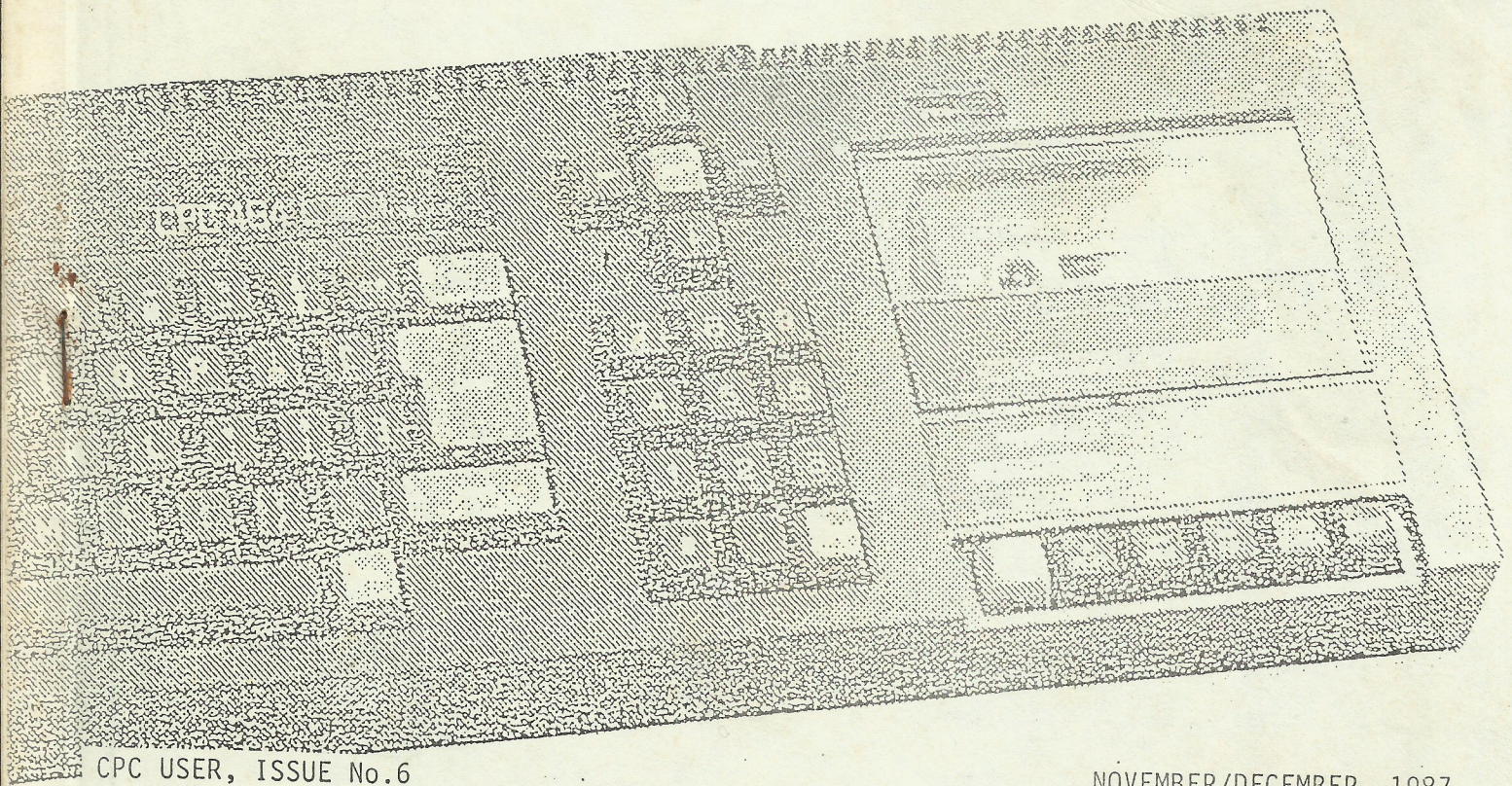
CPC USER

THE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED AMSTRAD USER GROUP



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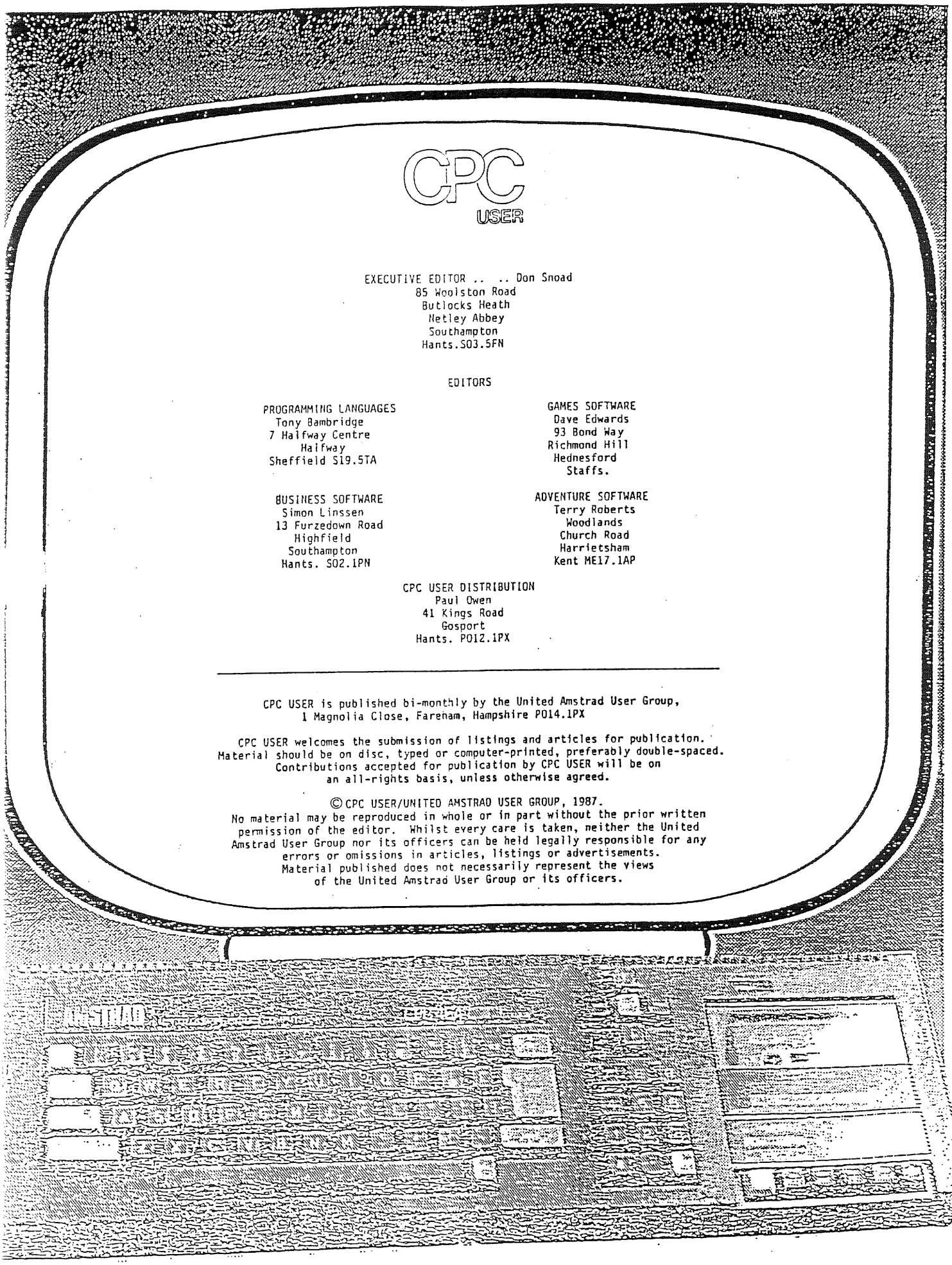

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APOLOGIES...

Having sat in the editorial hot-seat only since the end of November, this edition has been put together in far less time than I would normally expect to devote to it. Consequently, a few articles have of necessity been omitted. My apologies to the contributors, and my assurance that your endeavours are much appreciated and will be used in a future edition - Ed

EDITORIAL

SO HERE WE ARE ALMOST INTO 1988. A new year about to dawn, a new editor and a new magazine. Thankfully, our administrative problems are behind us and we can now concentrate on strengthening the UAUG.

Editorially, our objective is to publish a magazine that will be eagerly received by the membership and which will attract new members and advertisers. So far as is practicable, we intend to pursue a policy of in-depth reportage, thereby ensuring that CPC USER is unique in the coverage it provides. Because the magazine is published bi-monthly, we shall not attempt to compete with the weeklies or monthlies in terms of fresh news, but we can and will show the way when it comes to CPC-specific reviews and feature articles. We already have a brand new series lined up for publication in the New Year and we are introducing two new services; namely: MONITOR, a members' complaints bureau with, if necessary, a 'black list' (circulated strictly to members only) of malpracticing traders, and KEYBOARD, an agony column for members' computing problems. Members' correspondence will be published in MAILBOX and the existing discount sales, public domain software and book library services will continue. We welcome authoritative articles on any CPC-related subject, as well as comment or criticism about the magazine.

Whilst on the subject of contributions, members may recall that we invited suggestions for a new name for the magazine. This edition's cover is based upon one such suggestion. From time to time, we will be using other covers based on members' ideas and, eventually, you will be asked to judge which is the most suitable.

Since the first Arnold was marketed nearly four years ago, much water has passed under the Amstrad bridge carrying with it some twenty new models - but the CPC continues to thrive. Let's keep it that way.

Don Snoad

EVERYONE'S A WINNER...

The outright winner of our main competition (see Newsletter No.5, page 13) is Mr Paul White. Paul's prize, a copy of ENDURO RACER, is on its way. Congratulations, Paul.

Other 'competition' draw winners are: Mr S.J.Lee (for the return of the Application Form) and Mr P. Dooley (for the return of the Questionnaire. A budget game is being sent to both members.

UAUG CONSTITUTION...

