

# Eureka

**Issue 7  
Spring 1993**



*The Magazine for  
members of*

*The*  
**A R N**  
*Club*

**A**



## **THE ARM CLUB MAGAZINE**

### **PUBLISHED BY**

The ARM Club  
FREEPOST ND6573  
London  
N12 0BR

### **EDITOR**

Simon Burrows

### **ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Ben Eshmade

### **COVER DESIGN**

Ben Eshmade

### **PRINTED BY**

Speedprint

An



Club Production

© 1993 The ARM Club  
All rights reserved

# *Editorial*

A commonly cited criticism of the Archimedes is that "there is very little software available for it". I decided to look at this sweeping complaint in more detail, to see just how true it is.

Imagine for example that you need a package on which to compose and print out letters. Any of the following packages plus many more would be capable of doing the job: Impression II/Junior, Ovation, Wordz, First Word Plus, Easiword, Easiwriter, Desktop Office, StartWrite, PrimeWord, Techwriter, Pipedream, !Edit & Acorn Advance.

The same is true if you consider spreadsheets, databases, graphing packages, drawing packages, art packages, ray-tracers and so on. For most of the common activities which you might want to perform on an Archimedes, there are actually a number of packages capable of doing them - in fact, given the size of the user base, it could be said that there are too many packages in some areas, resulting in developers not receiving a satisfactory return on their investments.

The games scene is also well supported, and the future looks particularly bright given the heightened interest in ARM based games caused by games consoles such as the new 3DO.

With all of these types of software, a very valid comment is that we do not see versions of well-known software packages available on other machines, and when we do, they arrive many months after appearing for these other computers.

Software for the Archimedes is generally relatively cheap compared with that for other computers, and the overall quality of software is improving all the time. People are no longer prepared to pay companies to produce sub-standard software, and that can only be good news for the consumer.

Happy computing,

Simon Burrows (Editor)



# Second Hand - Second Rate?

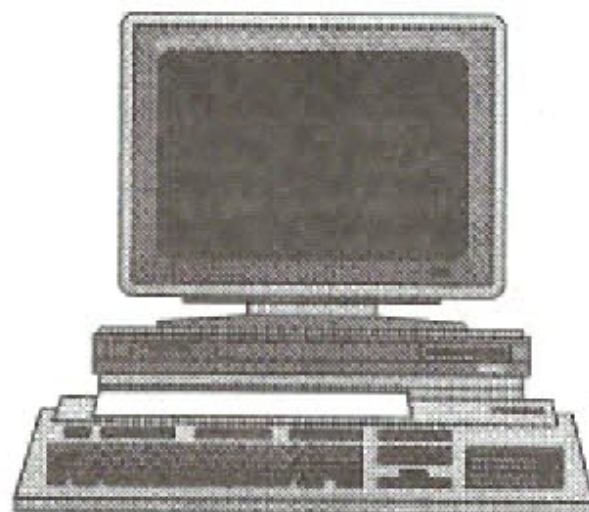
John Bancroft discusses how to get more for your money

Can it be possible to own the unaffordable? My personal experience of buying second hand computers and selling them on in order to upgrade suggests that it is. Like most people, I have to keep a tight reign on my finances, and I currently own an Archimedes 440/1 with a Canon A3 Colour printer. To reach these dizzy heights, I began with a brand new Archimedes 310 (using money from the sale of a BBC micro system) and gradually improved my computer systems through careful buying of second hand goods. This article offers some guidance through the maze of second hand advertising.

Firstly, where do you start looking for bargains? Any reputable magazine provides useful source material, but I find *Micromart* magazine (published weekly) and the Acorn dedicated monthly magazines particularly useful. The golden rule is to get a copy as soon as humanly possible. Here is the advantage in having a subscription to a magazine. The best bargains are obviously snapped up on the first telephone call, so it is something of a race.

Read through the adverts carefully and quickly. Be persistent and keep ringing the contact telephone number. Once you have got through, find out as much information as you can. You should find out the age of the item, and where it has been used - in the office or in the home - and the reason for selling. Find out the profession of the person selling and if it is an auctioneer, then be careful. Avoid box numbers like the plague. If at all possible, go and see the equipment working for at least 15 minutes, trying all the functions. It is not unreasonable to ask to see the inner workings of any item. Once you have agreed a sale, then you have to proceed with a measure of trust. Bear in mind what you could afford to lose, should the worst happen.

The standard practice these days seems to be to send a cheque the same day. I would advise sending this by recorded post and ask for goods to be delivered by compensatory post, in case of damage. Keep in contact until the goods are received and still keep a copy of the name and address, should there be any problems. If you are buying software, always try and buy unregistered versions or find out if it is possible to transfer the ownership of the software licence.



For those wishing to sell goods, there are a few more considerations. How do you assess a reasonable selling price? The age of the item must be taken into account, but the best guide is other second hand adverts and discount prices. Keep your ear to the ground for new developments in computer technology. Prices in the market do fluctuate according to what may be available just around the corner. It is always worth keeping the boxes for goods, as this makes for a better presentation. Take time to clean goods thoroughly. If you are disassembling keyboards, make sure you know how to put them back in the right order. I speak from painful experience of this matter..



If you are placing an advert, be prepared to sit by the telephone all evening answering calls. It is surprising that people still ring some weeks after the advert appears, just on the off-chance. Occasionally, a dazzling bargain appears, which turns out to be a practical joke. I hope this never happens to you, but if it does, just take the phone off the hook.

My rule is first come, first served. However, keep a reserve list of names and telephone numbers. Give a time limit, as there are some time wasters. Agree between you whether you will send goods before or after the cheque has been cleared.

I must say that I have not had any bad experiences, so far. Some of my successes have been (prices current at time of purchase, including V.A.T.):

**Taxan 795 Monitor**  
8 months old for £230 (retail over £500)  
**Canon BJC 800 A3 Colour Printer**  
for £750 (retail £1895) Nov '92  
**ARM 3 Processor**  
for £130 (retail £300)  
**Impression II Software**  
for £60 (retail £165)  
**Hard disc 40 meg ST506**  
for £25, bought February '93

Some people will not consider buying second hand goods, but with Acorn products, this is a missed opportunity. The technology is well made, reliable and lasts for many years past the 12 month guarantee. In some cases it may even be worth buying goods needing repair, if the cost of mending the fault is not prohibitive. My analogy is this: is it not better to own a second hand Ford Cosworth than a brand new Lada? Bargains are there for the taking, so go out and get them (if I don't get there first!).

**John Bancroft**

*Micro Computer Mart magazine is available weekly at most newsagents, price 60p per issue.*



## **The ARMEd Education Discs**

One part of The ARM Club which we hope to expand is the Education Division, formed at our Open Day in London last November.

Bruce Dickson, our training coordinator, has recently launched a scheme whereby he produces a series of discs known as "ARMEd" containing resources, programs and data of interest to schools, using a variety of material produced by pupils at Mill Hill School, Club members and a variety of other authors, including some well-known Public Domain authors.

The scheme is still in its infancy, and is likely to adapt according to its success, but currently a disc is produced monthly, and is available to schools and people with an interest in education for the sum of £5. Readers and purchasers of the discs are actively encouraged to contribute material to the disc, and Bruce has some interesting programs lined up for forthcoming issues.

For more information on the ARMEd discs, please contact Bruce Dickson on 081 959 3321, or to order a sample disc, send a cheque for £5 to the following address:

Mr B. J. Dickson  
ARMEd Discs  
c/o Mill Hill School  
The Ridgeway  
Mill Hill, London  
NW7 1QS

*Please spread the word about these discs!*



# Wordz

Wordz... cute name, but surely not another word processor? That's one possible point of view, but given its pedigree coming from the developers of Pipedream, I thought it worthy of investigation.

So what exactly is Wordz? Well, it's a straight word-processor, since Colton have avoided the temptation to turn it into any sort of Desktop Publisher, where the competition is fierce. It is also the first in a series of so-called Z packages, and the forthcoming *Resultz* spreadsheet from Colton will closely interwork with Wordz.

The software comes in a fluorescent orange box, with an attractive and well produced manual. Two discs are supplied, and are not protected – before use, you have to type in your name, and this is embedded into the program code.

Wordz is a word-processor, and thus contains all of the features which you would expect of such a package. I am going to concentrate on the more unusual and/or useful features available.

Use of Wordz revolves around the idea of templates, which are pre-defined files containing document formats, and these can be stored within Wordz itself. For example, you might have one template set up for writing letters, complete with a letterhead, and another template for writing essays.



