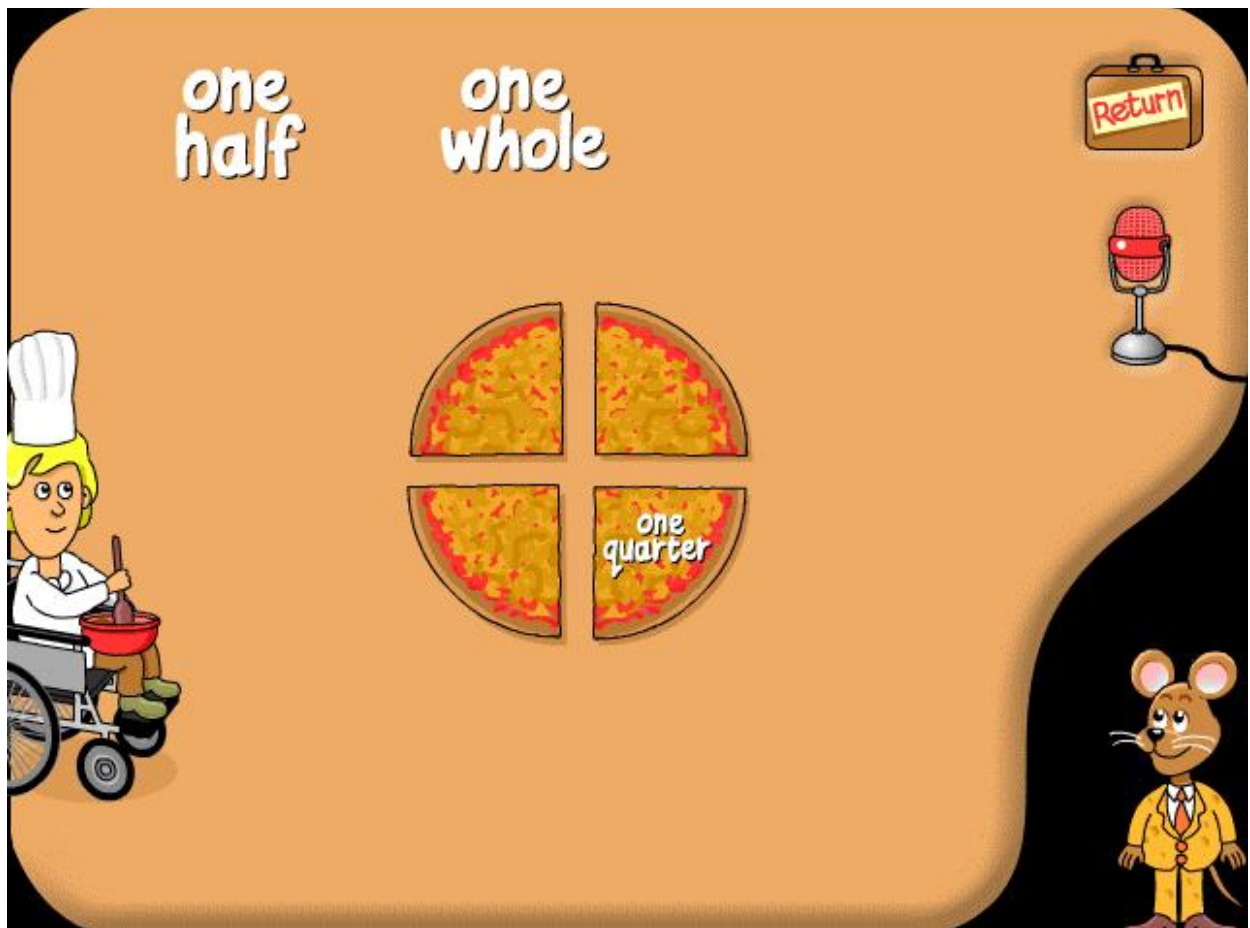
As we have come to expect from Sherston's in-house titles, everything is presented via clear screens with the



Murphy Mouse guides again

option of spoken instructions. Each activity can be tackled at three different levels, which can be set by the teacher in advance so that members of the class can work independently. Records of the activities attempted by each child are kept and can be viewed or printed out.

A pack of 31 Resource sheets is also provided on the CD to give extra practice and further activities linked to the computer sections. This is an excellent resource which will be welcomed by any busy KS1 teacher.



It fits nicely between Number Train for year R/1 and the Numberworks CD for lower levels of KS2.

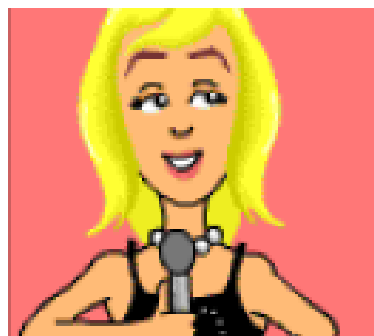
Sadly it looks as if it the last of the line as far as RISC OS users are concerned. Sherston say that it is no longer viable to produce RISC OS versions of future titles. This is very disappointing for those of us still using these machines very effectively.

RISC OS computers do still have a place in education, the market which was previously responsible for the majority of sales and hence the finance to develop the platform further. Many primary and infant schools are small and do not have staff with technical IT knowledge nor the resources to buy this in. Maintaining Windows based computers being used by little, fiddling, fingers can be very time consuming and time is not a commodity in excess in such

← *On opposite page*

TOP: The pieces of pizza way to understand fractions.

BELOW: Bag the right number to learn addition and subtraction with the Zogs.



***Debbie Diamond, the pop star
with a way with two-digit numbers***

establishments. The quick and easy <CTRL>+<Break> reset is a boon in such situations. However, despite the sound base of software already available and the continued commitment of some suppliers such as Softease, the loss of sources such as Sherston, 4Mation and the like for future titles is extremely disheartening.

Number Plane

Price: £42.95 +VAT

Supplier: Sherston Software Ltd

Angel House

Sherston

Malmesbury

Wilts

SN16 0LH

Tel: 01666 843200

Fax: 01666 843216

Email: sales@sherston.co.uk

Web: www.sherston.com

ArtWorks ColourBar Module

This new ArtWorks module from Martin Wuerthner is not going to cause problems with the race relations board. It is another seemingly simple addition to the Acorn vector program from its biggest upgrader.

circular. (*See the illustration on facing page*)

Installation is the same process as for all previous modules by Martin. Disable the Quickstart operation and

Add ons for ArtWorks keep coming from Martin Wuerthner and Christopher Jarman keeps us abreast of them, including the latest ColourBar module.

Many of you who dabble in the PC arena will be familiar with the kind of colour selection bars which are seen in Xara and PhotoShop, or even our very own Photodesk. Now Martin has provided ArtWorks users with a similar very useful instrument.

The ColourBar is a long window which shows all the colours which are currently selected for use, as small squares plus two extra squares for *none* and *Registration black*.

Actually the shape of each colour patch varies to show the type of the colour: Process colours are square, tints are square with the top-right corner cut off and spot colours are

drag the new module into the ArtWorks Auto directory.

The bar is really a long thin window with the usual Acorn properties. It is floating freely and can be placed anywhere on the desktop that is convenient.

To use the colours is extremely simple. You can drag with <select> to change the fill colour of an object, or drag with <adjust> to change the line colour.

You may also select an object first and then click on a colour to change the fill or the line. Again the mouse buttons perform the same functions.



The colour bar — a long, thin free floating window with the first half having a grey scale and the rest being colours

If a whole group of objects is selected the same rules apply.

You can drag a new colour to an object or to a line whether it is selected or not. This includes the 'None' and 'Registration black' colours too of course.

Dragging also applies to colours within a graduated fill. You just drag the required colour square onto the graduated fill window.

At the moment it is not possible to change the colours within blends, but hey, with Martin's modules all things are possible with time. In any case why would most of us want to do that?

If you have no work to go to or are just feeling a post weekend ennui, then sitting and flipping the colours of your various designs on an ArtWorks page could be just what you need. If so ColourBar is for you. With Martin's steadily increasing number of add-ons my copy of ArtWorks

seems to be keeping pace with the value of my house.

You can find more details and a screenshot on the ColourBar home page (see below).

To order, send a cheque payable to Martin Wuerthner and send an email with the subject 'ColourBar order' at the same as posting your order. You can also order using your credit card via UK Shareware Registration Ltd. (follow the link on the ColourBar homepage).

ArtWorks ColourBar module

Price: £12.50

Supplier: Martin Wuerthner

Mannheimer Str. 18

67655 Kaiserslautern

Germany

Tel: +49 (0)631 3608205

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ARM Arena

Despite the the state of the RISC OS market as we hold out for new hardware, the much-neglected games scene has certainly not been bereft of developments over the past few months and there has even been a small number of releases.

installations in an attempt to rid them of a robotic enemy.

Various features make Descent 2 more complex than its predecessor including transparency effects and bilinear filtering (as I understand, an

Andrew Weston looks back with enjoyment at the last few months, which have seen a major games release and other exciting developments in the ARM Arena.

Descent on Wakefield

May was, of course, the Wakefield Show which traditionally sees releases in the leisure area and this year was no exception, thanks to RComp Interactive who released the sequel to their earlier PC-game conversion, Descent.

The sequel, Descent 2 was written by David McEwen, the highly accomplished programmer who has converted a huge number of emulators for use with RISC OS.

This is a 3-dimensional futuristic combat game wherein the player explores complex underground

algorithm to smooth graphics when scaled significantly). Together with the option to run in true-colour modes, this package makes for a demanding piece of software but reportedly the games runs acceptably as David has changed parts of the original code to RISC OS's native machine code from, presumably, the platform-independent language, 'C'.

Descent 2 is available as an upgrade for those people who bought the original and RComp announced that they would have "a smaller number of 'full' packs with D1 and D2", so I would recommend contacting RComp to find the best solution.

TEK

Also at the Wakefield Show, in the games arcade area was a working version of TEK, the futuristic strategy game with an isometric graphical view that has been in development for several years at Artex software. I understand this was not the final version as it was slightly unstable!

However, Artex are notifying Acorn Arcade of the progress of the game and are apparently putting the finishing touches to the game for a release 'shortly' after the show. It is also reported that the major problem they are experiencing is finding a digital movie format to display in-game movie clips. In line with their original ethic of maintaining PC-style game presentation standards, Artex always intended TEK to have movies.

As a member of another RISC OS games-coding group VOTI, I have learnt that this problem is a general area of need for RISC OS. Since Acorn's demise there has been little, if any, development of the native digital movie playing software ARMoview and the principal video editing software is very unstable on RISC OS 4. This is leaving the scene

with few alternatives other than to convert from files generated on other platforms, which is proving difficult for developers on limited budgets!

Also the public domain players do not permit all the features or the latest versions of foreign movie formats to be played on RISC OS which is proving a hindrance. Whatever the solution, let's hope it doesn't seriously hold back development of titles from either Artex or VOTI.

EMD Update

On the subject of VOTI, ringleader Nathan Atkinson recently reported the latest developments to their overhead racing game, Eat My Dust, on the VOTI site.

The game is apparently largely complete but development is being blocked by the need for level graphics to make the game into a varied and substantial package. Efforts are under way to find graphics artists to contribute scenery and models for the game but, again, a release date cannot be set and it will not be in the immediate future unfortunately. On the positive side, a selection of music has been obtained for the game which

should hopefully add to the feel of the fast-paced action.

I'll try to give more details as they are released.

Fantasia

Fantasia, the Greek games programming group, released in March limited details of a game that has been in development for quite a while called *Toy Party*.

Apparently the game was inspired by the console game, Mario Party, but has been varied from this theme to give it its own character. I've included one of the screenshots, which can be seen on Acorn Arcade.

The game is said to run at a variety of colour depths up to 24-bit colour and sets of graphics have been made for each depth so presumably the game will be provided on CD as their previous game, the platform-game *Wizard's Apprentice*.

With large numbers of colours and high resolutions the demands on a computer's processor can be high so it will be interesting to see what machines will be able to run Toy

Party. There is even talk of optimising the game to make best use of the Viewfinder graphics enhancer card for Risc PCs from CJE Micro's.

Internet Chess

Occasionally in this column I have mentioned computer versions of traditional games, such as Patience or Chess and this time the same can be done as a new version of Chess has been released as shareware (try before you buy — usually at a very reasonable price).

NetChess by Colin Granville is a client program enabling the chess player to connect to internet chess servers to chat or play the game. The program is shareware and details of registration are to be found at the program's own subdomain of The Iconbar website, which is given below.