Final details of the Constitution have now been determined; copies of the Constitution will be circulated in January to all members.

COMPUTER BOOK LIBRARY...

The library list is not yet available for release to members due to our re-organisation. The library is currently being re-catalogued and will re-open on February 1st.

UAUG TELEPHONE LINE...

The UAUG secretarial office can be contacted on Fareham (0329) 281324 between 6.30 and 8.30 pm Monday to Friday and 4.30 to 9.30 pm on Saturday and Sunday. This telephone number is for the use of members during the times stated. Please remember when calling that the line is in Gary's home so don't forget to ask for Gary before launching into your queries, problems or whatever; it may not be Gary who answers the phone !

MORE HELPERS SOUGHT...

Although the UAUG re-organisation is almost complete there are still one or two unfilled posts. If any member has the time, enthusiasm and commitment to undertake responsiblities for publicity or trade advertisements to further the cause of the UAUG, Gary Carter would be very pleased to hear from you.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTIC...

As at November 30th. membership of the UAUG stood at 131, plus honorary and complimentary members. Members are reminded that subscription renewals , due on January 1st, will be welcomed.

CPC USER CONTRIBUTIONS...

Just a gentle reminder that we are always pleased to receive contributions from members for publication in CPC USER. Reviews, articles, hints and tips, gripes or problems - we welcome them all.

SAD LOSS...

We regret to record the death on October 4th, 1987, of member Mr David George Jackson of Egham, Surrey.

DISCLAIMER...

The UAUG is a completely independent Group and has no vested interest with any manufacturer or supplier. Whilst the UAUG gratefully acknowledges the support of suppliers offering discounts to the membership, the UAUG does not necessarily recommend or favour the products offered for sale.

IN THE NEXT EDITION...

The next edition of CPC USER will include a review of the new Brunword 6128 word processor, an article on D.I.Y. low-cost 2nd disc drives, Part 2 of the series on compiled language programming, plus reviews of current games and adventure software and the regular Monitor, Keyboard and Mailbox features. Publishing date is February 1st.

A series of in-depth reviews and other articles are planned for future editions. This includes: the Microscript word-processor-cum-calculator package, Micro-word, Pendown, Word Perfect and Textproc word processors, an overview of Pocket Protext, feature articles on Configuring the CPC for Pocket Wordstar, Simplifying Wordstar on the CPC, resolving the screen columns/character pitch/ printer platen width relationship and a simple program for labelling your discs. Let the editor know which articles you would like to see first. In addition, a new 4-part series is being prepared on Epson compatibility and printer configuration problems, and the spreadsheet program MATRIX.

INDUSTRY NEWS

MERRY-GO-ROUND...

Having threatened to sue everyone in sight who dared use 'Amstrad' in trade advertisements for computer accessories, it is now Amstrad's turn to be on the receiving end of a writ. Epson has got uptight about Amstrad's use of the LQ prefix for one of its printers, and it won't be long before Amstrad have a go at Tandy for the latter's use of the DMP prefix.

As by-standers to these publicity-seeking antics, we are tempted to ask whether the participants are men or children.....come on gentlemen, grow up!

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

Database Software has released their first upgrade of the Mini Office II suite of programs. Priced at £29.95, Mini Office Professional is supplied on two discs with enhanced versions of the word processing, database, spreadsheet and communcations modules plus a new graphics program which allows bar charts or line graphs to be developed either independently or using data imported from other modules. Tutorials are included on the master discs and the package is accompanied by a 70-page handbook.

Mini Office Professional will be reviewed in due course by CPC USER; meanwhile, further details may be obtained from Database Software, Europa House, 68 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7.5NY.

THE MISSING WORD

If you're thinking of buying NewWord2 for yourself this Christmas, forget it. NewWord2 for the PCW/CPC computers is virtually unobtainable, at least until the conclusion of negotiations by MicroPro to acquire all rights to the program. Ironically, NewWord was developed by a break-away group of programmers from the MicroPro stable, allegedly over disagreement about the lack of further development of Wordstar. Now that MicroPro has got shot of the ageing Wordstar, it seeks the return of its illegitimate but virtuosic offspring. But what will Auntie Cumana say ?

CP/M PROTEXT

Two versions of Arnor's famous Protext word processor are a CP/M Plus implementation specially written to run on the PCW/CPC range of computers. Be warned, however, that despite being a CP/M Plus program, they will not run on any other CP/M Plus computer. Don't ask why - we don't know.

LOCOSCRIPT

Should any readers be using a PCW computer (perish the thought !), they may like to know that a LocoScript wall chart is available showing all the routes through the program and the command parameters. With this chart, you need hardly ever refer to the handbook. The chart was prepared for LocoScript v1.4 (but can also be used for LocoScript2) and is available direct from Don Snoad, 85 Woolston Road, Butlocks Heath, Southampton SO3.5FN, price £4.50 inclusive of p & p.

IN RETROSPECT

Whatever happened to:

- the credit-card size Astron ROM card with Pocket Wordstar ?
- the high-speed RAM card with your choice of word processor installed and with up to 1 Mbyte of memory ?
- the (Vortex ?) 16-bit second processor enabling the CPC6128 to use PC-DOS and MS-DOS software ?
- the (Amstrad ?) 8-bit printer port ?
- the EPROM programmer for the CPC6128
- the 10 Mbyte hard disc for the CPC6128 ?
- the CPC4320 ?

All these items were reported in the computer press during the past 18 months. Has any member seen or heard any of them ?

AMSTRAD'S NEW PORTABLE COMPUTER

So the secret is out. The much rumoured and equally much denied new portable was announced by Alan Sugar during a Wogan TV chat show early in November, confirmed the following week by previews in the computing press.

The new range of Amstrad PPC-series portables (which in appearance are vaguely similar to the Wren portable) will be available in the UK in January and will feature an 8086 16-bit processor, 8 MHz clock, integrated display adaptor compatible with MDA and CGA, a 640 x 200 pixel supertwist back-lit LCD panel, a full-size IBM AT-type enhanced keyboard and five optional power supplies (battery, ac mains adaptor, expansion box, car cigar lighter socket or via the PSU of any Amstrad PC monitor). Carrying weight is said to be around 12 lbs.

The range comprises four models: the PPC-512S (single 720K 3½ inch drive) at £459, the PPC-512D (double 720K 3½ inch drive) at £574, the PPC-640S (single 720K 3½ inch drive with internal modem) also at £574 and the PPC-640D (double 720K 3½ inch drive with internal modem) at £804.

ENTERTAINMENTS SOFTWARE SECTION

by Dave Edwards

Title: Head Over Heels
S/house: Ocean
Price: £8.95
Type: 3D Maze
Micro: All CPC

This is a 3D maze game in the same mould as Batman. Written by the same authors it is very similar in graphic detail to Batman but the gameplay is quite different.

Your task is to find the hidden crown on each of five worlds thus liberating those worlds from the oppressive rulers, and leading to an eventual rebellion. You control TWO figures, Head and Heels either separately or as one depending on the puzzle to be solved. Just to make life interesting in some rooms only one of the two figures is allowed through, forcing a detour by the other to rejoin his other half.

The puzzles vary from the usual building block method of escape to some quite tricky and frustrating situations that need to be carefully planned. Always make sure you have some doughnuts (why doughnuts ?) in reserve to use against the hostile sprites, thereby immobilising them and making them available for your own use. As with all maze games make a map as you progress. Directional control is by joystick and the keyboard is used to trigger certain special functions.

Although similar to Batman the game is different enough to make it interesting for someone with Batman in his collection. Over two hundred rooms mean it will keep your attention for a good while and the puzzles are pretty tricky in places, especially when you eventually find the crowns. Definitely recommended.

Title: F15 Strike Eagle
S/house: Microprose
Price: £9.95
Type: Flight Simulator
Micro: CPC

First impressions are very good. The box contains the software and an excellent 40-page manual detailing flight characteristics and tactics, also key functions.

The aim of the programme is to simulate various missions such as a strike on an Iraqi nuclear reactor or a bombing mission over Hanoi.

Control is by joystick or keyboard. The display shows an artificial horizon and the usual flight information can be toggled on and off using the keyboard. A map of the mission shows ground targets and a navigation cursor used to provide directions to target.

First impressions don't always prove correct however. This is an example of the hype being better than the actual game.

The graphics are nothing special and the sound almost non existent. Air targets are almost impossible to recognise and ground targets are simple two dimensional wire frame that look the same whichever mission is chosen.

As a combat simulator it is indifferent and as a flight simulator it is less than average. How can you have a flight simulator without undercarriage, flaps, or rudder control? Others have done it better (Fighter Pilot); few have done it worse.

AMSTRAD NEW RELEASES

SURVIVOR	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
MASK 1	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
TAI PAN	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
ENTERPRISE	£8.95 TAPE
EVENING STAR	£13.95 DISC/£8.95 TAPE
INTERNATIONAL KARATE	£ 7.99 DISC
SOLOMONS KEY	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
SCRABBLE DE LUXE	£13.99 DISC£13.95 DISC
INDIANNA JONES	£13.99 DISC/£8.99 TAPE
LURKING HORROR	£22.99 DISC
STATION FALL	£22.99 DISC
MYSTERY OF THE NILE	£11.95 DISC/£7.95 TAPE
RENEGADE	£13.95 DISC/£8.95 TAPE
YES PRIME MINISTER	£17.95 DISC/£13.95 TAPE
FLUNKY	£13.95 DISC/£8.95 TAPE
KILLED UNTIL DEAD	£13.99 DISC/£8.95 TAPE

NEW RELEASES DUE OUT SOON FROM ELITE:

ELITE 6 PACK VOLUME II
(Light force, International karate, A.C.E., Shockway rider, Into the eagles nest, Batty)

BEST OF ELITE VOLUME I
(Commando, Airwolf, Frank Bruno's boxing)

BEST OF ELITE VOLUME II
(Paperboy, Bombjack II, Ghosts & Goblins)

£9.95 (CASS) £14.95 (DISC)

SPECIAL OFFER WHILE STOCKS LAST:
GAUNTLET £7.95

WHY NOT PLACE A BULK ORDER FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS
ONLY 50p POSTAGE - NO MATTER HOW MANY GAMES ORDERED

COMPUT A BITS
93 Bond Way
Richmond Hill
Pye Green
HEDNESFORD
Staffs. WS12 4SW

MONITOR

It is the policy of CPC USER to reply to members letters individually and, whenever possible, by return post. Correspondence is published in CPC USER for the general benefit of all members.