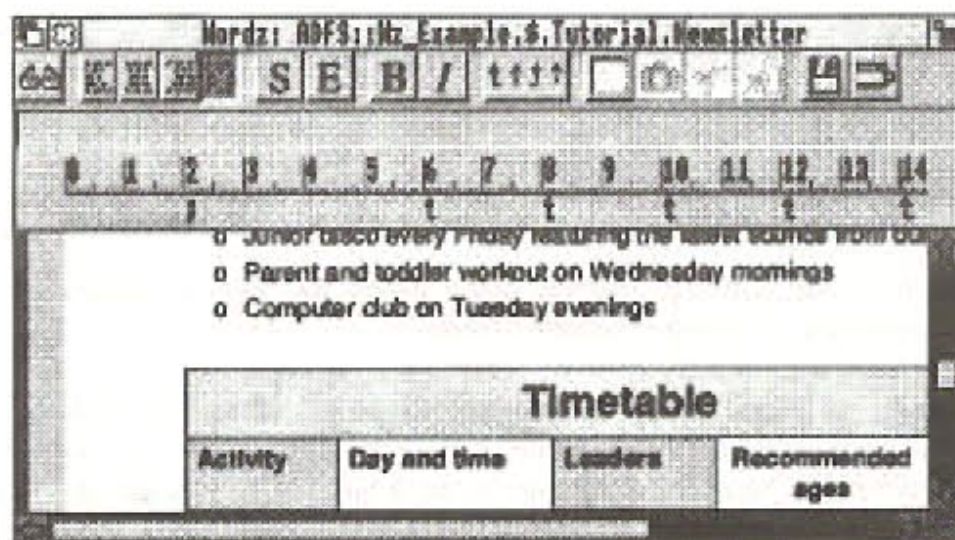
The main Wordz window is somewhat unusual in appearance, so is worthy of discussion. The look and feel of Wordz may feel unusual to users of other packages, and this is mainly because it is written to comply with Acorn's new 3D Style Guide. The window is divided into separate parts, each with a different purpose. The top part contains a number of buttons, used for gaining quick access to features such as bold text, justification and cutting/pasting text.

Below this is a status line, which is very useful for the novice user. It is a bit like Acorn's !Help utility, but is built in and does not clutter up the screen. Screen borders are also available, both horizontally and vertically. Wordz has an extremely neat feature for opening several views on the same document. It is possible to split the window horizontally or vertically (or both), and this creates two (or four!) "sub-windows", each with their own sliders and resize icon. This may sound a bit tacky, but is actually well implemented and very useful.

The table creation and layout features of Wordz make it stand out from DTP packages such as Impression, and they are very flexible indeed. Creating tables is extremely simple – one of the example files supplied by Colton is a year planner, which is implemented as a huge table with a slot for each day of the year. Tables can be customised with different shapes, colours and sizes, and the automatic slot resize facility is exceptionally useful. Wordz makes it easy to create tables of any size and complexity, and clearly a huge amount of thought has gone into this feature. Colton's experience with Pipedream really shines through in the table handling. If you drop a CSV file into some text, Wordz automatically creates a table containing that data.

Wordz uses effects and styles for text (and tables!) in a fairly similar way to Impression. Styles can be overlaid on a piece of text to build up the overall appearance. You can highlight a piece of text and examine each of the applied styles, changing and removing them if needed.





Colton might have been tempted to put little thought into this side of things and just copy one of the other packages, but it obviously didn't, and there are many nice features – for example, the different sections of the Style dialogue have tiny green “LEDs” which indicate whether those sections have any effect on the style.

Although a word-processor, Wordz does allow the use of drawfiles and sprites in documents. A handy feature here is that pictures can either be embedded in the document, or else referenced on disc, keeping the size of the Wordz file to a minimum (although making the actual file less portable). Special facilities are available for label printing, and dropping a CSV format address file into Wordz is enough to lay out the addresses ready for printing.

As you would expect, Wordz has all of the typical features of a wordprocessor such as search-and-replace, and a 55,000 word dictionary. The dictionary is split into master and user sections, and new words can be automatically added and saved. Separate dictionaries are available for proper nouns which must begin with a capital letter.

Wordz has some flexible printing facilities, although I do miss some of the features available in packages like Impression. There are options for printing pamphlets, and a

particularly good feature whereby you can specify discrete ranges of pages which should be printed out, for example 1-5,7,11-12,17. There are also facilities for draft printing using the built-in typefaces of printers, very useful if your printer is not suited to printing in outline fonts.

The support files include many examples, some needed for the tutorial, including sample layouts for label printing, tables and even some year-planners. The package also contains a registration card, and details of the Z-Line disc & support group.

Overall, I find that Wordz is exceptionally pleasant to use. A lot of thought has gone into making it really easy to use. That does not mean that it is perfect, but judging from the way in which Pipedream has been constantly improved and updated by Colton, I would imagine that the same will happen with Wordz. Version 1.01 does contain a number of bugs, but this is a common feature of early releases of Archimedes packages (I remember using Impression v0.6!).

“...Wordz is exceptionally pleasant to use...”

”

The biggest potential problem for Wordz is that at £99+VAT, it is competing with DTP packages such as Impression Junior and Ovation. However Wordz is very powerful and easy to use, as Colton claims, so if you don't need the DTP facilities it should be a very strong contender for your money.

**Simon Burrows**

*Discounts are available to owners of Pipedream, and Resultz will cost less for Wordz owners*



# Arnold's Observations

Steve Arnold talks about setting up local user groups..

Once again time seems to catch up on me, Life's a bit like that! You know, work pressures, looking after the family, fixing the car. I bet it all sounds so familiar... At this moment in time I'm desperately trying to get rid of some nasty little bug that seems to have got its evil claws into me. "Do you know the mouse moves quite a distance when you cough! or that a nasty smear appears on your screen when you sneeze!" Yes I know, enough of the tacky jokes, but it does seem to me that colds and computers don't make for good results.

With this awful excuse for being late... (Sorry Ed.) and my general lack of energy, this is going to be a short article, a brief interlude in the wealth of knowledge and information contained within. Some of you will be saying "Thank-Heavens" and hopefully a few will be saying "How Sad". So without any more rambling, here we go!

## Computer User Groups

There are many reasons and motivations for computer users to join a user group. You, the readers each had some specific goal in mind when you joined The ARM Club (or its previous incarnation Club A3000). I hope some of the goals have been or are continuing to be fulfilled. One of my personal goals was to see lots of independent but affiliated user groups spring-up, unfortunately this hasn't really happened. There have been a few successes, with a few members starting up their own local groups, but there need to be many more.

There must be a growth in the information outlets for the Acorn world, and the form of these outlets needs to be diverse to keep a balanced approach. The user needs to be able to extract a variety of information on a variety of subjects from a variety of sources. This leads to a fertile, progressive

market place where the user is capable of an educated choice.

This all sounds a bit idealistic! Well it is.. However user groups help in spreading information, be it fact or opinion, and this in the long term helps you the user. So it's time to consider if you could start a small user group (or a large one if you're ambitious!) or help someone who is considering it.

The Acorn world as a computer community is generally a very friendly, enthusiastic and loyal community. I wish I had a pound for every time I've heard about how individuals have migrated from their trusty old Beeb through to some form of ARM based machine. With this as a basis, it shouldn't be too difficult to start a club in your area. Below are a few very basic hints on how to go about it:

- 1) To start: think of a club name - keep it simple and above all sensible.
- 2) Get some members: stick an advert in the local press, talk to the local schools, put posters in libraries and community centres, talk to the local computer shop etc.
- 3) Get a meeting place: to start with, a member's home will suffice, you can progress to a bigger location with time and a growing membership.
- 4) Set a meeting time and date: try and canvas your members to get the maximum attendance.
- 5) Set an initial agenda: This is where you should elect a committee and agree the aims and rules of the club (if there are only a few members, then each adopt a role and informally set out aims etc.)



6) User meetings: Have regular meetings, once a month minimum. Set out topics for discussion. Organise demos, start teaching sessions, start a local public domain software library and question & answer sessions etc.

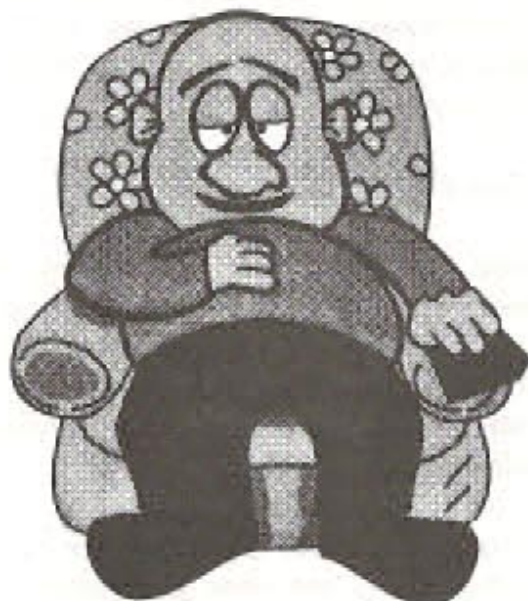
These are just a few items to help you progress your user group. The main ingredient I've forgotten to mention is: **Enthusiasm.**

If you wish you had a local group to share ideas and information with, then do something about it! Remember: *"Talk is Cheap, It's the doing that counts!"*

So don't be frightened, give it a try. Help yourself and at the same time, help others. We'll give you any support we can. Do write and let us know how you get on. Bye for now.

## Training Courses

Do you look or feel like the chap shown below? Do you need inspiration on what to do with your computer, or guidance on how to use it?



If so, then chances are you would benefit from attending one of The ARM Club's Training

Courses. Describing them as this makes the courses sound rather formal, when in actual fact they are quite informal and friendly, with plenty of opportunities to ask questions and progress at your own pace.