Acorn Arcade articles

Various discussions through the course of this year on the Acorn Arcade discussion forums lead to calls for somebody in the know to write articles bringing together the main issues and possible solutions involved in games creation for RISC



A shot from Fantasia's Toy Party showing the 3D pre-rendered character models

OS computers nowadays. These discussions generally arose from requests for help in graphics or for particular software absent or not well supported on RISC OS.

Team leader at VOTI, Nathan Atkinson, was called upon to express his views and opinions on a couple of topics and his thoughts make interesting reading on which you can also comment on the website. The

two topics covered are 'the lone programmer' and 'the RISC OS gaming world'. The columns are in the section of the same name on Acorn Arcade.

If you see a need to express views on a topic then why not suggest another article — Acorn Arcade's administrators would be more than happy to listen.

Brutal Horse Power

David McEwen, author of the aforementioned *Descent 2* conversion, has managed to find time to look through the resources included with the TBA Software Games CD released last year by RCI and has worked out how to continue work on two tracks for the racing game *Brutal Horse Power*, which were left uncompleted by TBA but included on the CD, to a point where they are playable.

Although the tracks aren't entirely up to the standard of the remaining tracks of the game, lacking certain trackside graphics for example, they allow us some more gameplay and show the remaining tracks which would otherwise be only a matter of indefinite discussion.

This is a commendable service to other RISC OS games players and, although the tracks have shortcomings, posters to the `comp.sys.acorn.games` newsgroup have been quite pleased with David's efforts. The tracks are available from the downloads area of the Leisure section on RComp's website.

Exile

If you have a very good memory you will know from earlier columns that I am a fan of the legendary 8-bit game. *Exile*, by Peter Irvin and Jeremy Smith. It may surprise you to know that there are not one, but two part-time efforts currently underway to update the game for the PC platform. Although rather quiet of late (due to the work commitments), one of the projects' co-ordinators, Simon Storr (author of the last-ever BBC game, *Citadel 2*), assures me that the project is ongoing and has a piece of potentially good news. This piece of news is that the game is now being written in the platform-independent language 'C' (which is many modern game-author's languages of choice — not mine though!) and this might enable a version to be generated without too much difficulty for RISC OS.

You can find out more about these projects by looking at the *Exile* tribute site (listed below) which has further information on these projects and links to their sites. If you're interested you could even write a word of encouragement to Simon which I'm sure he'd appreciate!

I've made the point to others that it would be nice to see the game return some day to the Acorn/RISC OS platform and it seems that a version written in a language such as C that would appeal also to the larger PC market is the best hope.

Rounding off

Although I think it's not really the convention in columns to summarise the proceedings, in these times where the market is so uncertain I feel it's important to emphasise the positive aspects wherever possible and leave them, as opposed to more negative points, in people's minds. Therefore, it's been a relatively exciting few months with a major release from RCI and developments in other areas.

Various projects are beginning to enter their final stages now and it shouldn't be long before we see a few original releases to complement the high-quality conversions that RComp are producing. With a small number of enthusiastic and dedicated groups and individuals looking to bring new titles or updates to RISC OS, we can be sure that there will continue to be a slow but steady stream of releases for our unique platform.

Contacts

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22 Robert Moffat, High Legh,
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6PS

Tel: 01925 757377

www.rcomp.co.uk

David McEwen

davidm@argonaut.com

Artex Software

www.artexsoft.com

(RCI are UK distributors for Artex games.)

Acorn Arcade

www.acornarcade.com

VOTI

42 Wales Street, Darlington
Co. Durham DL3 0LT

www.visionsoftheimpossible.co.uk

CJE Micros

Tel: 01903 523222

www.cjemicros.co.uk

NetChess

www.netchess.iconbar.com

Exile Tribute

exile.acornarcade.com

Xara X: Is It ArtWorks For Windows?

The old Computer Concepts has re-invented itself as Xara but is still at Gaddesden Place in Hemel Hempstead. It has now, like so many others, abandoned the Acorn world and plunged into the heady Windows PC scene. Famous among Acorn

as a Riscos program. It is intuitive and quick as well as being the only fully anti-aliased vector product I have come across on the PC.

Martin Wuerthner tells me he has been studying Xara X for some time

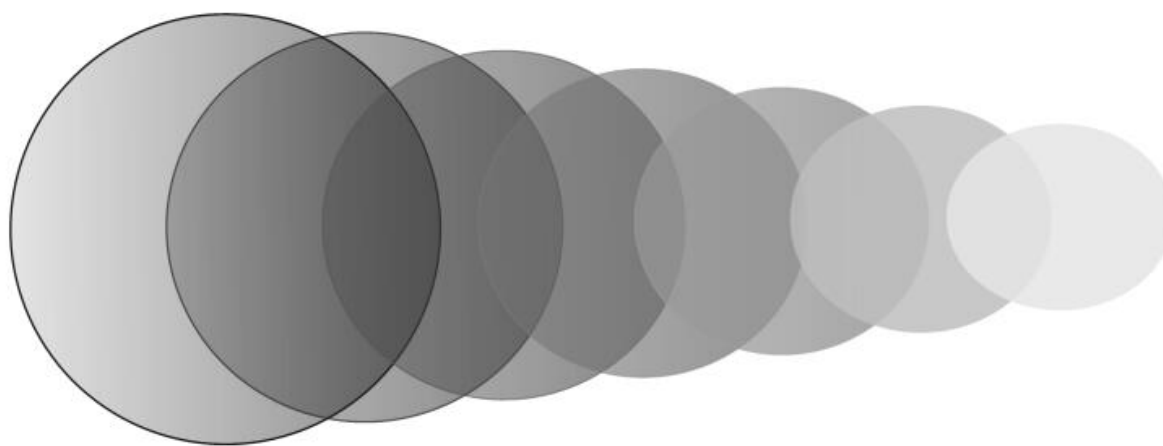
Artist Christopher Jarman weighs up whether ArtWorks enthusiasts should consider the offer of a cheap upgrade to Xara X at the cost of switching to Windows.

enthusiasts for both Impression and Artworks, the company is still throwing us a backward glance now and again. Their clever programmers have ported Artworks across to the PC and called it *Xara X*. But if you are a registered owner of Artworks from way back, you have the opportunity to buy Xara X either for your new PC or your Risc PC card for £49, a good discount from the full price.

The thing is though, that Xara X is not Artworks as we know it, but a very much better and more complex version. It is what we always hoped Artworks would be. It is so good that it acts in Windows just as beautifully

to see if he can get more tips to upgrade his own Artworks Modules. So if he is impressed so will we be. Anyhow I am convinced.

I have been playing about with Xara X for about three weeks now and keep finding more and more options. To begin with the two CDs come with many excellent support videos telling you all about the program and giving a lot of tutorials before your very eyes. These are extremely well done. Like some of you I guess, I have had its predecessor Corel Xara for a while now. I was happy with it, but this new upgrade is considerably better. Pretty well all the actions which Martin's



A simple blend showing graduated transparency

upgrades to Artworks will do, come already as standard in Xara X.

It has infinitely changeable bevels to add to any shapes, hard and soft and transparent shadows; there are tools that can do their own erasing (just hold down the shift key) and menus of astonishing line characteristics. You can draw with footprints, ribbons and dots. Actually, as you are able to design and edit your own there is no limit.

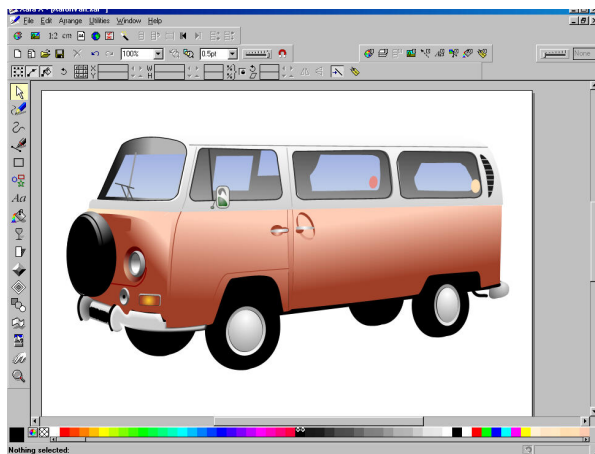
Transparency is a huge feature. This can apply to any object or bitmap and may be graduated or flat, as you wish. Bitmaps can be stretched and bent, Text can be typed onto curved lines and still be edited. Animations can be made from text or from any series of drawings. Vectors may be transformed into bitmaps and bitmaps

traced into vectors almost instantaneously. Readers may have sussed by now that I think this is a great program. It is, in fact the best piece of software I have seen on any platform for many years. It is, in my view another killer app. It could convert the most pro-Acorn curmudgeon to Windows overnight.

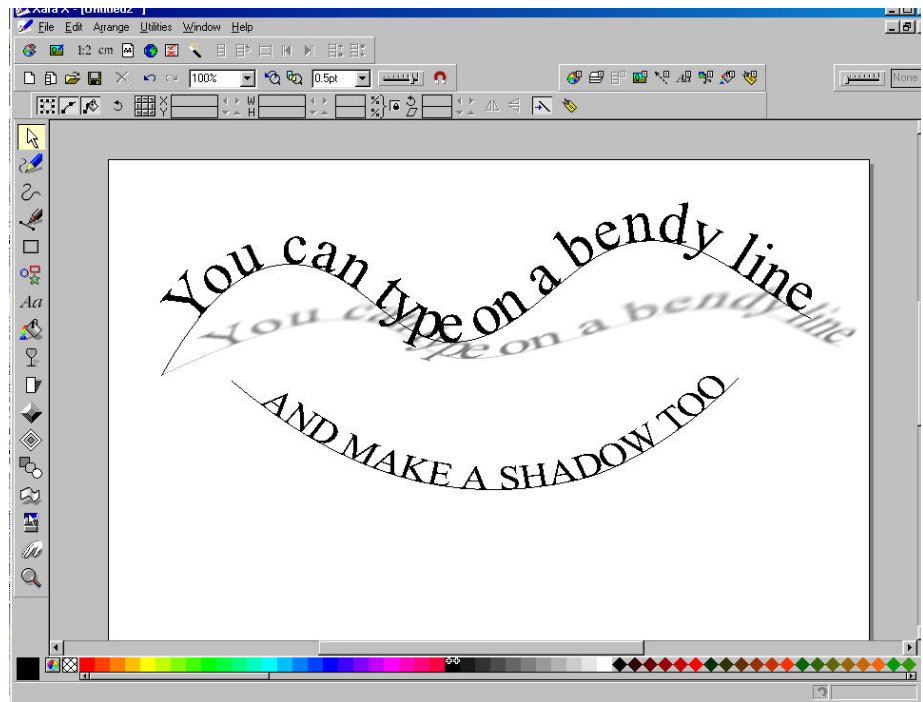
Xara will export as 24 different file types including PNG, JPEG, Adobe Illustrator and of course, Artworks EPS. Artworks on my Risc PC will accept the files happily but will not render the fonts nor transparency. Fonts need to be 'Converted to editable shapes' before they can be read on your RISCOS machine. Xara will in return, accept your Acorn created illustrations if saved as Artworks EPS files too and indeed,

will read them instantly.

At first sight Xara looks very like any other Windows product on the surface. But as soon as you begin to learn it and navigate around the screen, anyone of the Acorn fraternity will recognise the ease and interactive nature of a program that has evolved from our favourite platform. The anti-aliasing itself is enough to make it stand out from all that other jaggy PC art software.



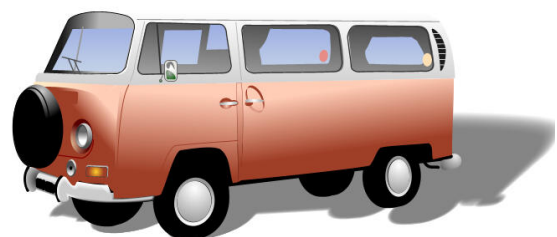
Volkswagen van belonging to Aaron Timbrell drawn in Artworks on a Risc PC and dropped into Xara X on the PC in Windows ME



Editable lettering while placed on curves

I could go on listing all the super features and options but then this would just sound like advertising blurb. It is better to think of how you used to feel after opening your favourite Christmas present. You can't wait to get up next morning to have another play with it.

That's Xara X!



The Volkswagen with the floor shadow tool used

Xara for RISC OS?

The big question now is whether there is any possibility that Xara X could become available for RISC OS machines.

We asked Kate Moir of Xara Ltd:

Q: Is there any chance of a RISC OS version appearing now that the former Acorn market appears to be reviving?

A: I can't pretend there's any chance of that — we're spread very thin already and I think the revival would have to go a very long way before justifying the sort of resources that an update of the scale that ArtWorks would now require. Unfortunately.