I recently purchased a database program by Micro Power called Club Mailing List but some parts of the program will not run. The supplier is unable to help and refuses to exchange the program or refund my money. Can you help ?

If it's any consolation, we experienced problems when we tested the program about 18 months ago; we could not save a file in ASCII code because, amongst other things, we could not enter the numerous options that are a pre-requisite of that facility. We wrote a number of letters to Micro Power, but no satisfactory answers were received.

At that time, Micro Power announced (via their press advertisements) a price reduction from £39.95 to £19.95, but not all stockists were advised of the price cut. We suspected that Micro Power were aware of the bugs before marketing the program and, because of it, the draft user instructions may have been edited before printing to delete all references to those parts of the program that were malfunctioning; this seemed the only explanation for the total absence in the instructions of any mention of features (which were still present in the program) such as "ASCII File: Options 1, 2 or 3", "Labels", "Extra Data Fields", "Field Numbers", "Field Separator Codes" and "Record Separator Codes", none of which worked on the ROM we tested. It was rumoured that the real purpose of the price cut was to clear existing stocks of the bugged program, but we have no evidence to support this. The price of the Mailing List ROM was restored to £39.95 about a year ago, so presumably an upgraded version has been available for some time.

If you are certain that the program you purchased recently is defective, three options are open to you. You can (1) contact Micro Power and ask for an unconditional replacement, (2) bin the program and put it all down to experience, or (3) return the complete package to the supplier and insist upon a full refund on the grounds that the product is not fit for the purpose for which it was sold. If you obtained the program from Micro Power, you will have to deal with them direct (we dealt with a Mr Graham Slater). If you purchased it from a retailer, return it to them; it is the point-of-sale retailer who should refund your money - you do not need to become involved in any dispute between the retailer and his supplier. Should you get no satisfaction and wish to pursue the matter, contact your Trading Standards Officer (if you cannot find the address, your Local Authority will give it to you). We have always found the Trading Standards people to be extremely helpful, so long as you explain the problem clearly and accurately.

I bought a second-hand printer through the personal ads of my local paper. It seemed to work OK but when I got it home I found a number of defects including a broken part. The seller says it was in working order when I collected it from him and doesn't want to know. I've been told I can get my money back by the Trades Description Act. Any advice you can give would be appreciated.

We cannot help you, especially since the printer was demonstrated to be working at the time of purchase. In any event, the Trades Description Act does not apply because the vendor is not a trader within the meaning of the Act. This is one of the disadvantages of private sales. However, a plea may succeed if you can show that the vendor is selling at sufficient volume for him to be classed as a trader, but it could be a difficult point to prove. Talk to your Trading Standards Officer.

THE ADVENTURE COLUMN

by Terry Roberts

As promised, here is the information on magazines devoted to adventuring; they are the only mags I know about. If there are others, please let me have details and your comments on content.

ADVENTURE PROBE and SOOTHSAYER are both produced monthly. Adventure Probe covers a whole range of hints, full solutions, reviews plus a lively correspondence section. It also publishes details (with addresses and 'phone numbers) of those clever souls who have completed various adventures. Probe has been going now for 18 months and is published regularly on the first day of each month. Soothsayer is new (the first issue appeared mid-October) and is dedicated to maps and solutions only, so it is more of a reference collection. Both mags cost £1 a copy and are obtainable from Sandra Sharkey, 78 Merton Road, Wigan WN3.6AT. Back copies of Probe are also available.

H and D Services of 1338 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11.1JG, publish a range of monthlies on adventuring including WHAT NOW? This is a glossy mag with hints, solutions, etc, and is available by mail order at £1.50 per copy. WHAT NOW? can also be obtained from some retail outlets, details of which I hope to have soon.

THE ADVENTURE CLUB LTD is my final offering this month. I have no first-hand experience of the club, which operates from 64c Menelic Road, London NW2.3RH. Membership in the UK is by annual subscription of £11.95, for which you receive six "members dossiers'. Should any reader have experience of the club, I would appreciate details.

That's all on the magazine front for now.

In the last issue, I suggested the Arnold Blackwood collection of adventures as a good starting point. Although these adventures have been around for some time, they still have a lot to offer. The four best known are: TRIAL OF ARNOLD BLACKWOOD, BRAWN FREE, ARNOLD GOES SOMEWHERE ELSE and THE WISE AND FOOL OF ARNOLD BLACKWOOD. These, together with a lesser known adventure ANGELIQUE, A GRIEF ENCOUNTER, are still available. The author, Colin Harris of Nemesis (now famous for fascinating utilities such as BONZO SUPER MEDDLER) has kindly offered a unique collection of all five of the Arnolds on disc for the CPC for £10. At £2 each, they are excellent value and will keep you off the streets night after night. To obtain your copy, send £10 remittance to Nemesis, 10 Carlow Road, Ringstead, Kettering, Northants NN14.4DW. When you receive the collecton, start with TRIAL as this has only 100 locations, not all of which are immediately accessible. After wandering through the grounds of Lord Erebus' castle, you eventually find the key to open the oak door. When playing, inputs are verb/noun only (e.g, shoot dog) and you need to input only the first three letters of each word, which means that you can move along quite quickly through the game. The 'save game' option (to a blank disc) is important as the games take some time to complete even though they are not too difficult. Plenty of laughs can be had and a warped sense of humour helps! After TRIAL, go on to BRAWN FREE and see how you get on in the wild west.

There are more and more adventures now appearing on disc and this is hardly surprising. As already mentioned, it is essential, from time to time, to save the current play position and this can be a real drag if using tape. Some software has a 'RAM save' option while playing and recent Level 9's allow you to go back one move (e.g, if you 'die', you can resurrect yourself!). If you are into building-up a collection of adventures, it is worth getting a disc drive. Also, with CP/M, the Infocom range can be run and no self-respecting CPC owner of any age should be without at least one Infocom, even if you never complete it. However, the most well-known Infocom, HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, may not be the best place to start. More on this next time.

KEYBOARD

It is the policy of CPC USER to reply to members letters individually and, whenever possible, by return post. Correspondence is published in CPC USER for the general benefit of all members.

As a newcomer to the computer business I have been appalled by the prevailing standards. In response to your useful piece on word processing may I quote for example my unfortunate experience. The advice I received was that the "Mini Office II" best selling business software was the best buy for use with my Amstrad 6128 and what was claimed to be the best selling daisy wheel printer Quen-Data 1120. To be fair to Database they did attempt to help but at the end of the day I could not produce a single line spaced print-out. "Protext" and the spreadsheet "Matrix" have been entirely satisfactory. The point I wish to make is that the finer points of program performance are sometimes less important than full compatibility.

Ron Priestley, Birmingham

Unfortunately, most of us have been persuaded to pay for a "best buy" at one time or another; in this respect, the computer industry is no different to any other. Such claims are invariably exaggerated and you pays yer money an' takes yer choice. A lot depends on what you want the software for and what you expect from it. The Mini Office II suite is good value for money compared with the cost of similar but separately priced programs, but the package does require a printer that is 100% Epson compatible. In addition, it is essential to set the page format parameters (via the Print Menu's 'Examine Display Options') BEFORE any text is entered into memory; if you ignore this pre-requisite (not mentioned in the handbook of course) the program will fail to produce the required hard copy. We have no detailed specification of the Quen Data DWP1120 but, from your letter, it would seem that the printer is responding to two separate but consecutive line feed commands, one from the printer itself and one from the MOII program. Since there is no provision in MOII for cancelling a line feed, your only choice is to study the Quen Data handbook to see whether the printer line feed can be inhibited.

We agree with you about the importance of program performance and compatibility; the problem is that the necessary level of discernment only comes the hard way. The alternative is to ask the UAUG before parting with your money.

(The above is a résumé of the reply already mailed to Ron; it is reproduced here should any other member have the same problem - Ed.)

Please could you provide me with some information. I have a Silver Reed EX43N typewriter with an I/F.44 connected to an Amstrad CPC6128 computer. I use Protext word processing.

How can I print a pound (money) sign. All I get is R#R when the key is pressed. Also, how can I stop the @ at the start of all printing.

Colin Bond, Lincolnshire.

Enter Protext and, in command mode, type SP then press Return. Answer No at the first prompt, then at the second prompt (Change Control Codes) answer Yes. At the cursor position (top line of the menu), enter @ then press Return twice then press ESC. At the next prompt (Redefine Characters) answer Yes then, at the menu prompt, enter £ then press Return; then at the next prompt (Enter New Codes) enter 27 0 3 35 27 0 3, press Return then ESC. Answer Yes at the next prompt (Save printer Driver) and enter a valid filename such as EX43N.PD and, with a data disc in the disc drive, press Return. Whenever you need to change or repeat the Setprint Options (SP), the foregoing should be included.

M A S T E R F I L E III

(£39.95 from Campbell Systems)

by John Blessing

I suppose like most home computer users I thought that a database would be another way of justifying the cost to my wife of what can be an expensive hobby: "Just think of all the useful things I'll be able to store" was met with the reply "Oh yes, what exactly", followed by a few minutes ransacking the brain for a specific reason. After all not everybody runs a club or user group and needs to keep track of names and addresses. In this review I will give a few good reasons I have found, with particular reference to Masterfile III.

One of the first databases I used was an adaptation of the program in the user manual for my 6128; fine for names and addresses but somewhat limited in speed and facilities. However it does enable you to keep all your friends details in one place rather than scattered around in various old diaries. Of course the Data Protection Act may have something to say about that application nowadays.