Derek Rowlands, our Welsh Group coordinator is organising a one day course for users in Wales. It is being held at the White Cross Inn, Groes wen, Caerphilly on 1st May, costing around £15 including lunch. The course will adapt according to the needs of people attending, but is expected to look at the use of the major software packages such as Impression, Artworks and the RISC OS Applications. It will also provide a great opportunity to meet other users and establish some useful contacts for the future.

Bruce Dickson has a number of courses running at Mill Hill School over the next few months. They run from 10am - 4pm at Mill Hill School in North-West London, and cost £20 for the day's tuition, including lunch and refreshments. Extra members of a family can attend for only £10 each, sharing a computer, and non-members are very welcome.

April 18th - Music Day  
May 2nd - Teaching for Teachers!  
May 16th - Pipedream  
June 6th - Beginners Day  
June 20th - Impression II  
July 4th - Building Blocks  
July 18th - Squirrel  
August 8th - Artworks  
August 22nd - Genesis  
September 5th - TBA  
September 19th - Games Day

For more information on the Mill Hill Courses, or to book places, please telephone Bruce Dickson on 081 959 3321 evenings.

Derek Rowlands will also be happy to answer questions and take bookings for the course in Caerphilly on (0222) 868635. Everyone is welcome to attend.





## Gribbly's Day Out on the Arc

An apology - to Coin Age Limited. Last issue I dismissed their latest release, *Gribbly's Day Out on the Arc* for having a silly name and being incredibly difficult to play. I have now realised that I was only half right. The name is still stupid, but the game is fabulous. In fact, I would say that it is most fun game to be released on the Arc over the past twelve months if you can be bothered to play it for long enough to become quite skillful in manouvring old Gribbly about his landscape. After playing it for about a month, I suddenly realised that now I had picked up the method of playing, it wasn't all that difficult after all.

So, this now deserves some more reviewing as a game. The aim of the game is to move a green bug-like organism 'Gribbly' about a landscape, and rescue a number of smaller (and distinctly un-green) bugs known as Gribblets. It is generally quite difficult, however because of an awkward force field (the PSI grid) which is present over the landscape and which drains a large percentage of your energy if you collide with it and also a large spider which also does his best to drain your energy - and unfortunately, he is quite good at his job.

With all this in mind, Gribbly must explore the level, find the Gribblets scattered around

and then take them to safety - the 'cave'. Graphically, it does not excel, but does its job well (apart from the intro screen) and the sound is also well up to standard. But the gameplay is what really makes this game stand out. At first, you will collide with the force field, the spider, trees and just about everything that will drain your energy trying to find the damn

Gribblets and will end up so disappointed and frustrated you will wish you bought Pesky Muskrats instead. But, persevere for a couple more days, and the game will turn into one of the most addictive games ever. The higher levels have been lovingly created and are a joy to play. This is the best platform game around at the moment, (*though the competition is a bit thin on the ground - AsEd*) and that's all I can say.

## Spheres of Chaos

*Spheres of Chaos* is a relatively new release from Matt Black. After forming my own opinions about this game (and not wishing to make the Gribbly mistake again), I consulted a number of other Archimedes games players for a second opinion. The two turned out to be completely opposing it the end, so here are both lines of thought:

### The Good Review

Asteroids has always been a classic game. The is some unknown factor which makes is fun to play and addictive, yet a simple concept - just like Tetris, so naturally any game of Asteroids will automatically be good if it is programmed smoothly enough.

And that is *Spheres of Chaos* in a nutshell. It has nice graphics and some great spot sound effects, topped off with intriguing ideas for enemies to destroy (some that home in on your ship, others that explode into a number of



smaller enemies etc). When you hit any of the rocks, a great explosion effect is produced as it splits up into a number of smaller

The gameplay matches the classic Asteroids game in just about every respect. Movement around the screen remains smooth, even when there is a huge number of effects triggering at once and all the traditional options are present.

The other thing obvious about Chaos is its well thought out options screen. It is possible to play the game using the keyboard, mouse or a joystick (keyboard being my own personal choice) and there are options present to change the control sensitivity, and also change a number of factors in the game - wrap around or solid screen borders, gravity etc. The presentation of the front end screen is most impressive.

If that wasn't enough, there is also the presence of a multi-player mode. Instead of having loads of people waiting for a go, up to four people can all play at once, and compete against each other. There is always something much more satisfying about completely annihilating a friend than doing the same thing to a computer and Chaos illustrates this brilliantly. The fun factor of the game increases tremendously with the number of players.

So what more could you ask for? Everything about Chaos is superb - if you have £25, invest in a copy now!

### The Bad Review

Apparently Chaos is not simply a re-release of Asteroids. It is in fact, a re-release of said game with numerous extra features to bring it bang up to date! Yes, we no longer just get transparent white circles floating around, we get ray traced circles instead (must have taken ages to think up that improvement), and there are nice sound effects and explosions and things.

This game is unoriginal in concept, playability, general design and everything else. The graphics are corny to say the least - the nice shaded rocks could be knocked up pretty quickly by an experienced artist, and the rest of the graphics aren't much cop either.

And, if that wasn't enough the gameplay is boring. It's quite fun at first to blast the asteroids to bits, but on getting to about level 5 or 6 on my first go, I found myself increasingly bored out of my mind as I continued to play, and the levels went on and on with the same boring, repetitive forms. After one game, there is practically no inspiration to play the game again (ever).

The only real good factor about the game is the multi-player option. Up to four players can join in at once, which is (as always) more fun than the one player option. Unfortunately, the gameplay is equally tedious for each player, so it means all four people can get bored together!

I remember a similar game to Chaos on the Amiga, which had some really inventive ideas, like a designer so you could have your own wierd and wacky shapes, and neat stuff like that. It was about, ooh, ten times as good as this, and it was PD. Okay, so the graphics are nice. Okay, so the explosions are quite inventive but surely nice graphics and decent sound are automatically expected from games today and any other game would be viciously criticised for not having these features! So Matt Black have obviously tried their very best to disguise the fact that it's unoriginal boring and dreadfully overpriced with a few feeble new features and options. But the fact remains - it's no good. Don't buy it!

Two sides to the same story - make your own mind up!

**Ben Eshmade**





# PD R E V E W

Since The ARM Club decided to start a PD library as a service to its members in July 1992, and I got lumbered with its inception I thought that I had better see what level of service other PD libraries had to offer.

On 2nd September I did a mailshot to all the PD libraries listed in *Acorn Computing* of that month apart from DataStream, which had under the previous owners caused some members of Club A3000 a few problems, and APDL, which I knew was undergoing a change of management. I enclosed a cheque for £1.00 made out to the name which appeared in the PD list as written by Teri Paul and asked for their catalogue disc. The list of PD libraries I used is set out below.

Abyss Software, APDL, Arcaynia, ArchAngel, Arch PD, ARMistic, Busy Bee Computers, RE Clark PD Library, Cream PD, Datafile PD DataStream, Diamond PD, Digital Illusions, Digital Phenomena, DigiTech PD, Equinox PD, Genesis PD, Low Cost PD, Mad Rabbit PD, Naked PD, Ozone-Friendly PD, Prime PD, Risc PD, RML PD, Skyfall, Soft Rock Software, Spidersoft PD, Telstar PD, The Undercutter and Matthew White.

The replies that I received are also set out below.

**Abyss** – Received 5/9/92. Mailer was new with a handwritten address. 1st class postage. Disc label had no writing to identify it, although it had a blank label. There was 37k free on disc. No archived software. Catalogue in 5 Edit files but very small. Price of disc £2.00 with no mention of a discount for quantity.

**Armistic** – Received 5/9/92. Came in bubble pack in an ordinary envelope with a handwritten address. 1st class postage. There was 42k free on the disc which was crammed with a selection of archived software and had ArcFS version 0.53. There was the facility to send in blank discs in which case the price of the discs was 50pence as long as 4 discs were bought. Ordinarily the PD discs were £1.00. A pick and mix service for customised discs is also on offer at £1.35 per disc.

**Digital Illusions** – Received 5/9/92. Came in a previously used mailer with a printed address. 1st class postage. There was 37k free on the disc which was also crammed with a selection of archived software along with ArcFS version 0.45. Each disc was 99 pence with a discount of 29pence if you sent in your own formatted disc. There was a discount of 10 pence on each disc if you already subscribed to Illusions disc-based



magazine. There was also a discount of enabling you to get one free disc for every 5 that you bought. They also promised to send your discs out by the next day with first class postage. They advertised a Technical help service which they provided on weekdays.

**Equinox** – Received 5/9/92. Came in an ordinary envelope with a handwritten address surrounded by a printed software catalogue which was also present on the disc as an Impression file. 1st class postage. There was no free space at all on the disc which was crammed with a selection of archived software and had ArcFS version 0.51. There was a pick and mix service with applications, games and demos costing 30 pence each. Sound tracker files, Draw and Paint files, fonts, game cheats and some text files were 12 pence each and normal preselected PD discs costing 80 pence each.