RISC OS Alternatives

RISC OS users who don't want to move to Windows PCs still have a choice of some excellent major graphics progrms in Photodesk (see the review on page 8), Vantage (reviewed in Eureka 34) and DrawWorks (reviewed, Eureka 36). -Ed

Xara (Windows only):

Xara Ltd
Gaddesden Place
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP1 6EX
Tel: 01442 350000
Email: sales@xara.com
Web: www.xara.com

Photodesk:

Photodesk Ltd
1 The Courtyard
Southwell Business Park
Portland, Dorset DT5 2NQ
Tel: 01305 822753
Email: sales@photodesk.ltd.uk
Web: www.photodesk.ltd.uk

Vantage:

Cerilica Limited
PO Box 40,
Ross-on-Wye HR9 7WH
Tel: 0870 2411731
Email: cerilica@cerilica.com
Web: www.cerilica.com

DrawWorks:

APDL
39 Knighton Park Road
Sydenham, London SE26 5RN
Tel: 020 8778 2659
Email: sales@apdl.co.uk
Web: www.apdl.co.uk

Gill's Caring Journal

The Chairman of The ARM Club and I are very concerned about you. I know that's something we've always been able to say about certain members of The ARM Club Committee but we're now becoming concerned about the membership. We

Now that's where it gets really tricky. We know that the technology is more flexible, easier to use and crashes far less often. These are all, clearly, good things. Sadly, these are not attributes that the general public seems to look for in an operating system. Oh no.

Gill Smith, who really does worry about you all, advises how you can be a really cool trend setter and suggests a fun way to increase the size of the RISC OS market.

hear rumours of people buying PCs and even running Windows. Now, while we optimistically hope that this is just a ghastly, vicious rumour, with no basis in reality, spread by a certain Mr William Gates, we suspect that there might be some small basis of truth in these reports.

What can The ARM Club do, to stop you having to flock in your droves (how many in a drove? Are there still enough of you to flock?) to the doors of Mr Gates? How can we increase membership and the number of users of ARM-based machines and take on — and of course, defeat — the evil-empire (Microsoft, not Darth Vader!)

They appear to look for the all-important attribute of being-the-same-as-their-friend-has-got. And you thought your kids wanted Nike trainers and Levi jeans because they genuinely thought they were the best?

So, we've worked out *Quality of Product* is not a big sales technique that works. And that's if we mildly gloss over the fact that there aren't an awful lot of ARM-based machines sitting around in warehouses waiting to be shipped anywhere. They do need to start actually producing them. I think that's a pretty vital step, myself. Sadly not one that's been happening much but, in the usual



ARM Club spirit, we remain sceptically optimistic that something will turn up boxed and ready to sell at the Autumn shows.

This still leaves the central problem—increasing the size of the ARM market, getting more people using them and generally, somehow, beating down the forces of Windows, so that a few believers can continue to escape the mark of the beast (the *Intel Inside* sticker, in case you were wondering!)

Nope, not a clue.

But I don't think Peter is going to

accept a journal quite that short, so I'd better get racking my brains (how does someone rack? And to their own brains? Sounds painful!)

Idea 1 is to travel back in time and give Acorn a marketing budget and to go with it, some marketers with a clue. Toby claims this was the only real problem Acorn had, otherwise being utterly great. Sadly, though, although Acorn usually were ahead of their time with technology, they only got as far as digital TV set-top boxes, not TARDISEs, for us to pop back and sort out history. Pity. I think that's a market that really could have taken off. I like the idea of my own personal



police box, travelling through space and time. It'd be so easy to beat the queues at the supermarket! And think of the time you could save commuting! When it's time to be at work, you just pop into your TARDIS and you're there, without any pesky traffic jams, or having to concentrate on your driving early in the morning! Running late? Oh well, set the TARDIS for arriving a bit earlier than you actually leave home. Cool!

But I digress. Anyone with a TARDIS, do let me know, as it's by far the simplest (and of course, not simply the only!) solution I've come up with so far. And if it comes

complete with Tom Baker and K9, well, I always wanted to be Romana. It's good to have a nice, achievable goal in life!

So, would I be right in guessing that time-travel isn't going to save the RISC OS market, at least not until someone's invented it? That was my best shot!

Ah, another solution presents itself. I have to warn you though, it involves you in some work. Yes, *you*. No, the fact that you only get Eureka for the educational stuff isn't a good enough excuse. No, you can't get out of it by claiming you just happened to pick

Eureka up but it really belongs to your wife/neighbour/gerbil.

The plan is this. We've already discussed that people want something because it's cool, not because it's any good. And everyone likes to 'keep up with the Joneses' (sorry to put extra responsibility on those of you called Jones!). Together, we need to make the RISC machine into something so worth coveting, so worth saving up the pocket money for and so utterly cool, that teenagers will refuse to let other teens round to their houses, in case their friends see that Dad is being sooooo uncool and using a PC.

So your mission — should you choose to accept it... no, make that regardless of whether you want to or not —is to go and tell everyone you know all about your ARM machine and how great it is. You have to talk it up. Make it sound even more amazing than it actually is and the in-thing. Tell everyone you know that your machine is much, much cooler than their's, because it's got the right label.

Just think —it won't be long before Camden Market runs a thriving trade in fake 'Acorn' logos to stick to the

front of your far inferior machine. Dodgy Soho street vendors will offer you a cut-price machine, from the back of their van. "All genuine parts" they'll claim but you, as a trend-setter, will know it's not the original and best. You'll have a real one — you were the fashionable sort who knew when they came out that these machines were cooler than a weekend break at the North Pole.

Heading back to reality for just a second (wont be long, I promise!), this does involve somehow persuading the poor, unsuspecting public to throw away their PCs and any peripherals that don't adapt. They need to give up their Windows and their regular excuses that the computer crashed. They have to be convinced to say goodbye to the money spent on the PC, already wasted, as by the time it hit the shelves at *Computer Universe* it was a lot nearer to its first crash.

How do you go out there and make ARM-based computers look just so utterly cool that the rest of the population just can't resist? What do you need to do to make RISC OS this summer's must-have accessory?



"Yo! Homey! If you think that's cool..."

This is one of those moments where the fact that there isn't one anywhere boxed and ready to sell is particularly cool. It maintains the feeling of exclusivity and allows those already owning one to feel suitably smug about being there first. The manufacturers then need to let them trickle onto the market, carefully maintaining the hype. (Subtle hint to manufacturers —that does mean making some!) And, bingo, anyone without a nice little Acorn sticker on the front of their box will be left feeling that they haven't even made it into the dark ages yet, let alone out the other side into 'cool.'

The plan is this. You go into pubs, clubs and bars with your mates... OK, with anyone you know... all right, by yourself, and then tell anyone who'll listen and many people who won't, all about this great new computer system you've heard about.

Make sure that you tell each person one-to-one. Tell them that it's a hot tip and very, very important that they keep it to themselves. Emphasise that you're not really meant to tell them but as a mate, you thought you'd pass the news on.

Once you've made it clear that secrecy should be total, you can be

absolutely sure that the rumour will be passed around faster than a hand grenade without a pin. And that's how a trend starts. Suddenly, everyone will want one. Whether that's a fizzy drink, a brand of jeans, or of training shoes, all you need to do is tell each person that everyone else already wants one but hasn't told them the secret and that person will be rushing out to buy one. Each dashing off to the shops, in a desperate attempt to keep up with the ever changing, bewildering variations of 'fashion' that face us.

There's still a little problem here, isn't there? That's this *talk to people* bit. Not a trait that spods are famous for. I've never had to write a column asking the spods not to chatter so much. At least, they do talk sometimes but I'm betting that the man in the pub doesn't really follow a word of the reasons why each spod uses that particular variety of Linux, nor care about the pros and cons of SMTP versus POP processing of their mail. I'm sorry to break it to you but the general public just want 'it' —be 'it' e-mail or a graphics program—to work and not mess things up too often. Such beautifully simple demands from life!

Face to face

This leaves us needing to somehow train spods in the art of talking like normal human beings. Not in chat rooms, not by e-mail, not on mailing lists. Face to face with other people. And not about technology, until you've convinced the poor unsuspecting individual, or *member of the general public*, as they're known, that you are relatively normal and kinda cool.

Hot tip

Only then, once this perception has been safely built, can the spod reveal this superior knowledge — of fashion, of course —and pass on, 'just between you and me' their hot tip for the next trend in computer buying. But first, before anything else, each spod has to persuade their victim of my cunning marketing approach, that they are cool and in the know about what's trendy and fashionable.

OK, so maybe the TARDIS idea was a bit more realistic!

I'm a bit lacking in other bright ideas here. I mean, there is always emotional blackmail on the family, or even straight forward bribery but I

think that just leaves your Mum and kid brother in the market for a cheap 'Acorn' sticker from Camden Market.

How about threats? No, your typical spod isn't exactly the threatening sort. And besides, who would worry about being beaten up by someone who hasn't been in a gym since they worked out that by word-processing their excuses to get off games lessons, they only needed to forge the parental signature, not their writing on the rest of the letter? And the letter was reusable next week, if you'd picked your ailment carefully enough!

Promises

Hmmm. How about promises? An instantly usable high quality, modern business software suite —totally paperclip free, of course —for the Acorn, available right now? So now we're back to time travel. Or bribery (of users or developers.) Both of which involve an awful lot of money.

Time travel needs some serious research, because it'd be pointless going back a bit too far, or not far enough and after all that work, you'd want a well-protected patent. And bribery, well, once you've started,

you might have to keep going and the sort of numbers of users we're talking about, all the cash subtly handed under the table really starts to add up. And, of course, both options might take quite some time to arrange.

So, assuming you've already spent the last of your hard-earned cash on the Oregon upgrade, or the phone bill from calling Microsoft tech support, what is there left that you can do?

Procreate

It's a long shot but this is the best suggestion I've got left. Procreate. Have kids. I mean, if you can be bothered to get married and convert the wife to Acorn use, so much the better but let's face it, having a child only takes 9 months.

You can have lots of them, too, sometimes even more than one at the same time, whereas, legally, you're only allowed one wife at once. Of course, you could opt for trying to convert each wife to ARM machines, to then leave her pregnant with a new spod and move on to the next conversion, if that's your style but there are some difficulties with that.



*Come on darling! Let's increase the market
Share for ARM Technologies*

Advantages, however, are that you, as the stereotypical geeky male spod, don't have a lot to do with the process for most of the time, leaving you with nine months to wire in baby's own SCSI hard-drive and be ready to teach it the best computer system in the world.

Please be gentle though —give baby a day or two to have stopped blinking at the world before you expect them

to be ready for the finer points of TechWriter.

If each spod managed just one a year and if those future spods all managed to join in —once they've reached the age of sixteen, of course —then eventually, the RISC OS platform would rival the evil empire's! It's a long term plan but it could work!

No? Back to the TARDIS theory then.

Paradise Graphics Tablet

At every RISC OS show, I manage to escape from The ARM Club stand to do a bit of looking around but in the rush it always seems to slip my mind what to buy. Not that there is a lot left that I can fit inside or plug into my three-slice Risc PC!

On the stand he had a range of graphics tablets; the usual stand alone ones and even one built into a keyboard. On having a try I instantly got the hang of drawing with it. This quite surprised me, because every time I'd used one before I'd fallen in

David Ruck makes up for the chances he's missed in the past when he suddenly gets the hang of using a graphics tablet and finally adds one to his Risc PC.

However one thing that I'd considered for some time, because I do a lot of graphics work, was an alternative to pushing the mouse around when drawing.

I used to wander past the Eesox stand and try out their graphics tablet but never quite got the hang of using the pen in the few minutes before someone else wanted a go. So I never did make the purchase. Now that Eesox have left the market I quite regretted not having one, so I was quite surprised when Ian Jeffray of Paradise shouted out "Like a graphics tablet?" as I walked past his stand.

to the mouse user's hang up, that is when the pen got near the edge of the pad, lifting it up and putting it down again in the middle (as you do with the mouse near the edge of the mat). This of course doesn't work with a tablet, as the area of the pad corresponds to the screen exactly, rather than the relative movement of the mouse.