Having outgrown that program I then moved on to commercial databases and tried both Cardbox and Atlast. These are both disc based and so are only limited in capacity by the disc. However I quickly found both were very inflexible; for instance, trying to change the format of a database once you started using it meant virtually starting from scratch and re-entering all the data.

My eyes were opened when I discovered Masterfile III, this is a memory based database but as it runs on the 6128 (or 464/664 with ram expansion) there is plenty of space for even the most demanding users. The manual is a little heavy going if you have never used a database before but is peppered with examples and leads the new user through all the functions.

Masterfile has all the normal database features for manipulating data and also a very powerful ability to use your own BASIC program to alter and generate a field from data in other fields - more of this later.

As with all database programs the format of your file must be defined before use but unlike others you can make alterations later if you wish. Also, it is possible to search any of the fields within a record, not just those you have preselected at the design stage.

Well, exactly what can you use Masterfile for apart from names and addresses. Presumably you own a computer if you are reading this newsletter so that gives one very useful application straight away. Disc owners soon find that the number of discs tend to increase fairly quickly, despite their high cost, and even the most organised of us begin to lose track of where programs are. Having to rummage through all your discs to find that three page listing you nearly finished typing in last week can be a bit annoying to say the least, somehow you always forget to write it on the label at the time.

It is a fairly simple task to define a database format with fields for disc number/side and filename. Rather than laboriously typing all the details in yourself, why not let User BASIC do the hard work. From the main menu in MASTERFILE this can be selected with a single keypress, execution then jumps to line 200 of the BASIC loader. MASTERFILE has a number of CALL instructions capable of selecting records and then reading or writing to the required field. In this example I won't give the coding but the process is as follows:

1. Clear screen and ask for disc number/side.
2. Catalogue disc.
3. Use COPYCHR$ to read the filenames from the displayed catalogue. (464 owners will have to redirect the catalogue buffer from a machine code routine and then read the filenames).
4. Store the filename in a field using the relevant CALL.
5. Repeat for all discs.

Once completed, control returns to MASTERFILE and you should now have all your files neatly stored in memory. Then you can produce an alphabetical list on the printer or even use more User BASIC to print disc labels. If you repeat the process once a month or so then you'll never lose another program again !

OK that's one good reason for a database; another I have found very useful is to keep track of what money I have left after buying all these databases. This is more likely to impress your wife that computing is not just an expensive hobby. It is possible to buy software designed to monitor your finances and I have used Money Manager (Connect Systems) in the past for just this purpose. However, this sort of program is limited in ability by the original design. The beauty of using MASTERFILE is that you can decide what functions you need to include.

In my case I designed a format to hold the following fields:

1. Date as YYMMDD to enable sorting of entries.
2. Flag to distinguish between business and personal expenses.
3. Single letter to distinguish between the five accounts, eg A (Access), J (joint account), V (Visa) etc.
4. Description of the transaction.
5. Amount.
6. Flag to indicate if payment has been cleared at the bank.
7. Balance of account.

The latter field is generated with User BASIC from the amount field of earlier transactions.

To display the transactions in each account separately it is necessary to perform a number of searches on the total file, eg exclude all records not having a "V" in field 3 to display the VISA statement. However, if the required keypresses are assigned to a function key in the BASIC loader, then it is a simple matter of pressing one key to select the required account. In fact it is easy to extend this idea and have a single keypress cause MASTERFILE to select and print out a statement for each account in turn, a process requiring much typing with dedicated finance packages.

Another use, to which Colin Baker (Newsletter No.5) has put MASTERFILE, is storing a complete index of the contents of computer magazines. If, like me, you remember there was a poke or review but not where and so spend several hours looking through a pile of magazines, then you can't fail to appreciate the massive effort Colin must have made to store 90K or so of information.

I'm now a firm convert to MASTERFILE (as if you couldn't guess) and would never dream of using any other database. I hope I've given you some ideas for using a database in the home and if anyone has other applications then why not write in and spread the good news ?

PS

If you would like help with User BASIC and MASTERFILE III then I would be happy to help, just call me on 0329 289988.

REVIEW

THE USEFUL BIT

by Simon Linssen

This has not been a good month for me. The dog ate a birthday cake, a gale re-sited one of my trees, the whole family had flu and my Amstrad broke down, (followed by me). However, Verran of Camberley,Surrey offered a special deal - £25 to restore the status quo; (they said they couldnt do anything about the tree). That was the good news. Bad news was that it took over 3 weeks; still, ask me anything about East-Enders.....

Several Software Houses have been in touch with us following my contact. Over the next few issues I will be reviewing some of their programs. These will include Goldmark's Character Font Designer, Tasprint and a comparison between Prospell and Tas-spell.

TAS-DIARY
from Tasman Software (Disc £12.90)

Most office microcomputer systems now offer some sort of electronic diary system - the hi-tech yuppies answer to Filofax. Tasman Software are no shirkers in implementing programs to exploit popular demand for common applications using our CPC's. The Tasword range, Tas-spell etc. have all introduced the man in the street to the sort of sophisticated program previously within the budget of the business-person only.

Tas-diary follows the formula of basic but sound usefulness without the frills and complexity of its senior counterparts found on teak-veneered desks in the double-glazing industry.

After inserting the disc, it initially requires the password which immediately will endear the user with a more squalid repetoire in the "Dear Diary" stakes. On entering a date you are offered nearly a full screen for each day; possibly a little extravagent, particularly when it may have been more useful to have a "week at a glance" facility. The remainder of the screen is taken up with two windows: one for a real-time time and date and the other showing the whole of the month calendar with a cursor over the day shown in the main window. Nice touch this - move the cursor to any day, the drive will whirr and the screen will display the new date with any text entry. With text on the screen, you can use an editor (to amend text or even sort into order), print or search (FIND) routine. The latter will allow you to find up to 25 characters, with wild cards. Filofax never had all this.

There is a handy Notepad mode which you use just like a thirteenth month - its got 31 pages. I have found this very useful to summarise a months activity. Tasmans original disc is amazing. The notepad section has 8 pages of the sort of stuff you would find in a conventional diary, you know - converting ounces into hectares and all that.

There is more. Nonetheless, I'm sure you've got the gist of it. The bottom line is whether switching on your computer, inserting the disc, typing and retrieving data is better than licking your pencil and scratching in "The Good Beer Diary" that Aunty gave you. There must be room for both; in the right situation. I enjoy using Tas-diary. Its a good-value program. And it's still a lot cheaper than a Filofax.

STOCKMARKET
from Meridian Software (Disc £29.95)

I noted that Meridian were at the Amstrad Show at GMEX, Manchester with this software. This may take this program from the small ads section in Amstrad Action to the big time. The program can be used by the newcomer wishing to practice investment techniques, or the seasoned bear (?) for recording those mounting millions.

Full details of portfolios of stocks, shares unit trusts etc. can be entered, then plotted using graphs and scales. More subtle uses might include tracking a linear scale graph to predict optimum buying/selling opportunities. Boil the whole thing down and what you've got is a record-keeping utility with built-in automatic calculations and graphic facility. Any of it can of course be printed out. Quite pricey, but no doubt will pay for itself a thousand times with a few positive linear curves.

* * * * *

Worthy of note is the Portfolio Manager gateway on Prestel (P.4815992) provided by CitiService, (a joint venture between BT and ICV Information Services). This provides a daily update on a portfolio that a subscriber has set up on the gateway computer. Needless to say all this would cost a lot more than Stockmarket.

R O D O S
(£29.95 Romantic Robot)

by John Blessing

Fed up with boring old AMSDOS ? Do you find fancy UNIX style directories exciting? Got a dual sided 80 track drive and want 800K capacity ? If so then RODOS may (repeat may) be the ROM you should run out and buy. Don't go yet as there one or two problems you might like to know about before parting with your hard-earned cash.

This review is based on about three weeks use of RODOS, with one upgrade, and is of course my personal opinion. I won't be covering all it's functions, just the ones I feel are most important.

As RODOS is a rom, you do need a rom-board (and a disc drive !); any of the current models will do though Super Power is probably the cheapest at £24.95 including free utility rom. Once installed RODOS gives approximately 57 extra RSX commands to control the disc drive.

The first thing you will notice is that your keyboard seems to have a life of it's own, RODOS tries to RUN "DISC when switched on. This might be useful but is usually highly irritating as you sit waiting for your computer to stop messing about loading the wrong file. Once it gives control back then you can start finding out what it really can do.

RODOS will automatically recognise any of the normal disc formats plus it's own format which enables 199.5K to be stored on a normal 3" disc. If you have a dual-sided 5-1/4" second drive you can format the disc to 800K and use this from BASIC. However, if you expect your favourite commercial program to recognise the 800K disc then you may be disappointed. Masterfile III and Mastercalc III are OK but Protext, Pagemaker and Advanced Art Studio either ignore it totally or crash. This brings me to my favourite command - |ZAP,n which switches off rom number n; guess which rom gets switched off most often ! If you do leave RODOS on and try to copy some of your favourite programs to the new format disc then don't, it must be the slowest and most unsuccessful file copying routine I have ever come across - it doesn't even cope with transferring BASIC programs.

So far it doesn't seem very encouraging does it ? There are some good points and it's those I will look at now. If you have a 6128 or a D'ktronics ram then you will be able to set up a silicon disc in the spare memory. On any of the CPC Amstrads some of the memory can be set aside as a buffer to free your computer while the printer churns out your latest blockbusting epic novel (pity you can't use it whilst printing a page from Stop Press).

One of the most widely acclaimed abilities of RODOS is to set up a tree-like structure of directories, sub-directories, sub-sub-directories etc. Using this you can separate the files on one disc into several areas, eg arcade games, adventures, utilities, text files and so on. This would be particularly useful on the large 800K discs where a lot of files can be squeezed in. One disadvantage is that to run a file which is a couple of levels down the directory structure you must first move to the sub-directory in which it is stored, then type RUN "filename", which means more commands to type.

RODOS also gives a number of powerful commands to read and write individual sectors on a disc, making it easy to write your own disc copier as shown in the November issue of ACU. It also allows full random disc access so, in theory, you could write a disc-based database without resorting to the horrors of CPM.