**Skyfall** – Received 5/9/92. Came in a new mailer with a printed label. 1st class postage and a printed catalogue. There was no free space at all on the disc and apart from a couple of sound samples and a small catalogue for software running under the PC emulator, the disc contained only a catalogue, which was, however, quite unusual with the sprites of the applications on the discs and the usual small description about the program. The price of 1-2 discs was £2.50, 3-9 discs £2.00 each and a gradually decreasing price for each disc until an order in excess of 20 discs would cost £1.50 for each disc. There was a further reduction of 40-50 pence off each disc if you were a member of the Skyfall PD Club. A new feature was the presence of 1.6meg discs for A4 and A5000 owners. These cost 50% more than the normal 800meg discs, ie. two for the price of three. *[Ed's note: these are 800K discs formatted to 1.6Mb].*

**Prime PD** – Received a letter on 7/9/92 by second class post to say that this library was no longer functioning.

**Ozone Friendly PD** – Received a letter on 8/9/92 by second class post to say that this library was no longer functioning.

**Arcaynia** – Received a letter on 8/9/92 by second class post in a new mailer with a typed address label and a software catalogue. The disc was completely full with archived software and ArcFS 0.45. The Arcaynia demo didn't run at all with RISCOS3 - the machine promptly crashed, and the special program for ordering software also crashed. I have an ordinary A440/1 with ARM3, RISCOS3 and 4Mb RAM.

**Westbourne Services** – Received a letter on 8/9/92 by second class post in a re-used mailer with a handwritten address label. The disc had 28k free and contained ArcFS 0.45 and a selection of archived software. Unfortunately the version of ArcFS used (which was a few months old) threw up an error with too many archives open. This version can only have 5 archives open at once, and so one had to be deleted by pressing the menu button over the ArcFS icon on the Icon bar. This annoying feature has been eliminated in the later versions of this excellent PD archiving program.

**Datafile** – Received a letter on 8/9/92 by first class post in a new mailer with a typed address label and a nice letter to me personally (not a mail-merged letter), along with a return address label. The disc had 15k free and much archived software using ArcFS 0.51. The selection was wide ranging and even included an outline font. The catalogue appeared to be the most extensive that I received.

**The Undercutter** – Received a letter and hardcopy of a catalogue on 9/9/92 by second class post. There was an apology for not sending a disc but blamed this on their suppliers. However, a quick telephone call to suppliers of bulk discs in Essex failed to reveal any shortage. The price of the discs was 80 pence each with a 25 pence discount if you sent in your own discs.

*...continued overleaf...*



**Diamond PD** – Received a cut-up mailer and catalogue disc on 10/10/92 by second class postage. The catalogue disc was apparently £1.50 and I was requested to send 50 pence by return. The software on the disc was mainly compacted sprites and ArcFS 0.22 was included. There was a utility which helped unpick the compressed files using a ram disc. The sprites included movie shots (probably illegal) and half-naked ladies (also dubious). There were also a couple of SoundTracker files which are also probably illegal to distribute according to the Performing Rights Society.

**Low Cost PD** – Received a second class letter on 10/10/92 with my cheque enclosed and a note asking me to make the cheque payable to J Michalski.

**Soft Rock** – Received by second class post, on Sept 12th, a letter saying that they had never been a PD library but that they sometimes provided PD material which were usually demos of commercial software they had produced. A disc with two of their PD programs was enclosed.

**Arch PD** – Received a letter by first class post on Sept 16th and a letter dated Sept 1st saying that they had now closed down the PD library, but had formed a new company, Software 42, and enclosed a couple of advertising sheets about their products. They also returned my cheque.

**RML PD** – Received a letter by second class post on Sept 16th along with a hardcopy of their PD catalogue and apology that they could not enclose a catalogue disc as they were undergoing a re-organisation. The envelope was hand written. My cheque was also returned. Their discs were £1.50 each for 1 to 10, reducing to £1.00 each if 20 or more were ordered.

**Genesis PD** – Received a catalogue disc on 18th September by first class mail in an A5 envelope with a handwritten address. The disc had a printed label. There was an enclosed letter apologising for the delay and assuring me that there would be no

delays in sending out any orders.

**Cream PD** – Received a catalogue disc on 18th September by first class mail in an A5 envelope with a handwritten address. The disc was partially enclosed in a bubble-packed piece of paper and was unlabelled. The library is apparently only distributing SoundTracker files at about 30pence each.

**RISC PD** – Received a letter by second class post on 22nd September to say that they were no longer trading and had informed *Acorn Computing* of the fact several months ago. My cheque was returned at the same time.

**ArchAngel** – Received a catalogue disc on 23rd September in an ordinary envelope with a typed label by second class post. The disc was enclosed in some bubble-packing and was full with the catalogue, some instructions on how to order which were written using ClearView, and a couple of PD programs which were archived and ArcFS 0.44. The ready made discs are £1.20 and the discs from their pic&mix service are £1.60. There is also a fixed 50 pence charge for postage and package. This is the most friendly and easy-to-use catalogue.

**Matthew White** – My cheque was returned on 28th September along with a note to say that he was not a PD library, but did supply PD software that he had written.

**LowCost PD** – Received a catalogue disc on 28th September in an ordinary envelope with a hand-written label by second class post. Also enclosed was a notice about the Archimedes Users Club. The disc had 30k of free space and contained several PD utilities along with the catalogue and more details about the Archimedes Users Club. The discs cost about £1.00 each, with 20 pence reduction for members of the Archimedes Users Club.



**Naked PD** – Received a catalogue disc on 20th October in a mailer with a typed label by first class post. My cheque to Naked PD was returned and I was asked to send another cheque for £1.00 made out to D Radcliffe. There was also a letter explaining the reasons for the long delay in sending the catalogue disc. The disc was full.

**Digital Phenomena** – Cashed my cheque 27/1/1993 but have received no communication from them as yet.

I think that my experiences of the PD libraries were rather mixed, and I have tried to alter the workings of The ARM Club library as a result of my findings. The library is still improving, I hope, and I now keep 4 copies of each disc so that I should be able to reply (by second class post) by the next day.

I use MEWSoft's address labelling program to produce the address labels and have laser printed the main part of the disc label. I try to include a return label, but if I have a lot of orders to fulfil this does not always happen. I have only had one disc which someone has complained about (I am sorry about that Mr Poland), and have had one set of two orders where I put the wrong labels on the mailer.

Apart from that I hope that the service is proving useful to some people, although I know that the absence of a clipart section, as well as some good discs with programs of educational value especially for youngsters, is a failing at present. I am hoping that these failings will be rectified in time, especially with the introduction of the ARMEd discs produced by Bruce Dickson.

Nick Evans  
The ARM Club PD Library



## **The BBC Acorn User Spring Show 15th - 17th April 1993 Harrogate International Centre**



We're delighted that BBC Acorn User has decided to hold a Spring Show this year in Harrogate. In recent years there has only been a single consumer show each year, held in London. This new Show not only fills a large gap in the calendar, but is also being held in a brand new location ideal for attracting visitors who would never make the trek down to London.

Whilst the Acorn World '93 Show at Wembley in October looks like being a spectacular event, there is every indication that this will be an unforgettable event and Safesell Exhibitions (the organisers) have enormous experience in this field. Incidentally, Dominik Diamond of *Gamesmaster Live!* will be putting in an appearance on the Friday of the Show.

The Club will be exhibiting on stand 19 throughout the Show, so please come along for a chat, free technical advice & some special offers.



# Smart STUFF

*Smart DTP* is one of those organisations which thrives in the Archimedes world, small but turning out top quality products of a type which is generally neglected by the larger companies.

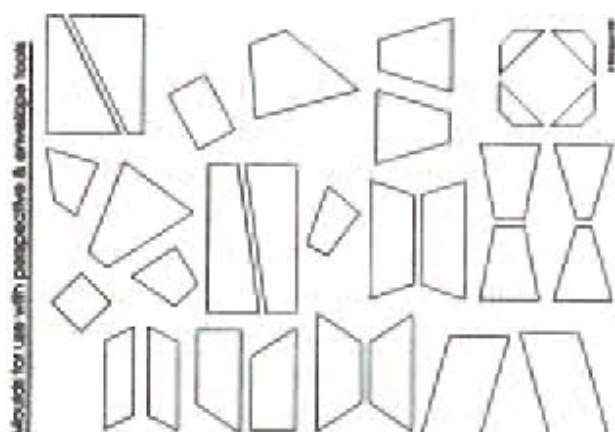
*Smart* is run by James Parry, and it produces a wide range of resources for the DTP user, all at bargain prices. You may have noticed their adverts in the large magazines and wondered if you could really get quality products from a relatively unknown advertiser, and what sort of service and support you can expect.

Among their products are a selection of clipart discs, all in draw file format, *Smart Resources*, a collection of arrows, corners, flashes etc for use in any DTP package. *Smart Borders 2* and *Smart Borders Plus* each contain frame borders for use in DTP and illustration, *Smart Works* is a collection of resources for use with Computer Concepts' Artworks package, and Smart also produce several *Mathematical Resource discs*, covering GCSE Maths, Key Stage 1 and Statistics A-Level.