This convinced me I should try it but my only other worry is that these plug into the serial port and my modem already occupies that port. However, I was soon convinced to get a serial port switcher box from Stuart Tyrrel Developments to save having to swap



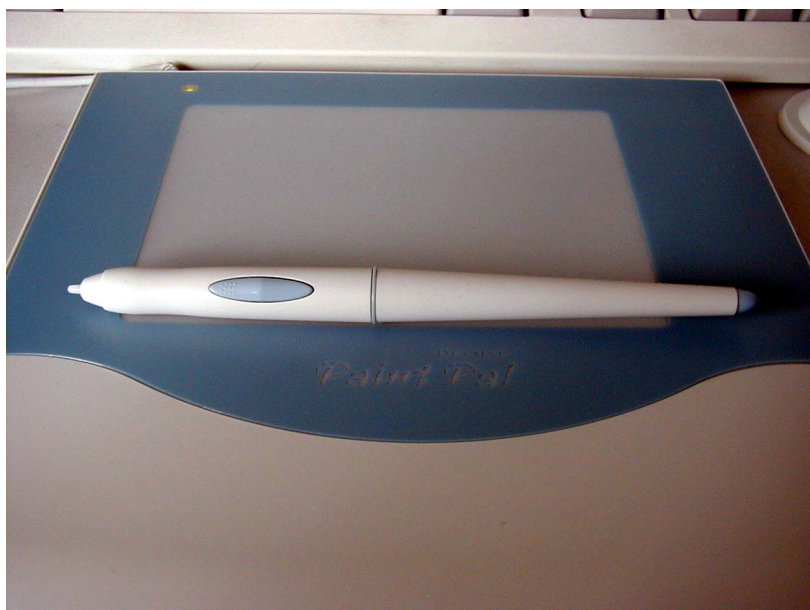
The tablet and stylus holder in front of the keyboard

cables. If you do have room in your machine for additional serial port modules, the pad will support them too.

On getting the tablet home, I proceeded to install it. The pad has a single wire that splits into a PS2 keyboard connector, with a keyboard socket and a serial lead. You plug the tablet into the keyboard socket, which gives it power, plug the keyboard into its socket and the serial lead into the

serial port or your switcher box. The tablet itself is the size of two thirds of an A4 sheet of paper and only 1cm thick, so it sits nicely in front of the keyboard without affecting typing (*see above*).

The active area of the pad is quite small, only approximately A6 size but is very sensitive, allowing every pixel of a 1600x1200 screen to be addressed. In fact the hardware provides 5000x3750 pixels which is



The stylus showing the dual action side button

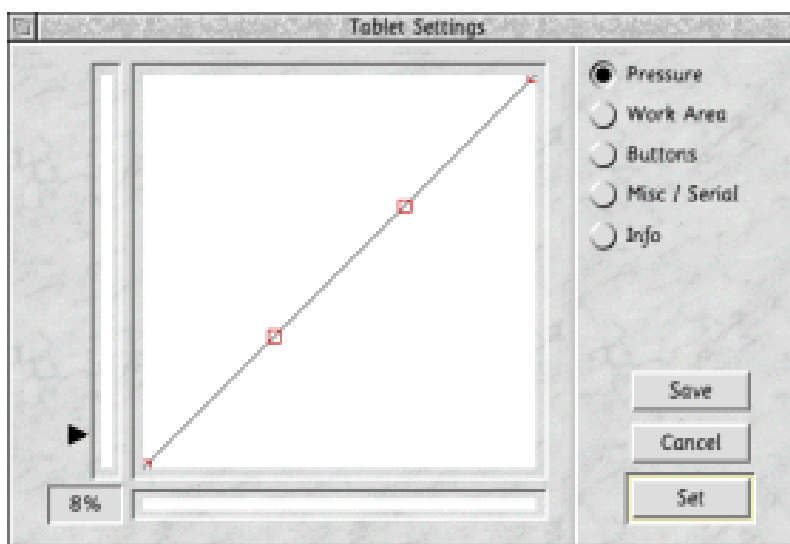
plenty even for future machines. The stylus is cordless with a pressure sensitive tip and, importantly for RISC OS users, two buttons on the side. Well actually it's only really one button but is on a rocker with the lower half acting as menu and the upper as adjust.

The software consists of three programs on one floppy disc (a separate floppy with drivers for Windows PCs is also included). !Tablet is the main driver program which is run when you want to use the tablet and

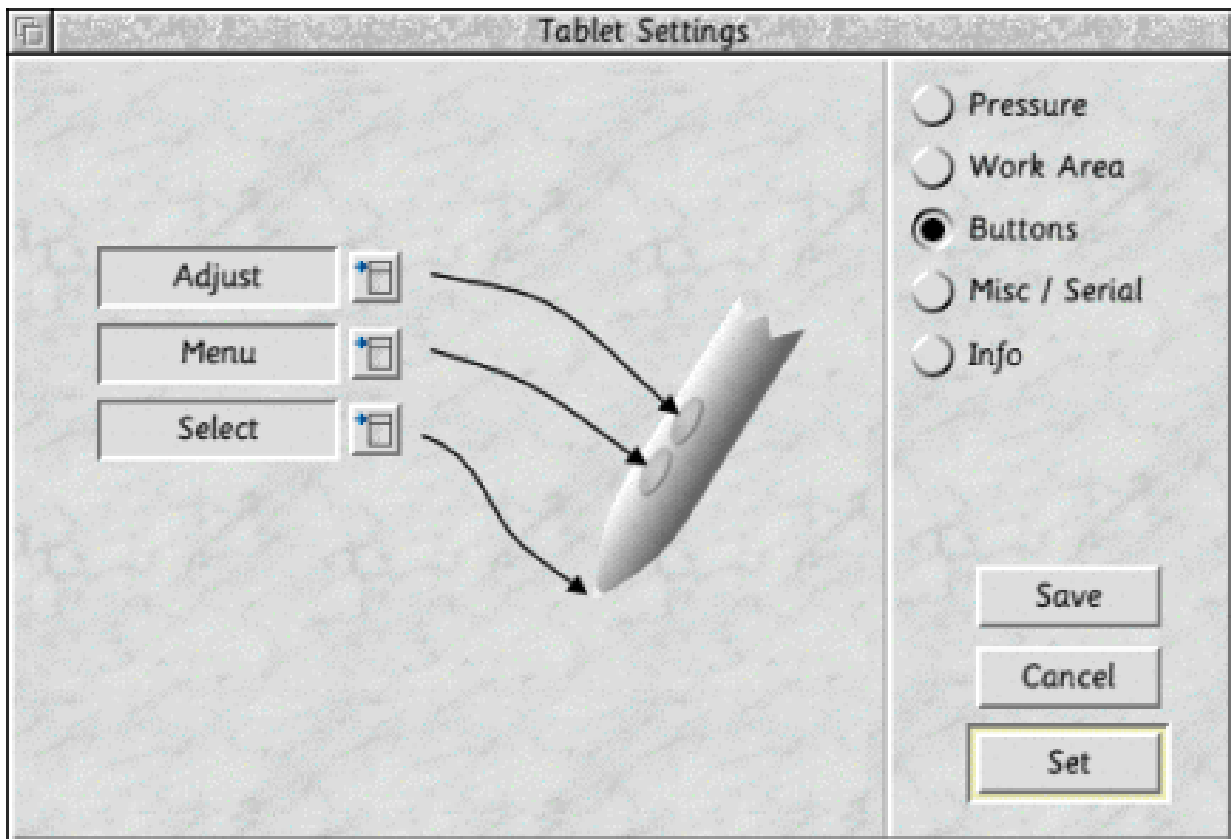
also provides the means of setting it up. It can be used out of the box but there are options to set the working area of the tablet to ensure that the edges of the screen can be reached, the pressure sensitivity button mapping, serial port settings and driver emulation details. The driver emulates the Eesox drivers, so any programs that work with their tablets

should be OK with the Paradise one.

The pressure sensitivity curve can be edited to adjust the amount of pressure needed to produce the maximum response. By dragging the



The pressure sensitivity curve setup window



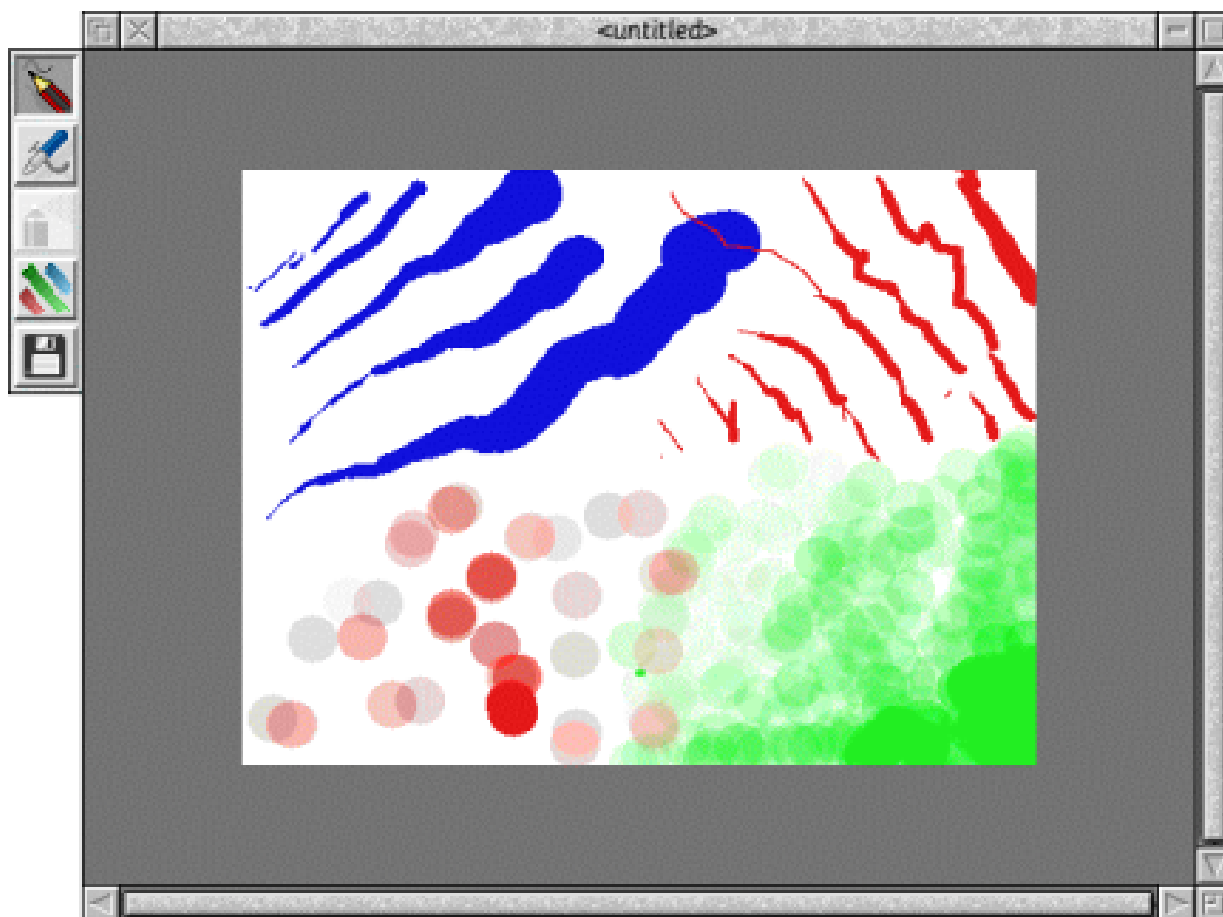
The !Tablet stylus button mapping window

bezier curve you can set it to react in a hard or soft manner. You can also set the level of pressure which is required to act as a select click on normal desktop buttons. I found I need it a bit higher than the default to avoid accidental clicking.

The button set-up allows you to choose which of the tip and two buttons correspond to select, menu and adjust buttons on the mouse. The program allows you to easily enable and disable the driver, so that the serial port can be switched over for

use by the modem, although I found on occasions I needed to reload the driver before I could use the tablet again.

The other two programs consist of !Scrawl and !Strokes. !Scrawl is a simple drawing program that demonstrates the pressure sensitivity of the tip by drawing either lines whose width is proportional to the pressure, or circles with density proportional to the pressure. It is a good way to test that your set-up is working and to help tune the pressure



Random scrawlings in !Scrawl, showing variable line width and circle densities drawn using different pressures on the stylus

sensitivity. The other program !Strokes is a pseudo handwriting recognition program. It won't accept normal hand written letters but will convert letter like strokes into characters which are typed into whatever program currently has the input focus.

It's amusing but not practical for entering more than a few letters.