In summary I have to say that RODOS was a big disappointment to me and I rarely have it switched on. Perhaps I should have learnt my lesson from buying the first release of Pagemaker complete with all its bugs. If Romantic Robot can overcome the quite serious problems with RODOS then they will have an excellent product, well worth it's price to the serious disc user. My advice at the moment is hang onto your money and wait for gullible users like me to find all the bugs so that Romantic Robot can fix them.

REVIEW

MINI-OFFICE II WORD PROCESSOR

by Don Snoad

Database Software's Mini-Office II is an ideal 'starter' pack for the newcomer to CPC computers. Not only does it provide a suite of six programs, but the price of the entire package is an incredibly low £15 for the cassette version or £20 on disc.

Mini-Office II will run on all CPC computers but does not utilise the second 64K bank of memory of the 6128. The master disc is not intended to be copied and any attempt to do so using the CP/M Diskit3 utility will fail; however, the master disc can be successfully copied using an alternative copying utility such as Oddjob. The suite of six programs fills one side of the disc and comprises 25 files only two of which will be displayed in response to a CATalog command. Seven of the 25 files contribute nothing to the programs; six of the seven files are named KOHLRABI.BAS and the seventh is KNIFE.BIN. The Kohlrabi.Bas files are space fillers and occupy 90K of disc space. The 5K Knife.Bin file is a 'put on' by the programmers (it's worth reading if you want a laugh). All seven files can be erased (again using Oddjob) enabling a useful 95K of disc space to be reclaimed.

Before loading the program, it is advisable to disconnect any external ROMs as, although the presence of a ROMboard does not prevent the program from running, they will cause a total lock-up when attempting to exit. In addition, Mini-Office II is incompatible with an external silicon disc which, if fitted, should also be physically disconnected.

To do justice to the package, each of the six programs warrants a separate review; the database, spreadsheet, communications and label printing programmes have all been thoroughly reviewed in Computing with the Amstrad CPC, so this review is confined to the word processor.

On loading the program, the user is confronted by a 7-option main menu and, on selecting the word processor, is then offered an 11-option wp menu. Although one is tempted to move directly to the edit text option, it is necessary (although the handbook doesn't say so) to first select the print menu in order to define the page format required (if this pre-requisite is ignored, page parameters will default to the 'standard' settings). It is at this point that further inaccuracies in the handbook become apparent, since the page formatting parameters offered by the on-screen menu are considerably different to those recorded in the documentation. One point in particular to note is that the maximum selectable columns per line is 78 and that this is reduced by the LH margin setting; as this is a minimum of 2, it follows that the maximum number of characters per line available is 76. Other parameters also constrain the usability of the program, which is partly menu driven and partly command driven.

The wp menu allows the display mode to be selected in terms of 20, 40 or 80 columns. The display mode selected cannot be changed whilst there is any text in memory; it can be changed, if necessary, only by saving the file, then changing the display mode then re-loading the file.

Having defined the page format and selected the display mode, the user can then safely proceed to the edit text option. The screen will change to the text entry and edit mode from which an on-screen help display is available via the CTRL ? command. The help display shows that CTRL 1, CTRL 2 and CTRL 3 can be used to alter background, text and border colours respectively, and that CTRL X toggles the control codes on or off for viewing on-screen (not mentioned in the user-handbook).

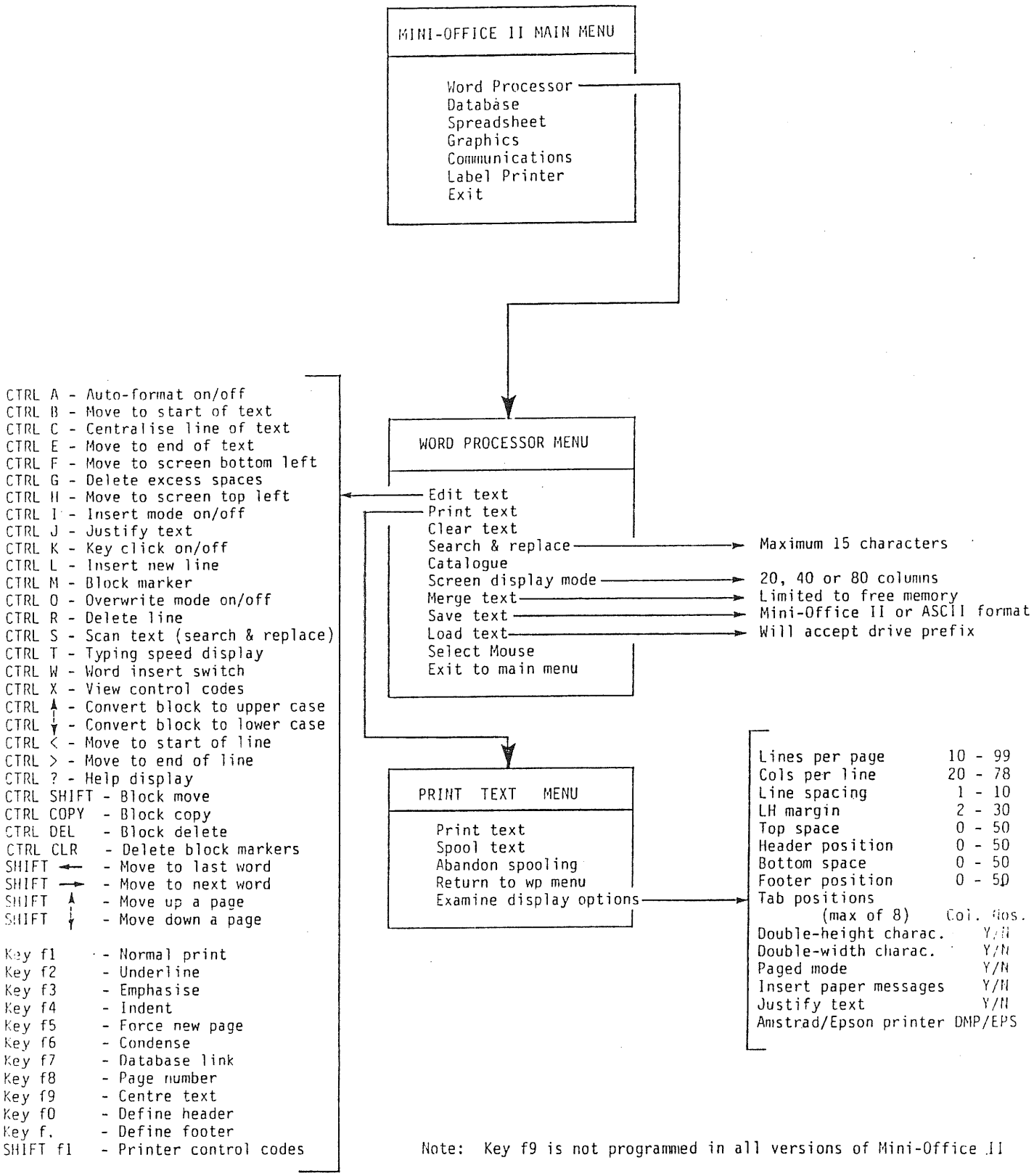
The on-screen status window displays a time-elapsed clock, a word count and the number of characters (i.e, bytes) free; also shown is the current insert/overwrite, caps lock, shift lock and auto-format status. The status line does not show the current filename nor tab and margin settings; neither are the column, line or page numbers confirmed. In response to the CTRL T command, the status window clears and then indicates the user's typing speed. The amount of information shown in the status window will be less when operating in 20 or 40 column display mode. The total absence of line and page numbers means that the user has little idea where he/she is in the current file at any given time.

The command structure is fairly straightforward with a total of 47 key controls listed. The function keys are pre-programmed to provide text-emphasis, indenting and header/footer commands and a database link. Of the remaining 37 commands, 6 control block operations, 5 provide text scrolling and control code access, and 21 are conventional text editing and formatting commands. The remaining 5 exercise control over such mundane things as screen colours (useful), and typing speed and keyclick features (not so useful). The text justification command, CTRL J, inserts space padding from the LH margin rightwards in every line, which gives an unacceptably biassed appearance to the finished text. Although file capacity is indicated as 17K, this was found to be optimistic (a 17K file was saved but could not be re-loaded due to insufficient memory). The program includes a search and replace facility (maximum of 15 characters) and a merge text feature (limited by the amount of free memory available). Text can be saved in 'Mini-Office II' or ASCII format and the save/load text options will accept a drive prefix to the file-name. There is no dictionary or spell-checking facility

It would be easy to criticise the MO word processor by challenging the practical advantages of the on-screen time-elapsed clock and the typing speed indicator since these features are of little real value to the average user. It also has to be said that the status line data and the documentation accompanying the package are not all that they could be; but who's complaining when the price is as low as £3 per program.

Nevertheless, whatever the price, the buyer is entitled to a usable product. Thus the first step is to correct the handbook as indicated by the addendum and corrigendum supplied and, having done that, to take note of the remaining inaccuracies. These are mostly concerned with page formatting and will be obvious when comparing the program with the handbook. The only other known constraints are that headers and footers must be embedded only at the end of the text in memory (printing is terminated by either of these commands), block manipulations are confined to complete lines of text and difficulties are foreseen in configuring the program for use with a non-Epson compatible printer; also, the lowest permissible position for page footings is line 50, which is a bit ridiculous considering that the program allows for a page length of 99 lines and, in any event, the usual page length is 66 lines.

In general the program works reasonably well; it is good enough for general-purpose wp applications using a DMP or Epson-compatible printer and it is undoubtedly good value for money when used in conjunction with the associated database and label printing programs. It is also an inexpensive introduction to computer communication techniques. Even so, experienced users who do need the range of programs provided by the Mini-Office II suite will soon be seeking a more sophisticated word word processor such as Protext, Pyraword or Brunword.