*Smart Works* is advertised as a collection of resources for Artworks, costing £7.95, so just what do you get for your money? It comes on two discs, each bearing very smart printed labels (sorry, no pun intended!). The instructions are contained on the discs themselves, in text file format, and Computer Concepts' CfsReader application is provided so that more files can be fitted on the discs, and this is easy to use.

The various resource files are stored in a number of directories, and almost all of them are ArtWorks files. For example, there is a pair of ArtWorks files which are quick reference cards, providing handy information about using

ArtWorks, including a summary of all the keypresses. There is also a poster which can be printed out, demonstrating all of the outline fonts supplied with the package, and another file for testing your printer with all the features of ArtWorks. Another directory contains numerous moulds and paths which text can follow, including the set below:



A series of workcards is supplied ready for printing, and these would make ideal posters for any school computer room, as well as the basis for any course on the use of ArtWorks.

On the second disc there's a very smart (groan!) keystrip for ArtWorks – it's amazing that Computer Concepts don't supplied one themselves, but the Smart keystrip is very good.

The remainder of disc 2 is filled with an assortment of example ArtWorks files, each with a specific purpose, perfect for the use to adapt for any occasion. Files range from sample posters, letterheads and logos to pricelists, stickers, worksheets and advertisements.



# **Toy Town**

**The largest toy super-store, with toys at low low prices**



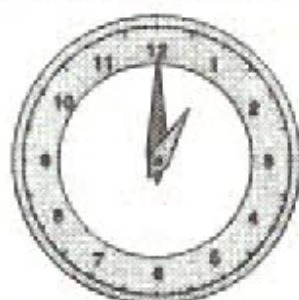
Next we'll look at the *Smart Borders 2* disc. This costs £9.95, and contains frame borders ready for use with Impression II. *Smart Borders* + costs the same amount, and contains the borders in draw file format suitable for any DTP or illustration package.

A printed manual is supplied, showing all of the borders for quick reference. Over 200 borders are supplied, and they are of the highest quality. Once you've got this set of borders, you won't need any other. The styles include corners, curves, cut, fun, intricate, lines, speech, colourshades and miscellaneous. The drawfiles containing borders for use with Impression only have some sides defined, because Impression rotates these to create a complete border.

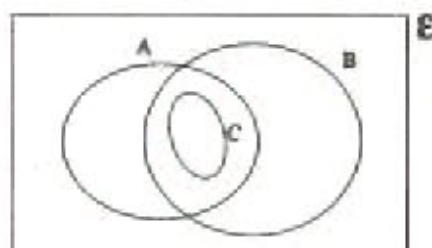
The Mathematics Resource Discs contain drawfiles produced by a Maths teacher for use in the creation of worksheets and posters.

There are currently three discs, each costing £5.95 and covering different levels of Maths education. Key Stage 1 contains a large number of draw files for use in this part of the National Curriculum, although they would be of use in other applications. Pictures include a calculator,

with a selection of digits to "apply" to its screen, dice, fractions, patterns, scales and time.

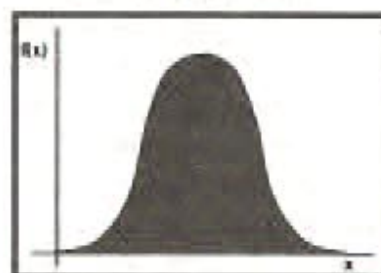


The GCSE Resource disc contains items such as various geometrical shapes, trigonometric formulae, grids, ominoes, Venn diagrams etc.



$$C \subset (A \cap B)$$

The A-Level disc contains the most specialised files, but would be very useful for anyone involved with teaching A-Level Statistics. Numerous example distributions are shown, including Binomial, Normal and Poisson, as well as scatter graphs. All sorts of formulae are supplied, ready to be dropped into DTP packages, including expressions for means, variance, regression & correlation, probability, chi-squared and confidence intervals, etc etc.



## **Conclusion**

Smart DTP produce a very good selection of resource discs for many applications at bargain prices. Providing you have a use for the material, you are sure to be pleased with any purchases.

*Smart DTP, 36 Park Road, Duffield, Belper, DE56 4GR. Prices inc VAT - add 50p postage.*



# Easiwriter

Reviewed by Toby Smith

Several months ago I received my copy of EasiWriter from Mike Glover of Icon Technology. He said he thought I'd like EasiWriter. He said he thought that I'd use it all the time. He mentioned the phrase "Impression" in the same sentence as "gathering dust in a drawer". I laughed – good sales talk this, but I've seen hype before. That was a few weeks ago...now I use EasiWriter all of the time, and my Impression disc is wallowing towards the section of my disc cupboard containing 65Host & the Oric emulator. I have to admit that he was right.

## WHY?

This is simple. EasiWriter has got to be the most user-friendly package that I have ever seen. If it were any more user-friendly, it'd be arrested by the vice squad. Every single thing that you never really liked doing is taken out of the control of the user and is done by the program. EasiWriter's system throws away the bounds of conventional wordprocessing, and this, combined with the ever shining brilliance of the Archimedes operating system, combines to provide a very powerful yet user-friendly program.

## New Approach

In the olden days, you typed your text into a word processor, then went back to the beginning, and selected one bit, and put it in bold, selected another, and put it in italics, selected a paragraph, and indented it. This has been the system used in all WPs and DTP programs ever since. EasiWriter changes all that – to start with, you tell the computer that you are about to start another 'section' of your document. You type in the title of this section, press return, then type in the rest of the section body. EasiWriter does the following:

- It starts the first line (title) on a new line, slightly down from the previous block of text.
- It puts that first line in a larger point size, and emboldens it.

- For the rest of the text, it reverts to normal type, but it does indent it a little.

Some may think that this is hard to get used to, but it isn't. You will need about 2 minutes to memorise the combinations of the function keys which start each style, then you're off. This new method isn't that hard to grasp, as it is the method that you use with a pen & paper.

When you think about it, when having dictated notes, you will automatically put section titles in capitals, and underline them, and then indent the rest, but you don't actually need to consciously think about it. And neither do you do with EasiWriter. This "Structures" feature is the basis of EasiWriter & TechWriter, and numerous styles are provided in the program, and I must admit that I have never found need for any more.

Before



After



Simply press Ctrl-Shift-F2 to put in section style (pre-defined to 2 columns)

## But there's more....

Point size, emboldening and so on are not the only things that can be specified for these text areas; EasiWriter also has an impressive array of other options, including forcing the case of words (to either upper, lower, or first letters in capitals), setting the justification, altering tab positions, underlining, and so on. The list is endless.

Whilst on the subject of lists, no review of



EasiWriter could possibly not mention its lists and tables functions. These features make the package worth its weight in hard discs without any of the other nice bits.

For example, to start a list, I press Ctrl-Shift-F4, which puts me on a new line, places a bullet in front of me and indents the line properly. Each press of <return> drops me onto another line, with another bullet and so on, until I press Ctrl-J to end my list. I can even change the bullet to any other character, or borrow a symbol from a font like Selwyn or Dingbats. I can also do numbered lists. Any changes I make to one of my lists or structures can be saved as default for this document, to easily create a uniform appearance.

For tables, I press Ctrl-Shift-F6, again I am put on a new line. My columns (separated by tabs) are automatically positioned (and if that isn't a god send, nothing is) and my data lined up underneath. I have never seen another package which can do this automatically.

### Graphics

Sprites & Draw files can be incorporated into a line of text, or used as either pictures, or figures, which have their own caption. The position and justification of the caption can be altered, and the pictures can be cropped by dragging the mouse.

These sprites & draw files can also be exported from the document, as can blocks of text. Other files that can be loaded are 1stWord+ documents, and CSV files, which are automatically set out as a table. Selected areas can be saved as draw files, and this can also provide a useful "cheat" for getting text paragraphs next to pictures.

### Spell Checking

EasiWriter comes with a dictionary containing over 80,000 words, and the spell checking is case sensitive. For instance monday and risc os are recorded as wrong, and can be replaced by

the correct forms of Monday and RISC OS. Cunning eh? It also puts suggested spellings in order by their phonetic possibility, meaning that the possibility that sounds the most like the word you mistyped is highest on the list. This is a surprisingly adorable feature. What though about that certain little phrase that isn't quite English, the one that adds that je ne sais quoi to your letter? By marking it as being French, German etc, the appropriate foreign language dictionary will be used, and the English dictionary won't complain either.

### Manual

I find that most manuals for programs of this kind are rather hard to grasp unless you really do know what is going on - this is not so with EasiWriter. The first section of the manual is a well written, quick paced tutorial that will take you through all the features effortlessly. Everything happens exactly as the tutorial says. The second part is a quick reference section, but neither I nor my technophobe guinea pigs have had to consult it having read through the tutorial once.

### Other bits!

EasiWriter also boasts the features you would expect from such a package such as find & replace, headers & footers, simple emphasis styles etc. There is a VERY useful feature to revert to your last saved copy when you foul up! EasiWriter also has a very good mail merging feature which will accept datafiles in numerous forms from packages such as Squirrel.

EasiWriter also has a feature to lay out the page in many ways, stretching from normal, through multi columns to a style rather like the Acorn Manuals. These columns can be separated by a selection of line thicknesses, and a selection of text can be placed in boxes made with these lines, or in a special shadowed box. Page size is read directly from the printer driver, and hence your page always fits!