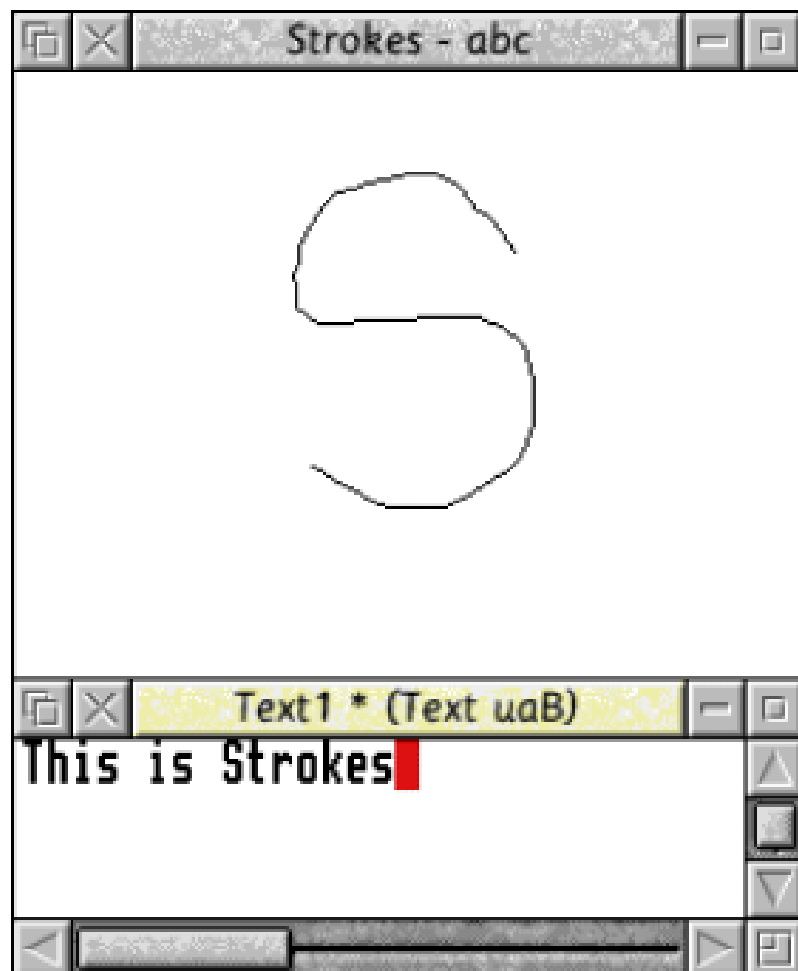
Starting to use the tablet, it is quite strange controlling the desktop. As the stylus is lowered towards the pad, it is picked up about a centimetre away and the mouse leaps to the part of the screen corresponding to where it is over and it can be moved around without making contact. Buttons can be pressed by touching the stylus against the surface and applying a small amount of pressure. Double clicks and drags can be achieved

easily and after a while it becomes very natural to use, although without more practice the mouse is still quicker for moving windows and dragging and dropping.

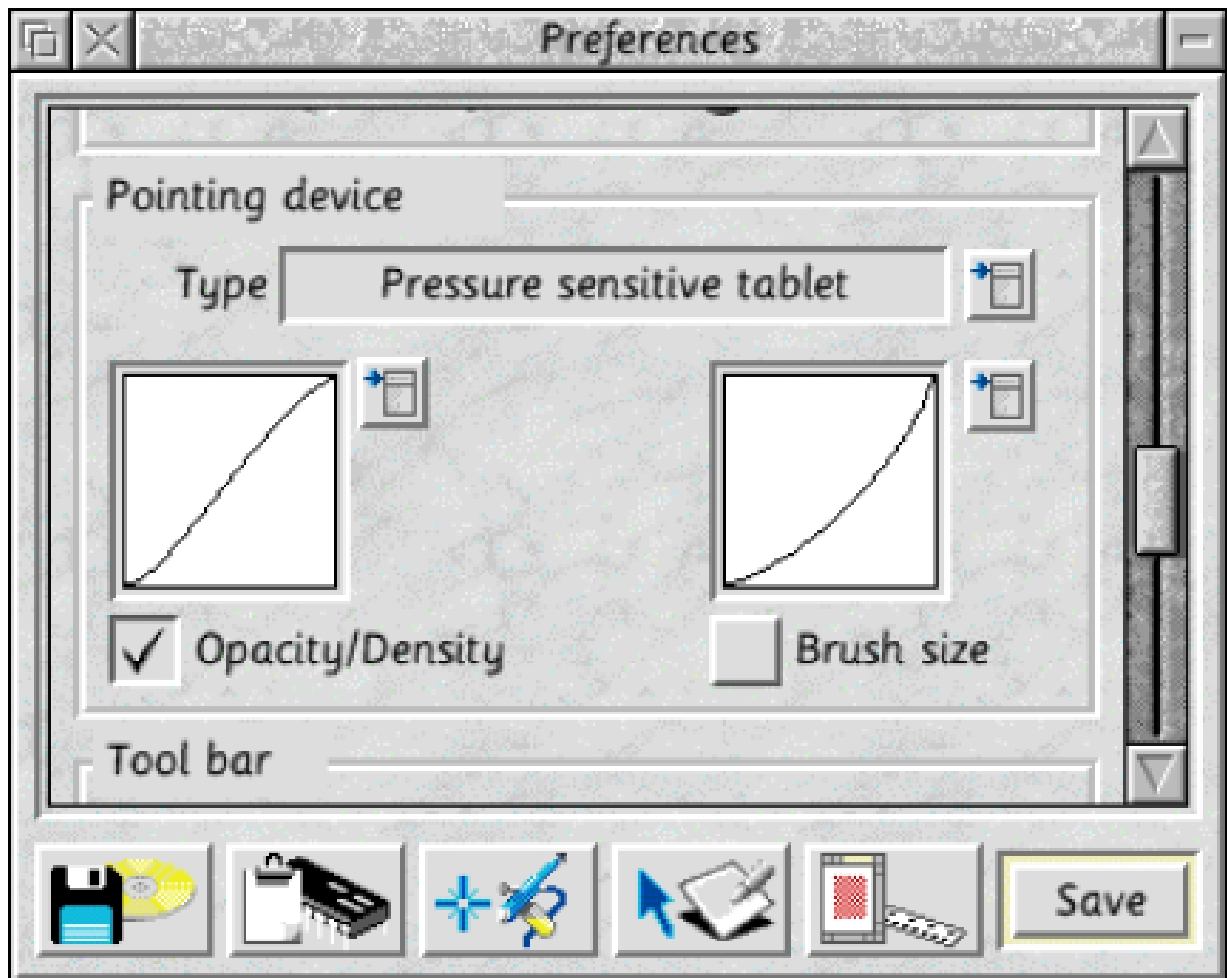
You do need to hold the stylus slightly more vertically than you may normally hold a pen, as otherwise the menu and adjust buttons may not be picked up especially near the edge of the work area (the cordless system works by induction which requires the pen in a fairly upright position).

The first program I tested the tablet out on was Photodesk and I had difficulties at first. While working on the desktop and toolbar it didn't seem to do anything in the image area but then I looked in the preferences (*see next page*) and found the pointing device was set to *mouse*, rather than pressure sensitive tablet. After setting this it worked like a treat, allowing far

quicker and more natural use, not only for free hand drawing but also for tasks requiring both accurate and repetitive movements such as cloning. There are two main advantages over the mouse: you are not dragging a large object around but using a light pen which is much less tiring and also that there is no inaccuracy due to the mouse slipping so much less need to undo mistakes.



*Entering text in to a Zap window by writing with
!Strokes (about two minutes' work!)*



The pointing devices section of the Photodesk preferences window

Photodesk allows the pressure to be used in two ways: to make the effect stronger (e.g. more dense airbrush) and to make the brush bigger. One type or both of them can be used together and the curves can be edited to alter how much force is needed on each effect. For instance, you can set it up so light pressure alters the strength and then heavy pressure makes the brush larger. I found I preferred just strength setting and to

choose the brush size manually as this allows you to subtly shade areas with better control over the area effected.

There are a couple of problems using Photodesk, which I am discussing with Paradise and Photodesk and which will hopefully be addressed in later versions of the driver and application. Firstly the use of adjust does not undo the action of the airbrush and pen tools, meaning you

have to go back to the mouse. It would be good if the adjust button could toggle the tip between *do* and *undo*, allowing a pressure sensitive undo. A bit of an oddity is that clicking on the unsharp mask effect apply button always causes the effect to be applied twice. If using a light sharpen you may not notice this but with stronger parameters it results in the effect being overdone. I've found that instead of swapping back to the mouse, putting the cursor in a writable field with the stylus and then pressing return is the easiest way to get round it.

When using the tablet, some operations involving clicks and key presses don't work, such as holding CTRL when clicking on the close icon of a window to remove the image from Photodesk's memory. However pressing CTRL+F2 also performs this operation.

The most serious gripe for me though is setting the sample area for cloning to pixel precision as, unlike all other operations, Photodesk only sets the position on the button release rather than the button click. When using the stylus it is much more difficult to lift

the pen and keep it on the same pixel than it is to press it down. This could be solved by a simple change in Photodesk but until then if you need pixel perfect placement, the mouse needs to be used. Despite these problems, it is still more productive to use the tablet when doing any drawing or touching up that requires fine movement.

The tablet can also be used for vector programs such as !Draw, !ArtWorks and !Vantage. The benefits are not as great with these, as you tend not to do painting strokes or free hand drawing. ArtWorks and Vantage do offer free hand tools, although I've never found them very useful when using the mouse but the tablet does seem to make them easier. The main advantage of the tablet in these programs is to be able to move the pointer rapidly to the exact point on the screen to edit control points or drop an object, with greater accuracy than the mouse and without wearing the mouse mat down to dust.

There is a drawback (oops pun!) to using the tablet, that is it is not as easy to pop up menus and use adjust clicks. These tend to be far more common in

vector programs when editing and selecting attributes than in bitmap ones that are more toolbar based. The reason is that when I am holding the stylus conformably, my thumb is not in quite the right place to work the buttons. Shifting your thumb tends to move the pointer as the stylus is hovering above the pad. However, reducing the select click sensitivity of the nib allows contact to be kept with the pad without making a click, which makes this operation easier.

The only current use for pressure sensitivity is the ArtWorks tool from Eesox that can vary the width of lines as they are drawn. But I don't have it, so I was not able to test if this feature worked with the Paradise tablet.

Late one night while reading long documents, I found myself being allured by the stylus sitting in its neat holder and decided to have a play with it. At this stage, when very tired, having to keep an arm outstretched to the mouse or hit a *Page Down* key is strain-inducing in both your arm and figures but using the pen was a revelation. You can keep your arm almost folded in front of you in a natural way holding the pen like

stylus and just use a gentle tap to move down a screen full. If you need to drag things around, far smaller movements are required than a mouse. It would be useful for reading web pages too but unfortunately having only one serial port means I can't use it online.

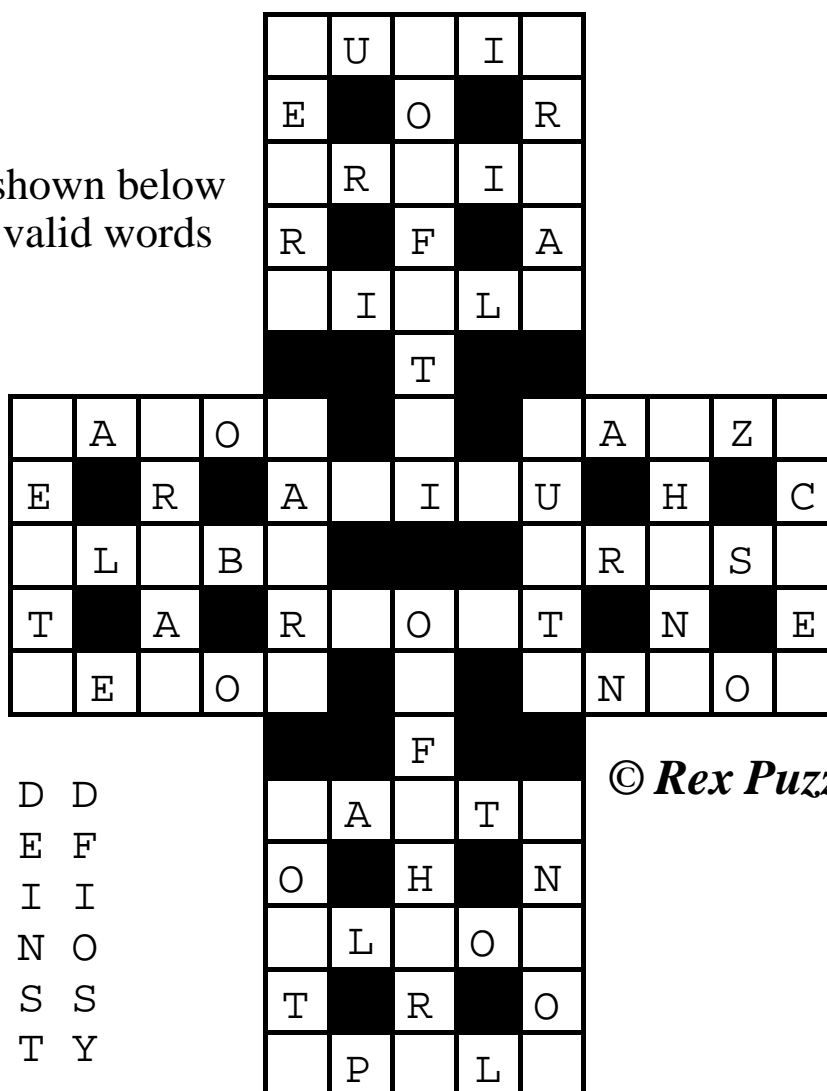
In summary, the tablet works very well and is a useful alternative to the mouse for creative work, but with a few niggles in Photodesk that either send you back to the mouse or keyboard. Hopefully, with a few minor changes in future versions, this will not be necessary and the pen will truly be mightier than the mouse (groan).