Note: Key f9 is not programmed in all versions of Mini-Office II

MINI-OFFICE II WP COMMAND STRUCTURE

REVIEW

HARDWARE REVIEW

by John A. Carver

Product : Modem, Interface and Software Package
Supplier : Cirkit Distribution Ltd
Price : £37.73 on disc; £32 on tape, plus VAT
Micro : All Amstrad CPC

To make your Amstrad CPC communicate with other computers, you will need a couple of pieces of hardware - an INTERFACE and a MODEM. You will also need suitable SOFTWARE to drive it and you won't get very far without a telephone either. This review is of the cheapest available BT-approved package.

I first became 'hooked' about a year ago, when I saw an ad for a complete communications package. A few pence short of forty quid bought me a simple RS232 interface, an acoustic modem and software on disc. It is the CIRKIT PRESTEL LINK package, sold by Cirkit Distribution (tel: 0992-444111) and incredible value when you consider that the Amstrad/Pace interface alone costs £20 more.

The instructions for connecting the hardware to your Amstrad are brief and to the point. What more needs to be said than how to put the batteries into the modem and which way up the interface should connect to the expansion port ?

The interface itself is a slim box with a through connector (useful for all those other add-on goodies). It has a built-in lead of about ½ metre (18 inches, to those of us not yet metricated) with a DIN plug attached for connecting to the modem. The instructions state that the interface can be used to drive other types of modems or a serial printer, but are a bit thin on detail.

The modem is a bendy black object with rubber cups into which is inserted a telephone handset; it is powered by four AA batteries which will give about 40 hrs of use. The modem has a single switch for selecting 1200/75 baud (Prestel and many Bulletin Boards) or 1200/1200 baud (Unfortunately, this is not V22 standard and only of use for connecting to other Cirkit users for file transfers, etc). The modem also has an earpiece socket so, if you want to, you can hear the data whistling to and fro.

The software is excellent; it was written by Honeysoft specifically for this set-up and performs faultlessly in use. The software titled CPL2 supports both Viewdata and scrolling ASCII formats, and it is possible to toggle between the two without dropping the 'phone line. Without going into too much detail, some of the features of the software are: Telesoftware downloading, Spool file/page to printer, XMODEM and ASCII file transfer, Alter baud/parity, etc, and other features which put to shame some packages costing several times as much.

As a package for the novice, this one must rate very highly. Its ease of use and value for money cannot be faulted. The only additional feature I would have liked is the ability to send prepared viewdata pages which, incidentally, is also sadly lacking with most Viewdata software; however, ICON2.BAS available as PD software from the UAUG goes some way towards rectifying this omission).

I would recommend this package to anyone wishing to 'have a go' at computer communications.

Value for money: 10 Ease of use: 8 Manual: 7 Overall rating: 9

MAILBOX

Mr K Howard (0115) writes:

I have an Amstrad CPC 464 with a modulator (MP 1). I find the modulator unsuitable for good viewing, and wondered if any member could help me with this problem. I would be willing to swap a SONATA 14" colour TV for a 464 colour monitor. The TV is about 18 months old (good picture).

Also, could anyone help me with a game called "Nonterraqueous" as I cannot get off the first level.

I think a column called 'Helpful Hints' in the newsletter would be a good idea. It would deal with members queries and problems.

As you can see from this issue, our new feature KEYBOARD provides precisely what you're suggesting. We can also help with the colour monitor - see the members ads page. Thanks for writing in Can anyone help with the "Non-" game ?

Mr T Snell (0061) writes:

I was lucky enough to buy a 6128 with colour monitor about seven months ago. Unfortunately, having to run a family as well has greatly restricted my purchase of any decent software. I am therefore in the process of learning to program in BASIC. I have started off with a character designer utility. I have designed the screen layout, got my menu's working and am down to the nitty-gritty of displaying the character and storing the information in some form of array.

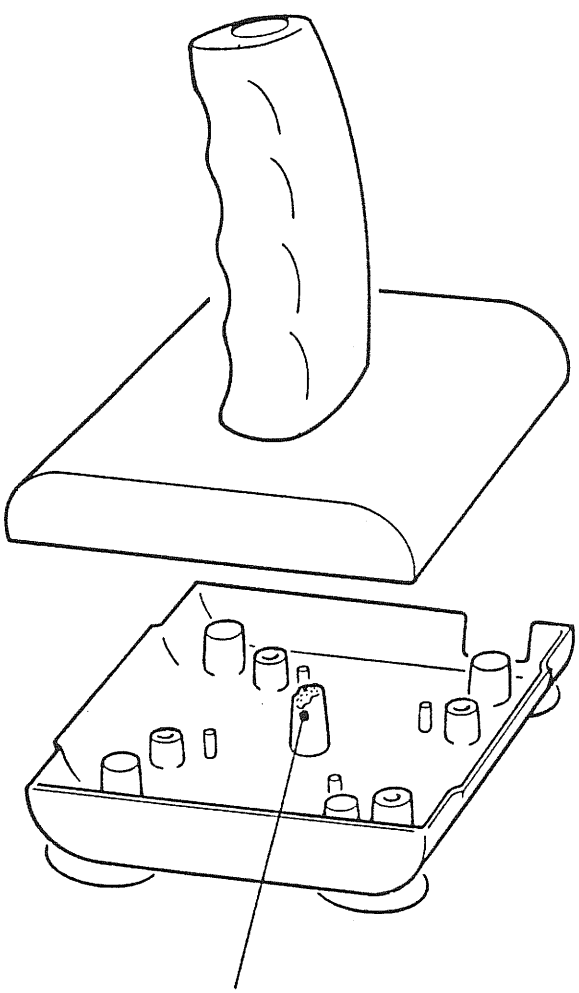
I basically have a window 8*8 characters and have a sub-routine to move my cursor within this area. I have also drawn over this window with some grid lines. What I now have to do is find some way of filling or unfilling a character square in that window, storing the details into an array and hopefully not to erase the grid lines drawn onto the window.

If you could help in any way I would be grateful but if not I will let you know how I'm getting on later and will also donate it to the PD Library if I ever finish it.

I would like to tell you of my experience of a JY2 joystick. After 6 months use the top fire button became very unreliable and to move left was impossible, the handle seeming to be off centre when moved to the left. To cure the fire button, remove the two screws and lift off one half of the handle. The two red buttons lie loose in the handle and can be swapped over, although the one from the front will need the lip from one end cutting off so that it will fit into the top slot; I also covered the top micro-switch with a piece of Cellotape. The fire button is now as good as new but I'm not sure what to do after another 6 months use.

As to the non-left movement I found, after removing the four screws from underneath and lifting off the base, that the centre column on the base had broken on one side (see attached diagram). This column holds the base of the handle poking up through the circuit board so, when the handle was tilted left, it moved left but didn't pivot and failed to connect with the micro-switch. This was remedied by lifting the micro- switch off the circuit board and moving it 2 - 3 mm further away from the centre. Again, covering the micro-switches with a layer of Cellotape improves the response.

Thanks for the joystick tip. Can anyone help with the character designer ?



CENTRE COLUMN with broken side

PROGRAMMING

Compiled Language Programming

by Tony Bambridge

Hi folks, welcome to the start of a series of in-depth tutorials on compiled languages. The first of which will be Nevada Fortran.

I hope to provide you with a complete introduction to both the programming side and the general reference side of a particular language.

The series will include Digital Research's much maligned CBASIC, PASCAL and finally COBOL.

Each series will assume absolutely no prior knowledge; you won't even need the manual, as a step by step guide will be provided.

What I need from YOU are any comments on the tutorials. If you don't understand any part then please write, but please confine your comments to the tutorials in question so that I can remain "SANE".

I shall assume that you know what a compiled language is; if you don't then let me know and I will provide a short discussion on the difference between compiled languages and interpreters in a future issue of CPC USER.

Finally, remember that PATIENCE is a VIRTUE.

Well that's it for the BLURB!!! so switch on your AMSTRAD CPC and read on .

NEVADA FORTRAN FOR BEGINNERS - Part 1

This series of articles is designed to introduce FORTRAN programming to the absolute beginner, using an Amstrad CPC Microcomputer and the CPM 2.2 operating system. I decided to use CPM 2.2 to enable ALL users with disc drives to benefit from this series. Later, if the UAUG will allow me, I will undertake a more advanced series of articles using CPM+.

This first article will be devoted to a step by step guide to setting-up FORTRAN on the CPC. First, however, a brief introduction to the FORTRAN language.

FORTRAN was one of the first high-level languages to be developed. It was developed in the 1950's specifically to resolve scientific problems most of which were and are mathematical. It is also ideal for solving technological problems involving engineering.

The word FORTRAN is an acronym for FORmula TRANslation. It is one of two languages designed for solving mathematical problems; the other language being ALGOL - the word ALGOL meaning algorarithmetic language. The difference is that ALGOL is a block structured language.

The FORTRAN implementation I will be using for these articles will be NEVADA FORTRAN purchased from HISOFT. I mention Hisoft because they supply ED80 a full screen text editor free of charge. You will find a good text editor invaluable.

Fortran is a compiled language and you will no doubt know what this means; however, if you would like me to discuss compilers in more detail please let me know (AGAIN!!!).

Because FORTRAN is a relatively old language there have been improvements over the years. These improvements are reflected by the different versions of FORTRAN. The two main versions that are referred to are FORTRAN 66 and FORTRAN 77. The main distinction being that FORTRAN 77 is about five times larger than FORTRAN 66. This is one of the reasons why I have chosen NEVADA FORTRAN because it more or less conforms to FORTRAN 66 but has some FORTRAN 77 features; it is also useful in transferring programs if one is involved with a mainframe version.

There are two classic methods of learning to program using FORTRAN (and other languages including BASIC). One being FLOWCHARTS and the other by writing the problems out in steps using English and termed Psuedocode. Both these methods have their advantages and disadvantages and you will find it a matter of taste which you wish to adopt. With this particular series being for beginners, I will adopt one of the above methods whenever I feel it will clarify a particular program or routine. The method used will be explained at the time of use rather than produce a lengthy discussion now. We will build our knowledge of FORTRAN by way of explaining small example programs; these programs in the main will in fact be subroutines which we will be able to use at a later date. So by the end of the series we should have built up our own subroutine library. Each example will illustrate the structure and use of FORTRAN statements. By adopting this method, experienced FORTRAN programmers can send in their routines which I will gladly include. Please note I am not an expert so if any of you out there wish to comment or criticise please do so - that way we all learn and that's the UAUG's objective.