*Continued on page 25...*





security by stopping the game as it ran. The disadvantage was that, as a hardware device, it cost some £40.

Cheating on the Archimedes has usually meant small modules that sat in RMA (as modules are prone to do) and waited until certain key-combinations are pressed, at the prompt of which the module would poking some

Andrew Clover describes his work developing The Hacker, and presents his views on ways of improving your performance..

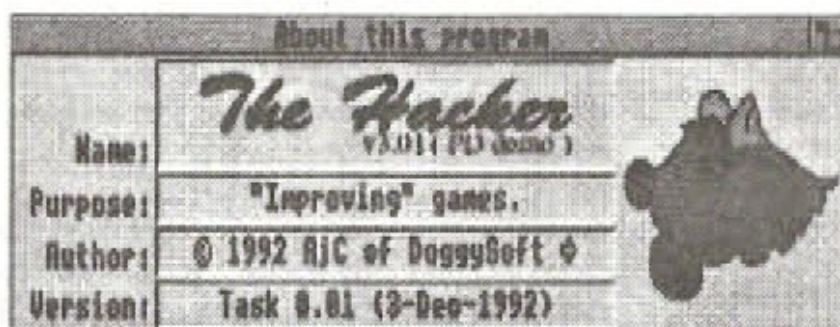
Ever since the first hints and tips page in a Spectrum magazine back in the dawn of gaming, players have wanted to cheat. At that time, Spectrum owners (and Amstrad owners - AsEd) bought a device called the "Multiface", which was then nearly declared illegal due to its ability to pirate games, but it also contained a handy way to cheat - it plugged into the back, and you pressed the little red button on the top to search for certain op-codes that looked like "take one off the player's lives", which you could then alter to give infinite lives.

Another method was to search for the number of lives you had when the game was interrupted, note down all the addresses, of which there were invariably lots, go back to the game, lose a life, and search for one less. Then you could cross-check the two lists to see if any addresses matched - an immensely time-consuming task. You almost always needed to know much of Z80 machine code, whose assembly language was ten times as difficult as the beautifully simple and flexible ARM code. The advantage of the Multiface was that it allowed you past the layers of

addresses in memory somewhere the author of the module has found out some interesting bits lie, thus changing the game in various subtle ways - for example, you never lose any lives, or your time never runs down, or infinite fishies.

Last summer saw the release on Arcade BBS of a useful little program to ease the creation of these cheats. It was called The Hacker, and was originally intended to help people discover where games held their lives, time, and everything, and then to make modules like the aforementioned cheats, which people could then send to PD libraries and so on, as their own work. The way it worked was rather like the Multiface (which has been cloned onto other machines under names like Games Genie and its purpose changed from Cheating to the rather euphemistic "Games enhancement"), in that it waited for a trigger, in Hacker's case the pressing of Alt-Alt rather than a little red button, then totally took over the machine, allowing you to search, alter, and cheat, before you return. The die-and-re-search method was made much easier by the addition of "lists" held in RAM that you could cross-check automatically. Altogether, it was very useful, and actually worked surprisingly often (considering how strangely programmers can program). At that point, though, The Hacker had fairly few features and a rudimentary





*The Info Window from DoggySoft's !Hacker*

command line style interface. This however, was to become a thing of the past.

About four months after the first release of The Hacker as shareware, a company called Leading Edge announced a new release - a program that waited until certain keys were pressed, then took over the machine and allowed you to cheat before returning you to it. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? *(We don't want any lawsuits, Andrew! Anyway, competition must be a good thing for the customer - Ed)*

Meanwhile, a new version of The Hacker was being developed. The intention was to make it more usable to those who knew nothing of ARM coding, while adding more features for the ARM code literate, and making the old ones more flexible. The old interface did seem rather unfriendly, particularly for someone who was not well-practised in coding. So, having been threatened by fellow-member of DoggySoft James Ponder (Jp), I decided to give The Hacker a graphical user interface rather like the RISC OS Desktop, with 3D icons like those first used by Computer Concepts and users of the *Interface* or *WimpExt* modules, and update the cheat module maker bit to run on the Desktop. The number of features ballooned, and were a lot more flexible and usable thanks to the interface - the manual is rarely needed, although it does give some helpful tips on hacking, and a few unguessables like what clicking in the disassembly and list viewers with different buttons does. The search and list features became extremely sophisticated while retaining the ease of use *[bias alert! - Ed]*. Some new

features were: a nice disassembler in a scrolling window, saving screenshots, saving of the game for later continuation, the display of the game's registers - an obvious missing feature of the first, executing not only star commands but also SWIs, trapping SWIs, slowing down

the game, and external code which can be used to rip Trackers out of games. You could much more easily print out lists and bits of disassembly, merge lists (and test them, copy them, cancel common words), search for SWIs and mnemonics, the ability to survive an error, with even hardware exceptions and disc requests appearing in a little window, and on and on etc. The price, however, stayed at £5, although this was probably a mistake marketing-wise. The shareware tag was removed as few people had bothered to register, as is sadly always the case on the Archimedes. Only very limited demos were ever released into the public domain, with the full version costing an unavoidable £5 *[hmm... - Ed]*.

By this time, Leading Edge were advertising Games Wizard, although it was still not quite in a finished form, costing £28.93 inc VAT - not too far away from the hardware Multiface! It's my opinion that the Games Wizard is totally featureless in comparison to the new Hacker, but then I wrote it and am biased.

One thing is clear, game enhancement is here to stay no matter which method you use!

**by Andrew Clover (DoggySoft)**

*Ed's note - we would be happy to publish an impartial review of Games Wizard, so if you have bought a copy, let us know. Andrew is naturally biased in favour of his own product, but for only £5 you can't really go wrong! A cut-down demo version is included on the magazine disc for this issue of Eureka.*



# THE PD SCENE

Nick Evans assesses various items of PD software written by Club members and included on the magazine disc.

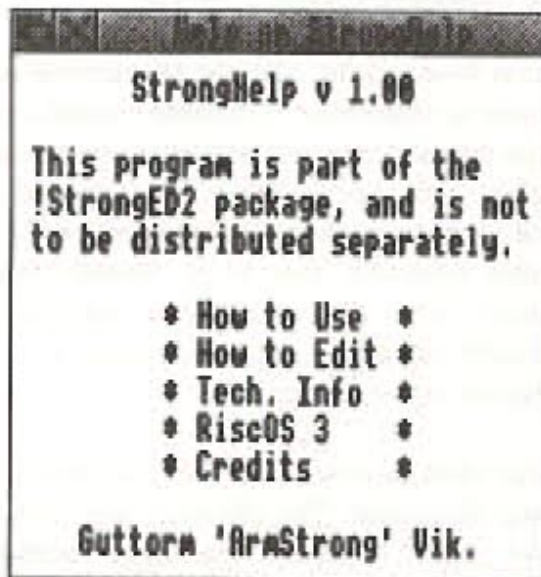
First I should apologise to those 15 members who received unreadable magazine discs with the last issue. I had very kindly been given the use of a bulk disc copier which I took up because I was getting a little bored with formatting and copying hundreds of discs each issue. At the same time there was a shortage of blank discs available on the market, and those that I bought were from a different supplier with metal shutters which caused problems with the bulk copier. This was a little odd as the discs were in fact preformatted in MSDOS format, so had already been through someone's bulk copier once. Anyway this issue of the magazine disc has been lovingly done by formatting and verifying the discs on an Archimedes [You're a masochist, Nick - Ed].

I received a letter from Stallion Software recently, stating that they have persuaded Guttorm Vik, the author of *StrongEd* and *StrongHlp*, an extremely good text editor, to take these programs out of the public domain. These were, in fact, present in most PD library catalogues (including ours on the *Program2* disc). It seems as though Stallion Software are intending to release a commercial version of these programs at the BBC Acorn User show in Harrogate whilst Guttorm writes a new version to be released into the public domain.

This is the first time that I have been aware of a program being taken from the public domain and raises a couple of interesting points. Firstly there are two versions of *StrongEd*, with the later version being called *StrongEd2*. *StrongEd* is a public domain program whereas *StrongEd2*, a much improved version, which as far as I know was the version which came with *StrongHlp*, was Shareware with a registration fee of £5.00. My

feeling is that for the time being, you are better to use *StrongEd2* provided that you register with Guttorm.

Secondly, it may be that the letter from Stallion Software has given the wrong version of *StrongEd* and really meant to say *StrongEd2*, as *StrongHlp* appears to be the manual for this latter program, and so, I assume, included in the Shareware licence for that program.



Thirdly, this means that for the moment everyone with a copy of *StrongEd* (but not *StrongEd2*, because they should be registered users) should delete their copy of *StrongEd*, as using it would now appear to be illegal. Fourthly, until the situation has been clarified I have withdrawn *Program2* disc from The ARM Club PD library although the catalogue still shows its presence.

Old members will notice that the catalogue has been altered a little, although its format still lacks inspiration, and Tracker modules have been added. These are compressed with CFS and the size shown is their compressed size. The modules can be mixed and matched as long as the total size for each disc is not more than 800. If anyone doesn't have the *CFSreader* then this takes up 35K on a disc.