Paradise Paint Pad Deluxe
Price: £50 including VAT
Supplier: Paradise Group
38 Marlborough Drive
Sydenham
Leamington Spa
Warks CV31 1GD
Tel: 01962 315 907
Email: tablet@paradise.net
Web: www.paradise-uk.net/

DOUBLECROSS 2

By Roger King

Place the 42 letters shown below into the grid to make valid words



© Rex Puzzles

A B B C D D D
E E E E E F
F F G H I I I
L L M N N N O
O O O R R S S
S T T T T Y

Check your answers on page 65

At Home With The Spods

I have, in the words of many, a wide ranging and eclectic collection of computers around the house. Some would consider this worrying but as my wife, Gill, points out it's "quaint" and "very you", though I'm not sure if that's a compliment.

Debian Linux box which does most of the network administration. It's quite an old piece of kit (Pentium 120, 80M RAM, 2G HD) and would struggle at even the basic Windows tasks but, under Linux, runs quite fine at more complicated things. It runs the

What sort of computer equipment have you got at home and what do you do with it? Toby Smith reveals all, in the first of a new series, and you are invited to do the same.

To start I have my trusty Risc PC. Originally one of the first 700 units, it's now got a StrongARM chip and more memory and a few more hard discs.

Love Messenger

This gets used for the brunt of my computing at home, most of which is running through emails with Messenger and Newsbase. I truly love Messenger — it has features I've never found on any other mainstream mail package. The threading display is marvellous, as is quote colouring.

I have a small house network (10baseT) which concentrates into a

network services (DHCP, samba file sharing, network printer, DNS, Mail SmartHost).

Internet connection

The house has a permanent microwave internet connection, courtesy of Reading company *Tele2*, so the Linux box acts as the bridge between this, firewalling connections in and out for protection and providing NAT translation for the house network (so an entire network can 'hide' behind one upstream connection)

Additionally there's a PC clone box running Windows 2000 for the odd

game and tasks I can't do on the other machines. I do a degree of working from home, so direct access to applications like Word, Excel, Project and assorted coding tools, however irritating they may be, is necessary. It's also got a flatbed scanner attached and connects to our digital camera.

All the above live in what should be called my study but generally gets referred to as *The Server Room* due to

the domination of hardware. All three units share one keyboard and 17" monitor courtesy of a powered KVM (keyboard, video, mouse) switch — expensive but worth it for the space saving. There's a general loud hum of electronics.

And there's a spare Phoebe case in the corner, into which the Risc PC innards will go, one day.



A Phoebe case, waiting to be fitted with the innards of the Risc PC

Many people ask how on earth I manage to get away with so much, yet still maintain a spouse (one of those things that distracts you from computing and can't see the point in spending all that money on it).

I find it fairly easy — have friends who are worse and invite them round to go on about their stuff...

Gill

Additionally, Gill has a laptop in her study. As you'll know from *Gill's Journal*, she is a professional writer, working mainly from home, so this assists me in justifying such things as the internet connection and a decent laser printer.

It also means things have to work, not spend days broken but that adds some fun to the operation.

I'd say the majority of the computing I do at home these days is based around reading email. This is partly due to spending all day working on computers (I'm involved in dot com work) so it's nice to have a break when I get home and partly due to the volume of email I get. Some of it is personal but a lot is related to Club activities and things like the RISC OS

shows. I do occasionally knock up documents in TechWriter, a package I grew to like early on and grew to love while writing several Master's Theses.

For people who can think in a structured manner (and at heart I'm a scientist) TechWriter's ability to deal with documents in a structured manner is a marvel and trivial to pick up.

Web surfing

Beyond that, I web surf using a collection of Oregano and occasionally Browse, sometimes reverting to the PC for sites that won't work with either of those (which are comparatively few) and I also play around with bits of drawing layouts in !Draw (again, one of the unsung hero applications of RISC OS).

So, how many machines have you got and what do you do with it or them? Even if it's just one old, or newer, Acorn we would be very interested to find out.

Send The Editor an email (or a letter to the Club's usual address) and let us know.

Odd Odes 2

The Friendly One

**I have a new computer
And Acorn is its name
There are some things that differ.
While others stay the same.**

**This is my third 'new' model
And passed on by our son.
It gives me lots of pleasure
When daily chores are done.**

**I edited a magazine
With style in many ways.
Our son was then my helpmate
They were such happy days.**

**I love my dear old Acorn
So friendly and a mate.
It cheers up my retirement
And keeps me up to date.**

By Mildred Knox



*Got something you can say in verse about RISC OS computers
or computing? If so, send it to The Editor by email to
eureka@armclub.org.uk or by post to the Club's usual
address on page 80.*

Hard Disc Companion 2

Back in the mists of time (ie a date which I can't remember — actually it was 1991), RISC Developments launched a package called Hard Disc Companion. In those days when a 40MB hard disc appeared large (I recently bought a

differential backup backs up all files added or modified since the last full backup.

MS-DOS partitions can be backed up as a single file or as separate files. Backup media is not restricted to

Simon Burrows reviews the updated version of this long established backup tool, which first appeared when floppy discs were the standard storage medium.

70GB disc!), the idea of Hard Disc Companion was that it allowed cautious RISC OS users to back up their entire hard discs, or part thereof, onto large quantities of floppy discs.

Version 2.61 is now available from David Holden of APDL, offering full, incremental and differential backups with user selectable levels of compression and the option to include or exclude particular files, directories and filetypes from the backup.

A full backup backs up all the files on the source device, an incremental backup backs up all files added or modified since the last backup and a

floppy discs — other hard discs, network drives and removable drives can all be used in addition to good old floppies.

An application called *!Restore* is written to the destination disc(s) allowing the files to be restored onto the original or different media.

The new version has a number of features not included in version 1. Most importantly for many users is support for long filenames (RISC OS 4) and F+ format discs and for unlimited backup sizes (previous versions had a 2Gb limit on the size of a backup).

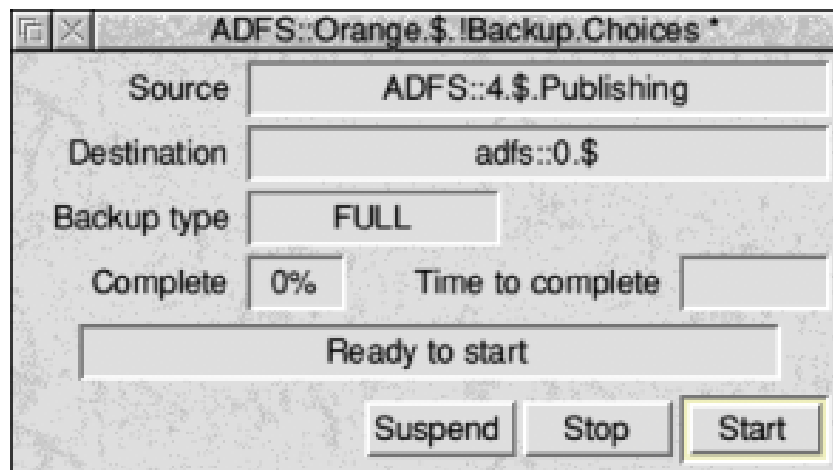
Log file construction is several times faster and Hard Disc Companion will request the first disc before building the log file, so that you can leave the backup to proceed automatically. Unattended operation has been improved, if a backup encounters a

problem —e.g. it can't backup a certain file because it's being used by another application -- then it will prompt the user and if there's no response, the problem will be listed in a text window and the backup will continue.

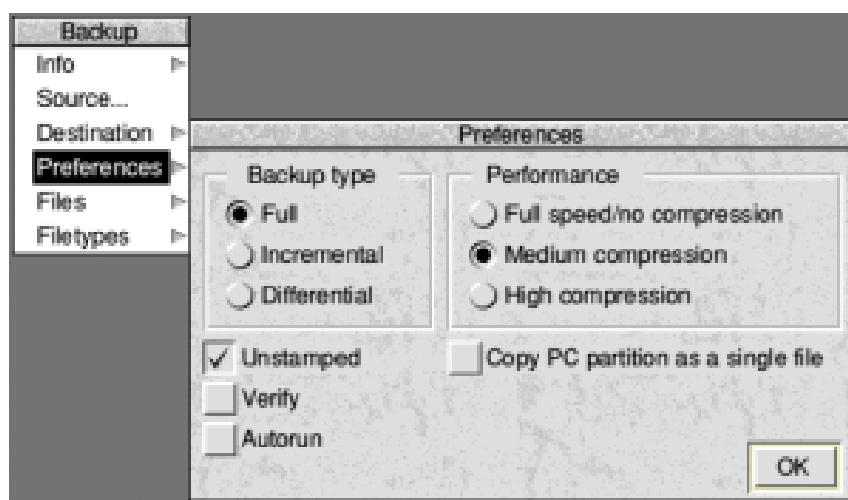
As already mentioned, handling of PC partitions has been improved. The Restore application written to each floppy disc will now create a partition to hold the PC files being restored, so that name truncation and large directory problems do not occur. Individual files within

a PC partition can now be backed up individually. Comments can also be added to entries in the backup history. The Restore application's appearance has been updated to match recent versions of the Filer (as supplied with RISC OS 3.5 or later)

Backup provides a 'Copy PC partition



The main Backup control window



The Preferences window contains the main configuration options



The Backup and Restore applications

as a single file' option. If this is ticked, the whole partition (including all unused space within the partition) will be included in the backup. This has the advantage of producing an exact copy of the original partition after it has been restored. If the option is not ticked, the files inside the partition will be backed up individually and you will be able to restore single files from the backup. When restoring the whole partition, Restore will recreate a partition of the correct size, but it will not be bootable, and you will have to make it bootable manually.

Finally for improved features, removable drives can be used such as SyQuest, SparQ, ZIP etc. for backups that extend across more than one cartridge. Large files can also be split.