What You Will Need !!!

1. Patience

   Yes I am afraid you will need large doses of this because like all compiled languages the program is first written using a text editor. In this form the program is referred to as the source code and it will be then compiled using the FORTRAN compiler. So if there are ANY mistakes the compiler will let you know and you will have to re-enter the text editor and correct them.

   Don't let this put you off! A compiled language teaches you to be meticulous in what you do and how you do it. Also this will be reflected in your BASIC programming; you will find that your BASIC programs are actually easier to go back to.

   Once the compiler has done its job then the program is referred to as object code. You now have two versions of your program: a source code version and an object code version.

There are other versions but at the moment this is all you need to know.

2. Hardware Requirements

The basic hardware requirements are shown below:

(i) CPC464 + DDI Disc Drive and a printer, but this is optional.

(ii) CPC6128/664; both have built-in disc drives

3. Software Requirements

(i) Nevada Fortran preferably from Hisoft as they supply ED80 free of charge.

NOTE: If you have a version of Nevada Fortran other than Hisoft then you can use CP/M's own text editor ED.COM, supplied on your system disc.

(ii) A Text Editor

See note above.

(iii) CPM 2.2 operating system.

Well I think that covers the introduction to FORTRAN.

SO LETS SET-UP FORTRAN ON THE CPC !

I shall assume that you are an absolute beginner and have not as yet used CPM 2.2. Therefore the first task is to copy your master CPM 2.2 disc. You only need to copy side 1 of the disc (the side to copy is the one entitled CP/M & UTILITIES).

The following refers only to the CPC6128:

Procedure

1. Place your MASTER CP/M DISC into drive A (CP/M 2.2 that is !)

2. Type the following:

|CPM (|CPM is obtained by holding down the SHIFT key and pressing the @ key then type CPM) Then press ENTER

3. Type the following:

DISCKIT2 (then press ENTER)

You will then be presented with a MENU. Choose the COPY option by pressing 7 on the numeric keypad.

The screen then changes and you then type Y, then follow the on-screen instructions.

The following refers to CPC464 owners:

Procedure

Follow the same PROCEDURE until you reach (3). At this point type the following if you have just one disc drive (this will be assumed throughout).

DISCCOPY (then press ENTER)

Then follow the screen instructions remembering that:

1. The SOURCE disc is the CPM master disc already in the disc drive.

2. The DESTINATION disc is the blank disc that you are copying to.

You can now repeat the procedure and copy your NEVADA FORTRAN master disc remembering to WRITE PROTECT the disc (if you do not know how to write protect the disc, read the instructions on the sleeve provided in the disc packaging).

AND don't forget to USE a blank disc, the other side of your newly copied system disc would be ideal but not necessary.

Once you have a working copy of your NEVADA FORTRAN disc you can now put the CP/M 2.2 system on that side.

Procedure

Remove your disc and place working copy of your CP/M 2.2 & UTILITIES disc into the drive and type the following:

BOOTGEN (then press ENTER)

When asked for the SOURCE disc all you have to do is PRESS ENTER

When asked for the DESTINATION disc remove your CPM system disc and put your newly copied NEVADA FORTRAN disc into the drive and PRESS ENTER.

You will then be given the choice of configuring another disc; to this prompt type:

N (then press ENTER)

You will be required to replace your working copy of your CP/M 2.2 system disc then PRESS ENTER.

Leave your system disc in the drive and type the following:

SYSGEN (then press ENTER)

The procedure is just the same as above but this time it is SYSGEN that is operating.

Now you will be able to boot up CP/M without having to use your CP/M system disc; try it and experiment.

We are now in a position that we can CONGFIGURE NEVADA FORTRAN; we do this as follows:

Type the following:

CONFIG (then press ENTER)

This is a COM file on your FORTRAN disc and will be loaded into the computer and executed. The screen will display the following information:

DO YOU WANT TO CREATE THE ERROR FILE (Y/N)?

Type:

Y (then press ENTER)

The screen will then display:

WHICH DRIVE CONTAINS THE FILE "ERRORS" ?

Type:

A (then press ENTER)

The screen response will be:

+++ CREATING FORT.ERR +++

The computer will then write a series of * across the screen until the file has been written.

The screen will then display:

+++ CONFIGURING NEVADA FORTRAN COMPILER +++

WHICH DRIVE CONTAINS THE FILE "FORT.COM" ?
SPECIFY DRIVE "Z" TO SKIP THIS STEP:

Type:

A (then press ENTER)

The screen will then display:

THE NUMBER IN ( ) IS THE CURRENT DEFAULT FOR EACH PARAMETER. TO USE THE DEFAULT JUST HIT THE RETURN/ENTER KEY. TO CHANGE ENTER THE NEW VALUE IN DECIMAL.

All you have to do is HIT the ENTER key until the screen displays:

CAN YOUR CONSOLE OUTPUT DEVICE HANDLE LOWER CASE LETTERS?(Y/N)

Type:

Y (then press ENTER)

Screen will then display:

WHICH DRIVE CONTAINS THE FILE "FRUN.COM"?
SPECIFY DRIVE "Z" TO SKIP THIS STEP:

Type:

A (then press ENTER)

For the next screen response type:

2 (then press ENTER)

Then, for next screen response type:

Y (then press ENTER)

Then type for the next response:

N (then press ENTER)

Your final screen response will be:

+++ ALL DONE +++

Well you are now ready to learn to program using NEVADA FORTRAN.

If you have the Hisoft version then try using ED80; all you have to do is type the following:

ED80 READ.ME (then presss ENTER)

Well I think this is a good place to stop. In Part 2 we will discuss the TEXT EDITOR and begin to program.

I hope you enjoyed reading Part 1

BYE FOR NOW

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Question 1

Percentage of members who own each machine;

CPC 464 Green	9%
CPC 664 Green	2%
CPC 6128 Green	15%
CPC 464 Colour	15%
CPC 664 Colour	0%
CPC 6128 Colour	59%

Question 2

Percentage of members having peripheral hardware;

DDI-1 Disc Drive	14%
Second Disc Drive	32%
Printer	73%
RAM Expansion	14%
ROM Board	21%
Modem	18%

Question 3

Percentage of members' main topics of interest;

BASIC Programming	93%
Pascal Programming	30%
COBOL Programming	18%
Forth Programming	25%
M/Code Programming	71%
Music & Sound	34%
Graphics	66%
Adventure Games	52%
Arcade Games	48%
Word Processing	84%
Computers in Business	59%
Computers in Education	59%
Hardware Add-ons	84%
Serious Software	84%

Question 4

Percentage of members' magazine readership;

Amstrad Action	68%
Amstrad Computer User	66%
Computing with The Amstrad	55%

Question 5

Members' assessment of value of each secton of the last Newsletter;

Editorial	10%
Members Letters	10%
Games Reviews	6%
Hardware Review	10%
Members Articles	9%
Adverts	8%
Adventure Column	6%
The Useful Bit	9%
Club News	10%
Discounts	9%
PD Library	8%
Book library	7%

Question 6

Percentages of readership groups of Newsletter;

Read by:

1 Person	77%
2 People	14%
3 People	7%
4 People	0%
5 People	2%

PROGRAMMING THE FUNCTION KEYS on a CPC6128

by Don Snoad

The function keys (f0 to f9 plus f.) on a CPC6128 can be programmed to provide eleven single-key and twenty-one dual-key commands to suit an individual user's requirements; thus a maximum of thirty-two commands can be executed via the function keys to carry out almost any combination of computer functions. This is particularly useful where a specific command which would normally require a series of key-strokes can be replaced by a single function key command. For example, the Load, Save, Run and List commands can each be executed by a programmed function key. The facility can also be utilised for storing text phrases, and the commands or phrases so stored can be recalled at will time and time again. The time-saving that this can achieve is obvious.

The facility for programming the function keys already exists on the 6128, the only constraint is that the memory allocated for programming the keys is limited to 120 characters; however, even this can be extended if necessary. A similar facility is provided on the PCW computers.

So far as the 6128 is concerned, all the data necessary for programming the keys is given on pages 3.37/38 and 7.22 of the user manual, and is more fully explained in Section 3 and Appendix IV of the Firmware Guide (Soft 968). However, a simple example is given below. Type in the program shown on the left, and save it to disc using an appropriate filename (e.g, KEYS.bas); on completion, try it out by typing RUN"KEYS then use the program as indicated in the table (below right). Of course, the program may be varied to suit your own particular requirements, and it can also be used as a 'menu' to run any of a range of disc-saved utilities or from within a program to enhance, for example, a word processor; the same principle of function key programming can also be used in piggy-back form to control an entire disc full of programs and utilities - but of this more anon. Finally, a few words of caution; if you have any ROMs installed that utilise the function keys, the ROMs must be switched off before running this or any similar program.

```
10 REM Function keys program for Amsdos/Basic
20 KEY 128,"LOAD"+CHR$(34)
30 KEY 129,"LIST"+CHR$(13)
40 KEY 130,"RUN"+CHR$(13)
50 KEY 131,"CAT"+CHR$(13)
60 KEY 132,"|REN,"+CHR$(34)
70 KEY 133,"|ERA,"+CHR$(34)
80 KEY 134,"|B"+CHR$(13)
90 KEY 135,"SAVE"+CHR$(34)
100 KEY 136,"|ERA,"+CHR$(34)+"*.BAK"+CHR$(13)
110 KEY 137,"|A"+CHR$(13)
120 KEY 141,"CHAIN"+CHR$(34)
130 KEY 142,"MERGE"+CHR$(34)
140 KEY 143,"CHAIN MERGE"+CHR$(34)
150 KEY 144,"OPENIN"+CHR$(34)
160 KEY 145,"OPENOUT"+CHR$(34)
170 KEY 146,"CLOSEIN"
180 KEY 147,"CLOSEOUT"
190 KEY 148,"|user,"
300 KEY DEF 3,0,137
310 KEY DEF 4,0,134,147
320 KEY DEF 5,0,131,144
330 KEY DEF 10,0,135,148
340 KEY DEF 11,0,136
350 KEY DEF 12,0,133,146
360 KEY DEF 13,0,129,142
370 KEY DEF 14,0,130,143
380 KEY DEF 15,0,128,141
390 KEY DEF 20,0,132,145
```

NORMAL		SHIFT
Load".	f0	Chain"
List	f1	Merge"
Run	f2	Chain Merge"
CATalog	f3	Openin"
REName	f4	Openout"
ERAse	f5	Closein
Drive B	f6	Closeout
Save"	f7	User
ERAse.bak	f8	
Drive A	f9	

PD LIBRARY

PUBLIC DOMAIN SECTION

by John Blessing

Welcome to the new-look PD section. As promised in the last Newsletter, the amount of PD software has increased tremendously. This means that the PD warrants it's own editor - me; it also means that there isn't space to list all the files but I have given a brief summary of what's available.