Back to the magazine disc now and I have included a number of PD/Shareware programs



which have been written by members of the Club. The programs are all archived using *ArcFS*, which was written by Mark Smith, and also included is *ArcFSInfo*, a support application for *ArcFS2* also written by Mark. It gives full information on archives and archived objects, including full and compressed sizes and a ratio of the compressed size as a percentage of the full size. To get information on an archive or archived object (or a selection either), simply drag the object(s) to the *ArcFSInfo* icon.

ArcFS Object Information	
arcfs#Programs:\$	
Type:	Archive
Comp. type:	-
Size:	1391 Kbytes
Comp. size:	655 Kbytes
Ratio:	47%
Access:	NR/
Date:	22:29:13 23 Feb 1993
Archive pathname:	
ADFS:Mag-Mar93\$.Programs	

It also contains a utility called *EnsArcFS2* utility, which can be used to check for the presence of *ArcFS2*.

*BurstPipe* by Mark Johnson is a game where you have to repair all the leaking pipes on any of the 7 levels.

*Crackle* by Andrew Thacker switches Tracker tunes and other sound to right stereo. Andrew says it is handy if your left speaker is blown!

*GoodIcon* is an Impression document on how to design good icons - a guide for programmers by Toby Smith of the Archimedes Help Service.

*The Hacker* allows you, by pressing the Alt-Alt keys, to interrupt a game and examine the Arc's memory at that time to discover the position of the code which gives you lives etc. By altering

these 'registers' you can make yourself more or less invincible. This version of *Hacker* is crippled but the full version cost £5.00 from DoggySoft, whose address is in the !Help file for the program.

*Huffman* generates efficient binary codes using Huffman's method. It was written by Gary Wass as part of an A-Level Mathematics 'Information and Coding' course.

*Protector* is a fairly crude, but probably effective, bastion against the evils of viruses and theft. The former is supplied by giving a quick scan of relevant files to check they have not been altered since you have been able to verify their 'virus freeness'. The latter is supplied by the possibility of a banner (with or without password protection) to come up upon powering up the machine. Although this banner can be removed, it is unlikely that any thief will have the know-how to do so (according to the author, Club member Ian Palmer). Ian has written a number of other applications which will be covered in the future.

Protector	
Info	↕
Scan	↕
Password	↕
% check	↕
Period	↕
Number	↕
Lock	
Check 100%	
Quit	

*RunProd*'s sole purpose is to produce !Run and !Boot files. It is aimed at those who could just about write their own Obey files, but a person without this knowledge could just about handle the thing. I have included it so that you can see why Toby Smith wrote his *GoodIcon* guide.

*1WpDiction* was compiled by Andrew Barron. The directory contains two dictionary files for 1st Word+: *1wp1-ExDic* - A 23,659 word dictionary for release 1; *1wp2-ExDic* - A 1,169 word dictionary for release 2. These dictionaries can be merged into the ones provided using the program on the utilities disk (instructions in the manual.)





### *The contents of the Eureka Magazine Disc*

*!FontPlus* by Simon Burrows is intended for hard disc and network users. Whilst it can be used by floppy only users, it is only of limited benefit to them. Various problems arise from having too many outline fonts:

- a conventional *!Font* directory can only hold 72 font family directories.
- Too many fonts can crash badly written programs, most notably the old version of *!Edit*.
- Long font menus are awkward when they appear on screen, and having lots of fonts available slows down the application using them, especially when creating the font list.

*!FontPlus* attempts to solve these problems by allowing you to put your fonts into various groups, and then you can choose which of these groups to have available at any time.

RISC OS3 has helped ease the pain of some of these problems but Simon has re-written *FontPlus* to produce a RISCOS 3 only version. The magazine disc thus contains both versions for those who have either operating system. I hope that this trend of updating PD programs for the new operating system will continue. With over 1200 applications in the library it has become a bit of a headache to try to separate RISC OS2 from RISCOS3 compatible versions.

PDSCC, which stands for "Promotional Designs Serving Commerce & Charities", are a group of people, mainly retired, raising money for charities in a new and novel approach. The PDSCC directory contains a couple of samples of scans that they have done. They have a large range of what they call *ArtHelp* discs in containing artwork, scanned images etc in modes 12,18,20 for mono

and modes 13,15,21,28 for colour. Each set is normally 5 or 6 disks for £6 and may include Wood and Tapestry scans, Gemstones, Cloth, Brick/Concrete & various other scans.

They also offer a comprehensive scanning service, including prints and colour transparencies. Peter Hughes is the secretary and can be contacted on PO Box 332 - BRISTOL BS99 7XL.

The directory *Kecun* contains a couple of sprites from Chris Kecun who is now producing art for Matt Black. *Dove* was made during his last year of school two years ago as part of his art exhibition. It was created on *Pro-Artisan* and *Eclipse* was a spin-off from a heavy period of Sci-Fi reading. It was created with *Revelation II* on the A5000 in mode 28. He has also sent me some very good *Artworks* files.

Many thanks to all those who have supplied me with PD/Shareware and I look forwards to having more of the same. The next project for the library is to start a clipart section, so donations will be gratefully received.

*A selection of discs from the Club library will be available at the BBC Acorn User Spring Show. If you've written some PD software, please bring along a copy for the library and we'll swap your disc for one from our collection.*

Nick Evans



# Write-Back Extra

Dear Sir,

I have just read Steve Arnold's "Observations" in Issue 6, this being my introduction to the contents of your magazine. I read that first because I am a teacher for IT in a primary school, and I was looking for a good laugh. (No! No! I was not looking for a good laugh! Honest? Well, maybe just a little laugh, but I didn't mean it...Really I didn't, sorry!)

However I was a trifle sceptical, but instead found an article written by someone who seems to have a good idea of what is going on in the world of educational computing (so I can't have a pop at him! Shame!). Much more of a shame, because what he said is true. So here are some tips of my own:

- When some cretin from an office environments intones the mantra "Ah, but is it PC compatible?" just say "NO!" very firmly. In fact, as firmly as you like. In fact scrub that last instruction. SHOUT "NO!" very loud. The question is completely irrelevant. Just look through any edition of *Educational Computing and Technology* and you will see advertisements for a wide range of computers, nearly all of which (Acorn & Apple excepted) base their claim for this market on the grounds that they are PC compatible, and your students are bound to come up against something wearing an MSDOS coat at some time in the future. (Have they asked Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft about this? I think he may have a thing or two to tell them!). As far as a primary school child is concerned, the world of the PC is a complete waste of time. Few, if any of these companies have anything more to offer the educational world than the occasional mind numbing arcade game, offered under the spurious pretext that it gets children used to using a computer. (Does this mean that pornographic magazines get children used to reading?).

- It's no good asking the Local Authority. They simply don't know, and, as more and more schools opt to take over their own budgets, then their ability to dictate/recommend a certain type of machine will decline. When I telephoned our local authority, who shall remain nameless, for some advice on which machines they supported, I was first told that it didn't matter what sort of machine I had as they supported all the computer makes currently available.

Not only was this a fairly mind boggling claim to make, it also turned out to be incorrect. After some consultation with a colleague, the lady who had answered the phone tried palming me off onto a colleague...who palmed me off...I ended up with a "bloke called Trev" whom I was assured would be able to help "cos he's got a Speccy". I put the phone down!

- Devise your own scheme – it shouldn't be too hard. Most teachers worth their salt should be able to tell you what they start with, in terms of programs and at what age, and where they end. Like me they have probably devised their own scheme the hard way (large alcohol liberations and long hours with a couple of like-minded mates) and with little help from outside quarters.

- Develop some personal contacts. Amongst the usual dross and filth, there are always a few diamonds. I've found some, I dare say you have. Hold on to them. Talk to them on the phone. Introduce yourself at shows. They may well remember you, as they like to be noticed as much as you or I do.

Should any of you wish to exchange views with me (you'll regret it, I warn you!) I can be found at the following address.

Mr C Price  
Merton Court School,  
Knoll Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4QU



# CLEAN

Toby Smith of the Archimedes Help Service gives advice on how to Spring Clean your computer and keep it in tip-top condition.

It is about this time of year when most heads turn towards cleaning the dust of the windowsills, and perhaps a bit of hoovering, but take time out to spare a thought for your poor old Archimedes, sitting gathering dust in a corner. Here are a few simple practical tips on cleaning up your act which can be carried out at home without any specialist materials.

## The Mouse

The poor old mouse comes into contact with your grotty sweaty mit for most of the time you spend at your computer, and the ball is liable to be rolled over a great mileage of dirt and other such nasties on your desk surface or mouse mat (you wouldn't believe how many miles a mouse clocks up each day!).

Mouse Mats are vital, and improve the accuracy of your pointer, as well as the life of your rodent. Being open to the air, they are likely to be covered in small amounts of dust most of the time. so an occasional thump against a wall or brush off with your hand will help avoid too much trouble here.

The mouse itself can be disassembled, following the instructions in the user guide, and the plastic parts (NOTE: not the whole mouse, remember the internal electronics) can be gently washed in warm water, and rubbed with a nail brush, or wet face cloth. A hot blow with a hair drier,

u  
p  
y  
o  
u  
r  
a  
c  
t

particularly the buttons, and the mouse can be reassembled.