In use, Hard Disc Companion is easy to use and keeps the user informed of the status of the backup. Restoring

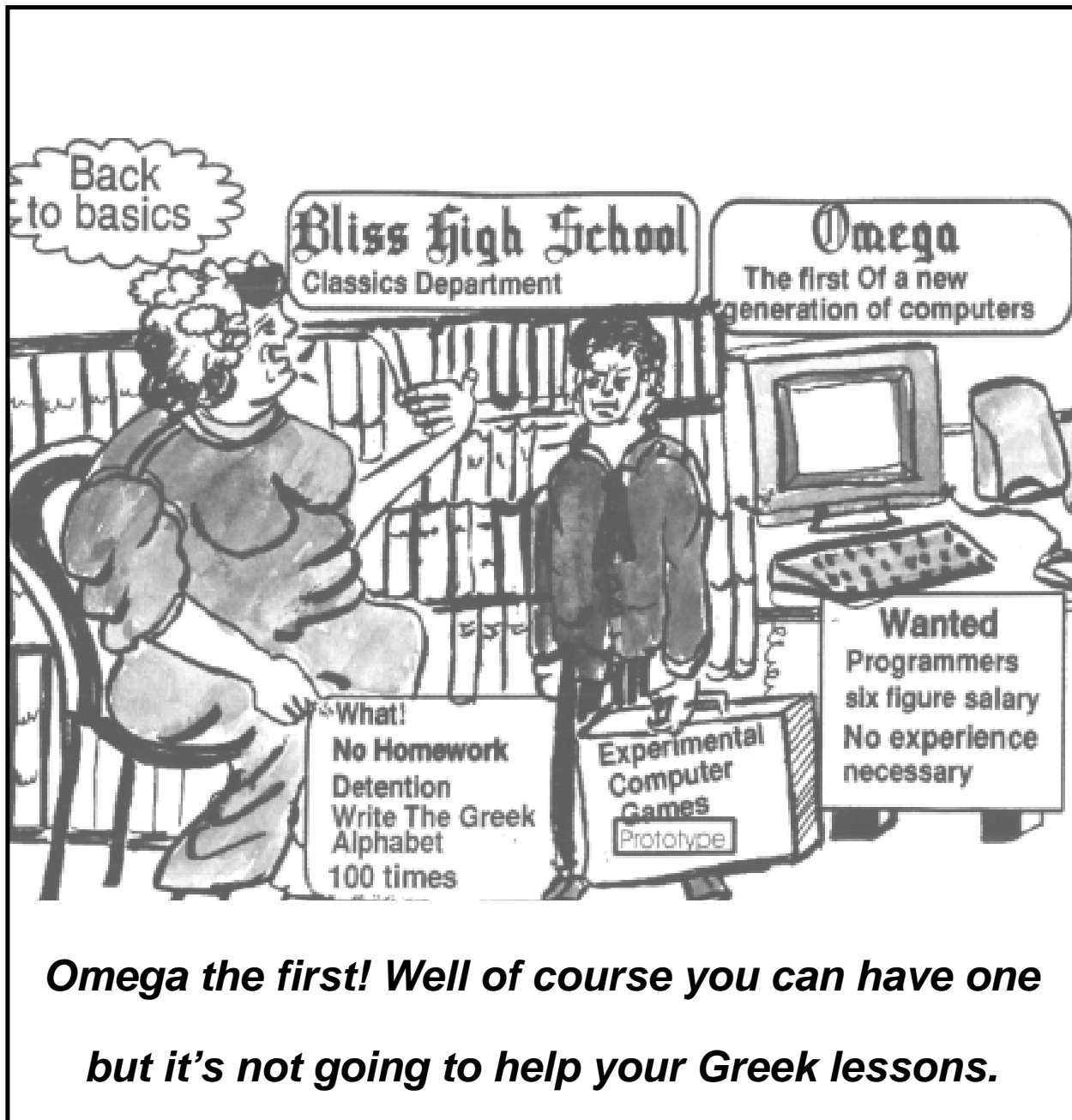
backups is also straightforward. There's not a lot more to say than it does the job it sets out to do, without lots of bells and whistles which would be expected of the equivalent application for a PC (which would never be used).

Overall, Hard Disc Companion 2 is a useful tool if you feel the need to backup your hard disc on a regular basis. I would like to see an automatic scheduling function provided, although realise that this is not essential.

Hard Disc Companion 2 is good value, particularly compared with the cost and hassle of losing your data through lack of recent backups...

Hard Disc Companion
Price: £14.95 inc VAT and postage
Upgrade: £7 (return original disc)
Supplier: ADPL
39 Knighton Park Road
Sydenham
London SE26 5RN
Tel: 020 8778 2659
Fax: 020 8488 0487
Web: www.apdl.co.uk

Meet the Omegus family...



...The first in a new series by our cartoonist Jan Pearce

LoadMaster

LoadMaster from Warm Silence Software is a download management tool; something which has been common on Windows platforms for some time but which I hadn't seen for RISC OS before, so I was interested to take a look at this and see what it could do.

application and a directory of text files as documentation, although this is barely needed as the program is simplicity itself to use. Just start the application and click on the icon to bring up the status window, then enter a URL in the writable icon to add it to the list of items to fetch. A save box

Download management comes to the RISC OS scene and our Webmaster, Tom Hughes, checks out what it can do to make fetching files easier.

The idea behind programs like this to make downloading from the internet easier by increasing the level of automation. You can give the program a list of files to download and it will fetch them one (or more) at a time until they have all been retrieved. It will also cope with aborted downloads by restarting them automatically from the point where the previous download left off so that you don't have to start from the beginning again; something which browsers are not generally capable of doing.

LoadMaster comes on a single floppy containing the !LoadMastr

will appear to allow you to choose where to save the file and the fetch will then commence.

You can also add items to the list of files to fetch using the save URL feature in your browser and dragging the file to LoadMaster. Both ANT URL files and Acorn URL files are accepted as are simple text files containing a URL.

By default, LoadMaster will only fetch one file at a time although you can change this from the options window. You can also use the options window to set it up to use a proxy but



this is normally inadvisable as proxies are not generally able to restart downloads in the middle.

I only found one small bug while using LoadMaster: if you try to save the options before you have started any downloads it will fail with an error. Something else that might be an issue for some people is that it seems to slow the desktop down to a crawl if you download over a high bandwidth link. It was fine over a modem connection but very bad when downloading from a machine on my local network. It is possible that ADSL and cable modem connections might produce problems here due to their higher bandwidth.

My biggest concern about the product is ease of use. Because it is independent of the browser, adding a URL from a web page to the download list is slow and clumsy. Maybe the browser manufacturers would like to consider supporting a

more integrated approach here — the LoadMaster API is fully documented in the documents that accompany the software after all.

Finally, I would like to close by suggesting to the authors that sending bill@microsoft.com as the default user identity when downloading from an ftp site is not big or clever in the slightest and should be changed as soon as possible as it reflects badly on the mentality of the Acorn using community.

LoadMaster

Price: £20 + VAT (£23.50)

Supplier: Warm Silence Software Ltd

PO Box 28

Woodstock

Oxfordshire

OX20 1XX

Tel: 0585 487642

Tel/Fax: 01608 737172

Email: info@wss.co.uk

Web: www.wss.co.uk

Questions And Answers

Dead hard disc

Question:

Prior to purchasing a RiscPC I had for a few years an A3000 RO3.1 (Now 11 years old). I passed this on to a colleague to try to get him interested in RiscOS.

rebooting, I managed to make that drive inactive as well.

I've tried things such as **mount IDE:4* but it doesn't seem to like that command.

A couple of the varied queries and problems read and directly answered to the enquirer by the members of our Technical Help Team, co-ordinated by David Ruck

It has a hard disc (partitioned into two) I think connected to an old Ian Copestake IDE interface. (This is a replacement for the original hard disc). He informed me today that he couldn't access some of the progs on the disc, so I went along to investigate.

On switching the machine on I found that only one of the drives (named IDE:5) was active. IDE:4 (the one with the !Boot file and most of the progs) was there, but greyed out and inaccessible.

Stupidly (probably) I tried to create a !Boot file on the active drive and, on

I have the original Ian Copestake Hard Disc Programmes on floppy but nothing there seems relevant. How can I re-activate the drives?

Gerald Cobbe

Answer:

You could try checking the disc with the free read-only copy of DiscKnight from www.armclub.org.uk/products/disknight/ This should report any problems with the formatting of the discs, which can cause the icons to be greyed out on some filing systems.

However as it's a RISC OS 3.1 machine with no !Boot available you

will not be able to run the front end of DiscKnight as it needs recent toolbox modules which are not in ROM on that machine. However you can run it from the command line. Make sure that !DiscKnight has been seen by the machine, then press F12 and type:-

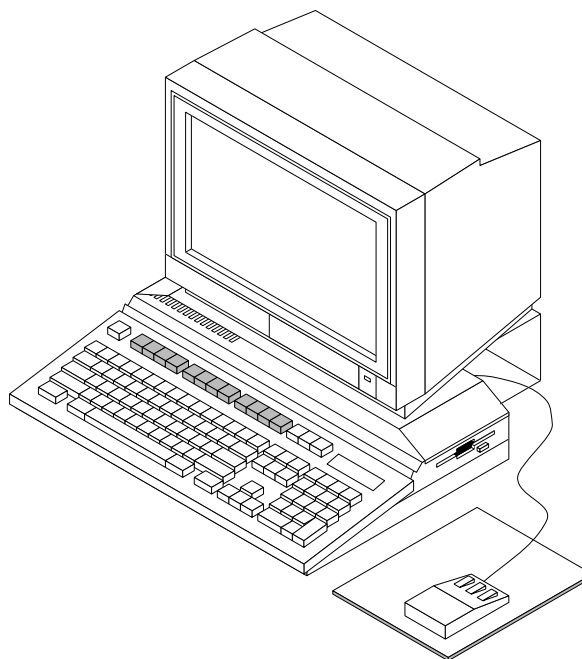
```
*DiscKnight <filing system>  
<disc number>
```

In your case this will be

```
*DiscKnight IDEFS 4 and
```

```
*DiscKnight IDEFS 5
```

If you need any advice on the meaning of the output produced,



instead of pressing F12, load !Edit and press Ctrl+F12 and run DiscKnight in the resulting window.

You can then save the contents of the window and email it to David Ruck.

Code query

Question:

I'm wondering if you could help me with a section of assembler I'm trying to figure out?

```
.loop  ADDS R2,R2,R2  
        ADCS R1,R1,R1           ;increases by 1 each time?  
        CMP  R1,R3  
        SUBGE R1,R1,R3  
        ADDGE R2,R2,#1  
        SUB  R0,R0,#1  
        CMP  R0,#0  
        BNE  loop
```

Andrew Weston

Answer:

Try this:

```
; Assembler:-
;
; Entry: a1 = dividend
;   a2 = divisor
;
; Exit: a1 = quotient
;   a2 = remainder
;   a3 = corrupted
;   a4 = corrupted
;
.division
    MOV    a4,a2                ; put the divisor in a4
    CMP    a4,a1,LSR#1          ; then double it until
.div1 MOVLS a4,a4,LSL#1          ; 2 * a4 divisor
    CMP    a4,a1,LSR#1
    BLS    div1
    MOV    a3,#0                ; Initialise the quotient
.div2 CMP    a1,a4                ; can we subtract a4
    SUBCS  a1,a1,a4              ; if we can, do so
    ADC    a3,a3,a3              ; double quotient and add new bit
    MOV    a4,a4,LSR#1          ; halve a4
    CMP    a4,a2                ; and loop until we have done
    BHS    div2
    MOV    a2,a1                ; move remainder to a1
    MOV    a1,a3                ; move quotient to a1
    MOVS   pc,lr
```

You can email, post or fax your problem to the Club's Technical Help Service or, if urgent, telephone 07010 708098 (a higher rate mobile phone).

DOUBLECROSS

The Solution

*The puzzle is
on page 51*

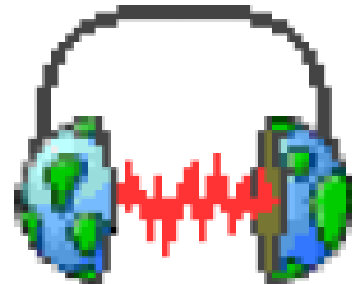
				L	U	C	I	D				
				E		O		R				
				E	R	N	I	E				
				R		F		A				
				Y	I	E	L	D				
						T						
N	A	B	O	B		T		M	A	T	Z	O
E		R		A	D	I	E	U		H		C
A	L	I	B	I				F	R	O	S	T
T		A		R	O	O	S	T		N		E
H	E	R	O	N		F		I	N	G	O	T
						F						
				T	A	S	T	E				
				O		H		N				
				F	L	O	O	R				
				T		R		O				
				S	P	E	L	L				

© *Rex Puzzles*

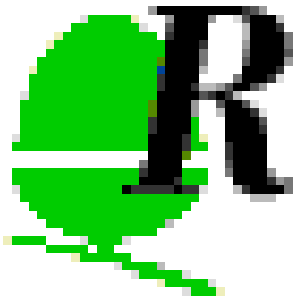
Web Sound Plugin

The Web Sound plugin from Warm Silence Software works with Browsers supporting the Acorn plugin protocol to provide support for sound embedded in web pages.

Oregano and it appears to work correctly with all of them.



Tom Hughes hears more on the Web with the new software that allows you to listen to some of the embedded sounds you've never heard before



Installing the software is relatively simple: just install the supplied Replay resources folder (or replace your existing one) and the !SoundPI application in your !Boot.Resources directory, and away you go.