Part of the reason the summary is so brief is because there's so much software ! I've only had a brief look at it so far, but in future issues I will be looking in more detail at one or two of the programs.

The majority of the software either has very good documentation, or is self-explanatory. However there are a number which are very poorly documented - but then half the fun is working out what they're supposed to do! If you can't discover what some of the programs do then don't despair - hopefully someone else will.

If you feel you have anything to add in the way of documentation then please send it to me (address below), preferably as an ASCII file and I'll include it in the PD library.

Details of how to order are also below, I'm expecting a flood of orders so please ease my task and follow the instructions.

Finally, although we now have about 1.8 Mbytes of PD software I've got plenty of discs! So i f y o u have any more, particularly if you've written it yourself, then it will be very gratefully received.

PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARY

PD1/1 - CPM disc utilities including: NSWP mass file transfer, DU disc editor, SQUEEZE ascii file compressor, directories.

PD1/2 - CPM COBOL compiler

PD1/3 - CPM Z80 assembler/monitor

PD1/4 - CPM Z8E assembler

PD1/5 - CPM SECRTARY - word processor

PD2/1 - CPM SMODEM - comms for smart modems

PD2/2 - CPM SMARTMEX, AMSMOD7, MEX, UKM1275, UKM72B - comms

PD2/3 - CPM Adventure game, BANNER and GOTHIC large sign printers, CAL calendar generator, biorythm.

PD2/4 - CPM Games including : chess, maze generator, tictacto, life, golf, mastermind, othello.

PD2/5 - AMSDOS Games including: snooker simulation, MERCHANT - trading game.

PD3/1 - AMSDOS Games & utilities including: adventure, comms, graphics,character designer, label printer, typing tutor, bomber game, home budget.

PD3/2 - AMSDOS Amstrad magazine index in MASTERFILE format.

PD3/3 - AMSDOS Amstrad magazine index in ASCII format.

HOW TO ORDER:

1. Each of the sections above will fit on one side of a disc so send enough discs ! eg if you want all the PD library then send 7 discs.

2. Please make sure the discs are blank and in VENDOR format.

3. Use a padded envelope and enclose correct stamps for return postage otherwise I cannot return your discs!

4. Enclose your address and tel no (in case you've forgotten point 3!).

5. State which software you require, eg PD1/1 and PD3/2. I cannot supply individual files.

6. If you haven't got a disc drive then you can still order software (but not CPM please!) by sending a long enough tape.

Most of the documentation files have been compressed to save disc space. This is indicated by a "Q" as the second letter of the filetype, eg READ-ME.DQC would be a SQUEEZED version of READ-ME.DOC.

These can easily be converted into normal ASCII with either UNSQUEEZE or NSWP on PD1/1 so you should order this section of the library first.

SEND ORDERS TO:

John Blessing
44 Purbeck Drive
Fareham
Hants. PO14 1RZ

DISCOUNT SALES

As you will have gathered from news items in this edition of CPC USER, the UAUG has undergone a major administrative re-organisation; in fact we are still sorting ourselves out ! As a consequence, we are not in a position to publish the full list of discounted items available to UAUG members. For the time being, it would be helpful if members would place their Orders direct with the supplier and, with this in view, we list below the addresses together with the discount being offered. For details of products available, please contact the suppliers or refer to their advertisements in the computing press. Don't forget to quote your UAUG membership number.

HSV Computer Services Ltd
Clive Peek, 23 Hampstead House, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1LG
TEL: (0256) 463507
10% off of all products.

Siren Software
Simon Cobb, 2-4 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 5QA
TEL: 061-228-1831
25% off of all products (Hardware add £2.00 P&P).

Timatic Systems
Mike Young, The Market, Fareham, Hants. PO16 0LB
TEL: (0329) 239953 / 236727
10% off any Amstrad Software (to order) and 5% off of Hardware.

Alligata Software
Annete Bancroft, 1 Orange Street, Sheffield. S1 4DW
TEL: (0742) 755796
20% off of all Alligata Software.

Micro Prose Softare
Karren Flannery, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Gloucestershire. GL8 8DA
TEL: (0666) 54326
35% off of all Micro Prose software.

ONCE ONLY SPECIAL OFFERS:

	NORMAL PRICE	OFFER PRICE
Multiface Two (1 Only)	£46.95	£30.00
64K Silicon Disc (2 ONLY)	£29.95	£10.00
XROM EPROM Programmer (1 Only)	£79.95	£40.00

If you are interested in any of these unique offers then contact:

Gary Carter, 1 Magnolia Close, Fareham, Hants, PO14 1PX
TEL: (0329) 281324

COMPETITION

First Prize: The Game PAPERBOY!!

Second Prize: The Budget Game DIZZY

S A G F X A E I J O Y S T I C K R S R F G M N L S O Q A D F G

O R D F P S C V Y E R C C E E R J M G A Y G D A X A S P H Z N

F D H R F A S F V A S D O U K V D O R O S F D N C W W A C N S

T F F S R V S D A L T A M S T R A D P J X X V I B L K S X E G

W J D E O B F C J P G Q P R I N T E R D I N K M S A U D I P J

A T W D T A D O A S F A U C E E S M Z A G Z J R A C I B J T C

R O Q C I S A B Z L N R T A P E X O W S O H U E P R O M F H V

E S M A N I H O E S X X E A E C L P K C F Y P T N F S A D G O

W X G L O O U L S W H A R D W A R E P A S O F T R A T Z U I E

S D S V M R T O A D J L P O Q N A R T R O F K G Q W X D A L D

What you have to do:

Hidden in the word search are the following words:-

COMPUTER	FORTRAN	TAPE	LIGHTPEN
PASCAL	EPROM	DISC	MONITOR
COBOL	MODEM	TERMINAL	SOFTWARE
BASIC	AMSTRAD	JOYSTICK	HARDWARE

The words may be spelt backwards, forwards, diagonal, horizontal or vertical. Locate the words and ring them, then photocopy or tear out this page and return it to the usual UAUG address.

The first correct entry out of the box will receive 'Paper Boy' and the second entry will receive 'Dizzy'.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

COMPOSED ON THE AMSTRAD CPC6128

12 Christmas Carols ready to play, on the 'Music System' or on the 'Advanced Music System'. Produced using all 3 of the sound channels on the Amstrad.
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N.D. Mutton,
16, Ferncroft Avenue,
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HA4 9JF

Mini-Office II disc, almost new: £10 — Ron Priestley, 84 Chesterwood Road, Birmingham B13.0QE

Amstrad CTM644 colour monitor, new and boxed complete with new cover: £85
Amstrad MP-2 TV modulator, new: £20
Cumana 5-1/4 inch 2nd disc drive for CPC6128, complete with integral power supply and all cables, new: £145
Archer twin-fire joystick, new: £5

Also, wide range of wordprocessors on disc and some disc-based games (mostly flight/combat simulators), all new (nothing pirated) and with original instructions.
SAE please, for lists

Don Snoad
(address on cover)

WANTED

Copy of NEVADA COBOL — E.Mellors, 42 Randall Drive, Hornchurch, Essex RM12.6SX (Hornchurch 55668)

Epson PX-8 laptop and 256K upgrade for a Wren — Don Snoad (address on cover)

TRADE ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE

1/4 PAGE ... £3.50

1/2 PAGE ... £6.00

1 PAGE ... £10.00

Telephone : 0329-281324

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The United Amstrad User Group was founded in 1986 by a handful of dedicated CPC enthusiasts. Membership now extends throughout Britain. The continuing success of the Group is due to the low membership subscription and five-star service; this includes:

* Bi-monthly magazine
* Computer Book Library
* Public Domain Software Library
* Extensive Discount Agreements
* Comprehensive Help, Advice and Support.

The bi-monthly magazine is written by CPC users for CPC users and contains authoritative reviews and articles, as well as other regular features specific to the Amstrad CPC computers.
The magazine also provides three help lines: Mailbox (for general correspondence, member-to-member contact, etc), Keyboard (for resolving members computing problems) and Monitor (a members' complaints bureau).
The magazine carries trade and member advertisements; members ads are published free of charge.

The computer book library is operated by post and is open to all members.
Books may be hired by the month for a nominal fee.
Most of the books have been donated and are specific to CPC computers.

The public domain software library contains many programs covering games, business, educational, utilities and programming languages. The library is open to all members and is free of charge.

The discount service to members is extensive. Companies offering discounts to members include Durell Software, Siren Software, HSV Computer Services, Micro Prose, Timatic Systems and Alligata Software; discounts range from 5% to 35% or more, and include games/business software, hardware, discs, disc storage boxes, listing paper and printer ribbons. In addition to arrangements with traders, the UAUG also maintains a small stock of joysticks and games/business software at prices substantially lower than retail.

HELP TO STRENGTHEN THE GROUP.....GET A FRIEND TO JOIN, NOW

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION: £5