In the future I'm thinking of setting up a mouse cleaning "salon" at the ARM Club Open Days, so bring along your rodent for a quick brush up & blow dry!

## Keyboard

The keyboard is also a collecting place for dirt. There are many keyboard vacuum cleaners available, battery powered and small enough to fit down the cracks. Look around your local stationery store, or at a computer show. Ordinary house hold vacuums, and portable car vacuums are too powerful. The confident amongst you may like to take the cover off your keyboard, and give it a quick very gentle blow. Whilst the cover is off, certain parts of the cover may need a wet wash, as described for the mouse, but don't dunk your electronics.

## A3000

All owners of the A3000 will have noticed the magnetic attraction for dirt & the like that the air grilles along the back of their machine suffer from. Removal of the top cover allows this to be blown / sucked out and washed in places, notably around the bottom corners, above where the disc drive should be, and the little tabs on either side of the space bar.



## Discs

Discs are highly attractive to dirt, and the metal cover should never be opened in a dirty environment. The mere knowledge that a disc head flies above the disc at a quarter of the height of a dust particle should explain why. The tops of your most used discs will quickly acquire a grubby look, and the colour of the label will begin to fade. A simple layer of sticky tape will provide an amicable and effective solution.

## Dust Covers

If you have not already got a set of dust covers, then buy one. The difference in appearance between a computer left under covers over night and one that wasn't is quite startling, particularly in an office environment. Various suppliers exist, although I would personally recommend a company called BBD Dust Covers, who produce dust covers to fit every possible computer & peripheral.

For any further details, please contact the Archimedes Help Service. If you are willing to help other members in your area to clean their Archimedes, give the Help Service your details!

**Toby Smith**

*Useful address:*  
BBD Dust Covers, Suites 113-115  
The Standish Centre, Cross Street  
Standish, Wigan  
WN6 0HQ

Tel (0257) 425839

*Please remember that your computer is a sensitive and valuable piece of equipment. Don't do anything you are not confident about. Neither Toby nor the Club can accept responsibility for damage caused to your equipment by following these suggestions.*

*EasiWriter review continued from page 17...*

## Conclusion

EasiWriter is possibly the most versatile, easy to use, professional package available for the Archimedes at the current time. I have tested it on both my own powerful needs and the simplistic and wholly inexperienced technophobe who I happen to live with.

The ease of use of EasiWriter coupled with a host of powerful features make this package a definite must for all users. I would honestly say that unless you definitely want a frame based DTP system (eg if you are teaching Desktop Publishing or producing magazines specifically) then EasiWriter will beat all other comers hands down. It excels at quality text publishing, especially in the realms of documentation, shown by the fact that the well presented and brilliantly written manual was written and published entirely by EasiWriter.

## Facts & Figures

Price	Retail	Education	Student
StartWrite	£ 90.48	£ 72.85	£ 61.10
EasiWriter	£ 178.60	£ 143.35	£ 118.68
TechWriter	£ 296.10	£ 237.35	£ 178.60

EasiWriter is in the middle of a range of three excellent products, and you can upgrade for the difference in price. All prices include VAT, and require at least 2MB of RAM (except StartWrite).

## Welsh Open Day

On Saturday 30th January our Welsh Group held an Open Day in Caerphilly, near Cardiff. Unfortunately the report on the day's activities arrived too late to go in this issue, but thanks to Derek Rowlands for organising it, and Uniqueway for kindly supporting the event.





## A roundup of the latest Acorn news

The pace of developments from Acorn seems to be accelerating all of the time, and the past few months have been an active time for Acorn watchers, with a number of new products and unusual new promotions.

The annual BETT exhibition took place at Olympia in January, showing off the latest developments in an educational context. Acorn had a major presence at the Show along with a wealth of new products aimed at the educational buyer. A major release was *Acorn Advance*, an integrated software package of document processor, spreadsheet, database and graphing package, with easy transfer of data between the separate parts. In the future Acorn intends to produce a global clipboard for the RISC OS desktop which will allow data to be transferred between any packages conforming to Acorn's standards.

Acorn also unveiled a new multimedia expansion box, modelled on the A4000, which contains a CD-ROM drive which reads data at twice the normal rate. A pair of PC mini-cards were launched to provide PC compatibility for Acorn's newer machines. There was also a Replay DIY expansion card, designed by Irlam Instruments, allowing anyone to produce Acorn Replay animation files from a moving video source. Acorn also announced a new rental scheme for schools, and details of Archimedes based computer "holidays".

Amusingly, the Acorn stand was situated next door to the Research Machines stand - RM are Acorn's main competitors in the education market. RM took great delight in flashing up a message on a large screen facing Acorn stating that RM is number one in education, rather than Acorn. Fortunately they failed to point out that the comparison was not comparing like with like, since the two companies have different approaches to retailing their products.

Acorn itself has been a centre of attention recently, with its USM share price rising from 6p to a peak of 155p in the space of less than a year (in fact mostly over a couple of weeks). There are several reasons for the massive increase, but the main one is the announcement in the USA of a revolutionary new games console called the 3DO. This stunning console uses an ARM processor, and Acorn are joint owners of ARM Ltd, the designers of this processor. Acorn has long been undervalued as a company, and was perhaps affected by the confidence inspired in investors by other companies based in Cambridge. IBM made a statement that RISC technology is the way forward, which was another bonus for Acorn and ARM Ltd and the corresponding share price.

Acorn has recently launched a new promotion featuring the hit car racing game *Lotus Turbo Challenge II*. Anyone can play the game on Acorn stands at shows & open days, such as the Ideal Home Exhibition, the BBC Acorn User Spring Show and so on, and there are numerous prizes available for the people who achieve the highest scores. Some dealers are also running the promotion, with a number of exciting prizes.

Finally, Acorn and Tesco Stores Ltd have got together to repeat last year's highly successful "Computers for Schools" promotion. Whenever customers spend money at Tesco supermarkets, they may receive vouchers which can be given to schools who can exchange them for Acorn computer equipment and software. Last year over 13000 items were distributed to 8000 schools, and advertisements are now appearing on TV.



## Final Thoughts

The last issue of Eureka contained a couple of errors which unfortunately slipped through the net. Mark Watts stated in his review of Squirrel that records may not be sorted for browsing. This is not the case at all. Squirrel has powerful browsing abilities in that all fields are automatically indexed by placing the caret in any field. By pressing the page up and page down buttons, the user may browse through the database in any field order, ie the order of the field in which the caret currently resides. Apologies for this oversight in the review.

The other mistake concerned the article on Vector Drawing, which was actually written by Richard Stubbs, not Ben Eshmade as stated. The article was supplied only signed as "The Gnelf", and we mistakenly interpreted this as meaning Ben Eshmade!

This magazine is edited and designed on an Archimedes 440/1 computer, fitted with RISC OS 3.1 and the super-fast 36MHz ARM3 available from Ground Control Electronics, which makes everything zip along! Design and layout are performed using Impression II and Artworks from Computer Concepts, with the help of various other packages and bits of hardware including a LaserDirect printer.

There's nothing better than meeting other Archimedes users, so do come along to the BBC Acorn User Show if you possibly can. We look forward to an exciting Show, and there should be lots to see and do. If not then, there is always the Acorn World '93 Show in October.

Now that we've got our FREEPOST address, there's no excuse for not writing lots of letters to us as well as obtaining free technical advice! As the days get longer and the nights get shorter, don't forget our motto of getting in touch with other members. Have fun!



# The ARM Club

I wish to enrol as a member of The ARM Club

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

Address .....

.....

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

For the following questions, please tick as many of the boxes as are appropriate.

Which model Arc do you own? A3000 ☐ A3010 ☐ A3020 ☐ A4000 ☐ A5000 ☐  
A310 ☐ A440 ☐ A400/1 ☐ A540 ☐ A4 ☐

What RAM size does your machine have? ..... What is the capacity of your hard disc .....

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

Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comms	<input type="checkbox"/>
DTP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graphics	<input type="checkbox"/>	PD Software	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	Databases	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Archimedes programs with which I am most familiar are:

.....

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

Please tick the following as appropriate —

I would be prepared to offer some of my hardware for the benefit of other Club members. Please indicate the service you would be prepared to offer (e.g. laser printing at 50p per copy if they include SAE) .....

.....

I would like to be a contact for my area (and help organise Club events in my area and get in contact with members),

☐

I DO NOT want to be added to the ARM Club members' list leaflet.

☐

I enclose herewith a donation (minimum of £10) towards the Club. I understand that the Club is non-profit making, and the donation is used to pay for administrative and running costs (such as postage, materials, correspondence etc.). You may send a photocopy of this form if you wish to preserve the magazine.

Please sign here:

Please make cheques payable to "The ARM Club", and send to:  
**The ARM Club Secretary, FREEPOST ND6573, London N12 0BR**  
(No stamp required)



**Please address all correspondence  
to the ARM Club Secretary at:**

**The ARM Club  
FREEPOST ND6573  
London  
N12 0BR**