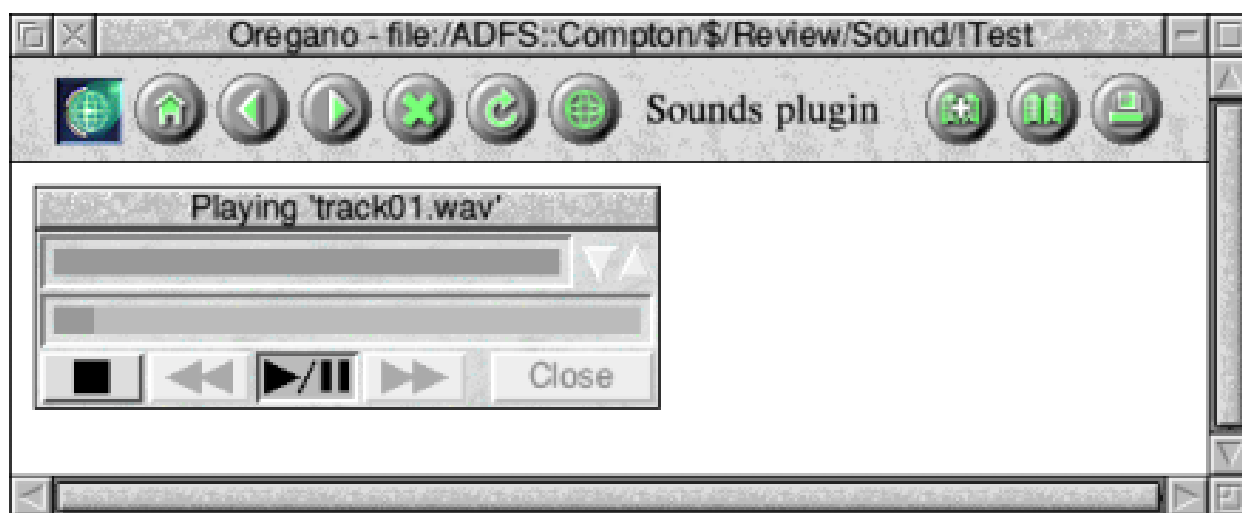
If you visit a page with a supported sound file embedded in it then a small player window appears in the web page and the sound starts to play. The control window allows you to stop and start it as desired. In basic terms the software appears to work fine. I have tried it with Browse, Fresco and

The problem is that this plugin only supports WAV, AIFF and VOC files and not the common RealAudio format so I am rather doubtful as to how useful this will be to most people, especially as the sound on a web site is rarely critical to successful use of the site.

Also included on the disk with the main sound plugin is a freeware MIDI plugin which supports embedded MIDI files.

Be aware though that unless you have MIDI hardware





attached to your machine you need to run a software MIDI system such as !Synth (which comes with RISC OS 4) in order to hear anything.

It also doesn't appear to work with Oregano although it does work fine with Browse and Fresco.

In summary, I suspect that this application will only really be useful to people with a very specific need to be able to use web sites with embedded audio files of the types it supports.

Hearing new sounds on the Web

Web Sound Plugin

Price: £10 + VAT (£11.75)

Supplier: Warm Silence Software Ltd

PO Box 28

Woodstock

Oxfordshire

OX20 1XX

Tel: 0585 487642

Tel/Fax: 01608 737172

Email: info@wss.co.uk

Web: www.wss.co.uk

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY...

The Midlands ARM Club Show will be at The National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham on Saturday 1st December 2001.

There will be more information in our next issue or see our website at www.armclub.org.uk/shows/

DiscKnight Rides To The Rescue

The following email appeared on one of the Acorn Internet newsgroups. We reproduce it by permission of the writer, Stefan Bellon.

‘I just want to report big and easy success with DiscKnight I had a few minutes ago. My main hard disc (all the development is done with it) crashed badly due to some mysterious ‘Filecore in use’ error.

After reboot the hard disc was not known anymore “... is it formatted?” Heck, what a question, sure it was! :-o

Luckily I’d bought DiscKnight a couple of weeks ago and placed it on every of my hard discs in the Risc PC (redundancy is a nice thing!).

DiscKnight was able to restore the hard disc within minutes. AFAICT, everything except one directory was restored correctly. And this was documentation for Python which is easily installed again.

Thank goodness I’ve bought DiscKnight.

For all those of you who haven’t done so already, buy it, it’s worth the money if you really get into such a situation!

Greetings,

Stefan.”

At the Club price of £9 it’s a very small price to pay for the reassurance it brings.

The **ARM**
Club



**BROKEN DIRECTORY
MAP INCONSISTENT
DISC NOT UNDERSTOOD**

DiscKnight £10

You need the reassurance of DiscKnight
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The RISC OS 2001 Show

With just three months to go (when this was written), show organisation was well advanced, with three-quarters of the show area allocated.

and Surrey and Sussex Acorn User Group (SASAUG) and their members will be admitted free on the Sunday upon presentation of a current membership card.

John Sawyer looks forward to the next big date on the calendar, the RISC OS 2001 Show being held in October at its new venue in Berkshire.

This is the third RISC OS Show, Epsom being the venue for the last two years. This year the Show will be at the Blue Mountain Golf and Conference Centre at Binfield near Reading.

The venue offers excellent road and rail links and a shuttle bus service will operate from Reading Station.

All the conference facilities at the centre have been booked to give the greatest possible exhibition space. A separate theatre will allow the usual popular presentations.

The Show is organised by group drawn from The ARM Club, Risc OS User Group of London (ROUGOL)

The move to Bracknell has allowed stand prices to be reduced below those of RISC OS 2000. Exhibition details have been supplied to most RISC OS companies. Anyone requiring an exhibitor pack, or additional information, should contact ralph@armclub.org.uk.

Some exciting products are expected to be featured at the Show, including production models of Microdigital's Omega, the RiscStation portable, and enhanced Oregon 2 from Castle.

For full information visit our web site www.riscos2001.com. This will be the RISC OS event of the year.

Don't miss it!



The Blue Mountain Golf and Conference Centre

The RISC OS 2001 Show

Saturday 20 October — 10:00 to 17:00

Sunday 21 October — 10:00 to 16:00

**The Blue Mountain Golf and Conference Centre
Binfield near Reading**

Tickets: £4 in advance £5 on the door

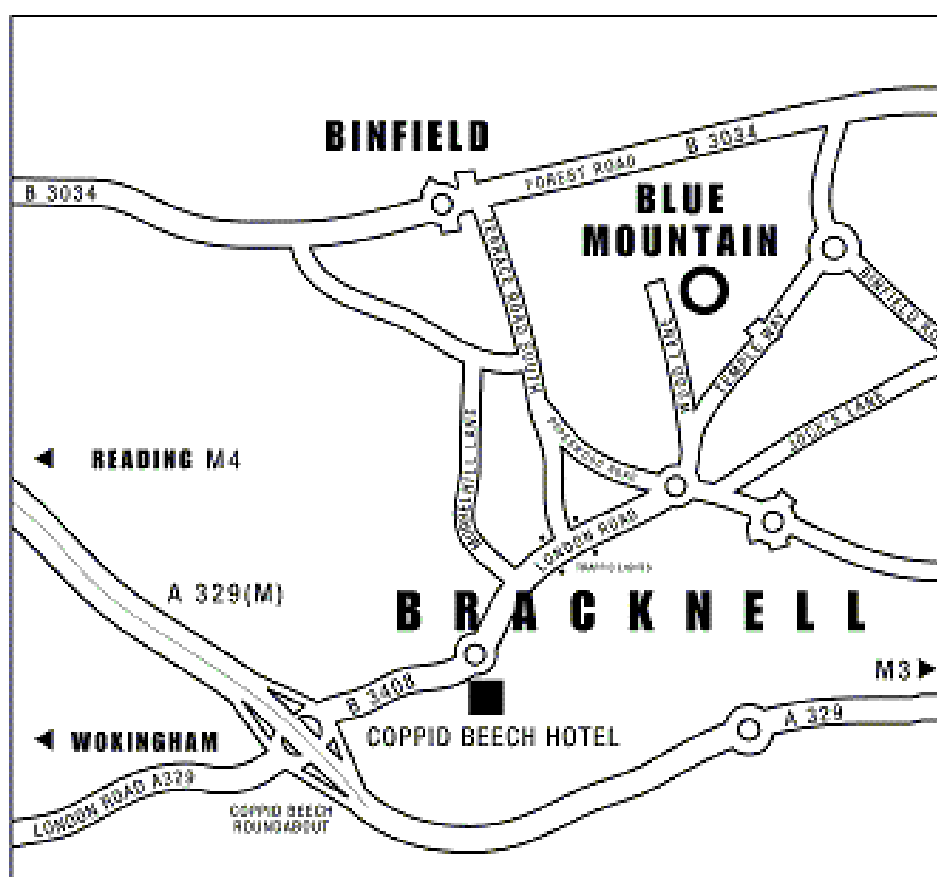
Free entry on Sunday for members of The ARM Club, ROUGOL and
SASAUG on production of membership cards

Advance tickets from www.riscos2001.com or by post from:
RISC OS 2001, Merton Court, 38 Knoll Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4QU

BLUE MOUNTAIN

LOCATION

The Blue Mountain Centre is situated 5 minutes from Junction 10 of the M4 motorway and 30 minutes from London Heathrow Airport. Bracknell Rail Station has a frequent service to and from Waterloo Station and British Rail main line station at Reading is only 15 minutes away.



From the M4, exit at Junction 10 and follow the A329(M) signposted Bracknell. Take the first exit left to the Coppid Beech roundabout, signposted Binfield B3408. Continue straight over the next roundabout, through the traffic lights to the next roundabout. Take the 2nd exit and then first left into Wood Lane.

The Centre is located at the end of the lane on the right.

Wood Lane, Binfield, Berkshire RG42 4EX
Tel: (01344) 300200 Fax: (01344) 360 960

Take the shuttle bus if you're coming by train

A shuttle bus service to the RISC OS 2001 Show will be provided from Reading mainline station.

Reading has been chosen as having very good connections to most of the country. Despite not being geographically nearest it is certainly the best situated for running a shuttle bus service

The Show buses will depart from outside the station. Head towards the lower numbered platforms and the *Brunel Arcade* shopping area (*not* the car park). Leave through the main doors, to the side of W H Smith. The shuttle bus will leave from the far side of the road outside, next to *Gregories Cafe* and on the opposite side of the road to the taxi rank.

The buses, which will be operated by Burgfield Minicoaches and will carry **RISC OS 2001** signs, will run every half hour on Saturday and hourly on Sunday.

The exhibitors you'll see...

Will include the following:

Castle, RiscStation, Cerilica, Softease, Cannon Cumana, APDL, Electronic Font Foundry, Warm Silence Software, Archive, RComp and RComp Interactive, Reflex Technology, CJE Micros, Photodesk, Chris Morrison, Akalat Publishing, PHR Computers, and Click Software.

Coming next issue...

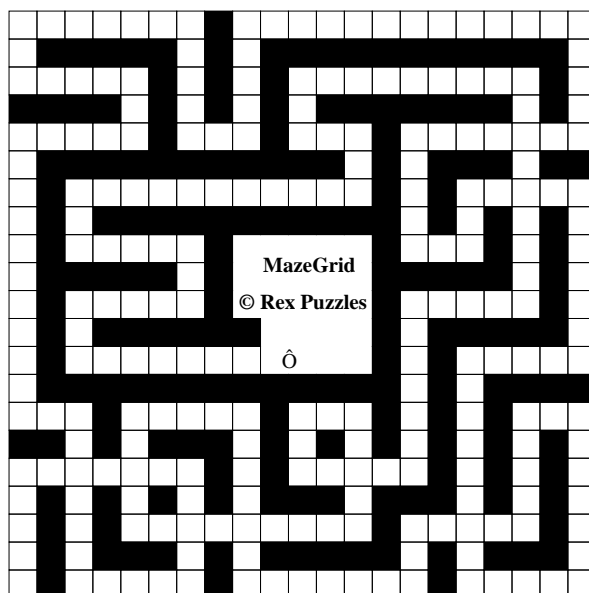
At the moment we can only hope, but our next issue could include a hands-on report on some of the most exciting new hardware we've been waiting for.

We will have a review of an innovative new back-up program called *Nuts* and we'll also be looking at *SVG Converter*, which will enable you to convert the new scalable vector graphics files, which have finally come to Windows, to Draw files for use with RISC OS packages.



There should also be reviews of brand new versions of Ancestor+ and DrawWorks (yes, another big upgrade) from APDL who have taken over these well-established programs.

More examples of the questions sent to our Technical Help Team will be published with the answers (already sent direct to the questioners).



On a serious note, a head teacher will be writing on the effects the Internet can have on young children.

For lighter moments there will be the latest pages from Gill's Journal, suitably illustrated, another cartoon in our new series on the Omegus Family, an Odd Ode to provide a needed touch of culture and a fiendish maze grid puzzle to exercise the brain.

Club contacts

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