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THE WACCI NIGHT OWL
IN ITS RAREFIED
CHRONON ATMOSPHERE

WACCI

CONTENTS

- 3 THANK AND STUFF *The news I think.*
5 FAIR COMMENT *Those letter pages.*
12 MARKET STALL *More goodies on offer.*
13 VERY BASIC BASIC *In the basement.*
15 GREAT SERIES *John Keneally starts.*
17 IN THE DARK *Christmas Special.*
19 PD SCENE *David's world of PD.*
20 STORY TIME *The Compo entries begin.*
21 MAIL MERGING *With Doug and Ron.*
24 BLAST FROM THE PAST .. *Ron looks at the year.*
28 FIGURE ONE *Figure it out.*
29 A WORK EXPERIENCE ... *Bobs reviews a printer?*
30 WHO'S WHO *More about the club.*
31 THE BACK PAGE *A old one!*
78 THE TOM GORDON PAGE .. *And no Protex for him.*

THE BENEFITS OF WACCI MEMBERSHIP

- * The best magazine for serious CPC users.
- * An INDEX of the above from issue 1 - 81.
- * Telephone HELPLINE (indispensable).
- * Bargain buys/wanted lists from the MARKET STALL.
- * Discount off goods from advertisers.
- * List of PD discs, tapes, library books, services.
- * Above all the advice, assistance and friendship from other WACCI members.

BENEFIT list by Ernie Ruddick, December 1994

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FRONT COVER: by Russell Macdonald/Paul Dwerryhouse

THE TELEPHONE HELP-LINE

BOB MOFFATT, (0994) 453509, Pendine, Carmarthen.
Masterfile III, Mastercalc, Qualitas & Protex.

STEWART PEPIATT, (0245) 353903, Chelmsford, Basic M/Code, DMP2000, VDE, Scrivener & general problems

PETER CAMPBELL, (041) 554 4735, Glasgow, OCP Art Studio, Vidi, Basic, MicroDesign & Art Programs, ProPrint, CPC plus m/cs and VideoMaster.

FRANK FROST, (0983) 882197, Isle of Wight
4pm to 10pm, VDE, CP/M and Protex.

IAN NEILL, Work (0928) 416157 9am to 5pm, Warwick
Eprom blowing, Hardware, Electronics and more.

MARK STEWART, (0773) 822599, Belper, 8pm to 10pm,
PAW Adventure Creator, Basic and general help.

LAURENCE SAUNDERS, Herts, (Work) 061 480 4900
Maplins & technical help. Now at Stockport.

NIGEL MELLS, (0784) 250763, Ashford, Tape to disc
problems, Basic programming and a general matter.

MIKE LYONS, (0942) 59942, Wigan, Basic, Stop Press
Dk, trionics Speech Synth, Rodos and general help.

STUART GASCOIGNE, (0272) 831361, Bristol, Basic,
Machine code, PD Discs 19 to 36. * New Tel Number

JOHN HUDSON, (01484) 423252, Huddersfield. M011,
CP/M, Wordstar/Newword, dBASE, CP/M PD, CPC-PCW-PC

JOHN BOWLEY, (0733) 260616, Peterborough.
Help and advice about the Book Library.

CHRIS GREEN, (0895) 633641, 5pm - 9pm, Middlesex,
MS800, CP/M Protex, PowerPage, Art Studio, NC100
and NC200 notepads, The Plus computers and DTP.

NIGEL CALLCUTT, (0664) 68738, Melton Mowbray.
Technical advice, hardware and CPC repairs.

RICHARD AVERY, Tasword 464, GPaint, Another World.
35 Marlborough View, Cove, Farnborough, GU14 9YA

VACANT HELP-LINE PLACES

Two spaces are currently available on the list so write with your details to WACCI HQ if you feel you could help your fellow club members.

This help-line is provided on a voluntary basis by club members to assist other members. Please call between 7pm and 9pm (unless stated otherwise.)

WACCI

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Owned by: *The Club Members*

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By: *Jeff Walker*
In: *October 1986*

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THANK & STUFF

Welcome to the first edition of 1994 and may I start by wishing you all a happy and prosperous new year. May it be a good one for you and a good one for the club as well. Last year had its ups and downs and I'm afraid that this issue continues with a couple of more changes, so let's get on with it.

MIKE LYONS RETIRES

Yes, I'm very sad to say that after nearly three years of serving WACCI as its letters editor, Mike has had to give up due to ill health.

I know you haven't heard from him in the last few months but I kept his job open for him as I very much respect the way he carried out the role. He will be greatly missed by the club and I very much will welcome the day he rings me up to offer his services again. Mike will, of course, remain a club member and he might even drop a line to Fair Comment sometime. We all look forward to hearing from you Mike and please get well soon mate.

Now Mike is going to be a hard act to follow but follow him we must. As you are all aware Angie and myself have been doing FC. Angie pulls all the letters together and sends them down on disc ready to be laid out in the magazine and answered.

This system will continue until a replacement for Mike is found. It does add a lot to my time in putting the magazine together but, as I said earlier, I have done this in order to give Mike as much time as he needed to make a decision on his future. Now the time has come to call for a volunteer for this position.

Please consider the following as the

role is a demanding one. You will need the time on your hands to meet copy date each month. We can make arrangements to cover holidays etc., but the rest of the time I will expect copy in on time. You must have a good knowledge of all aspects of the CPC and a well rounded usage of software. You will need to be Protex user and I would hope Promerge Plus too. Whilst it is not necessary to do your own page layouts, it will be a goal. Finally a good sense of humour combined with sense of fair play is Needed. Angie will still be available for typing work for you.

So it's over to you, fancy a go at the role of letters editor?

CLIVE HAS GONE

Yep, more bad news. I asked him to contribute to the mag and I asked him if he wanted an entry on the WACCI Helpline. I asked if he would be the Master PD Librarian and finally I asked him if he wished to be placed on the WACCI free of charge mailing list. All questions have been ignored by him. Unless he sends a subscription form in then he will be an ex-member.

If I have any more news on this front then I'll let you know. It does look as if old Uncle Clive doesn't want us any more.

GOOD NEWS (AT LAST)

Peter Campbell has (at last) got the complete Parados manual in printed format. All new orders for Parados will automatically get a copy. If you have bought the ROM from Campursoft and not got a manual, then send Peter 2 x 25p stamps and he'll send you one.

Whilst on the subject of Parados, Peter has patched the EMS file to work with Parados and a D20 formatted 3.5 inch disc. If you would like the patched EMS file then send Peter a CP/M disc and he'll do the business. Please enclosed the return postage.

Peter has also heard of some problems with the Siren RS232 port. Is it industry standard seems to be the question being asked. Anybody heard of or experienced such problems.

The next bit of news from Peter is that he will give a 464 keyboard free (you pay postage) to the first caller. Ring quickly if you want one, his telephone number is on the back cover.

And finally (*phew*) Peter wants his repair manuals back for the 6128/6128+ machines but has forgotten who has them! Is it you? Do send them back.

MANY THANKS

One person who has been helping me considerably over the last few months but who just doesn't seem to get a mention is Ron Izett. Your efforts are greatly appreciated Ron. Perhaps I need to give you a title and place you in WHO'S WHO. What would you like to be called Ron?

THANX & STUFF continued...

WHAT NO COMPO SPOT

I'm sorry if turning the page caused you a surprise as you would have expected the Competition Spot to be here. I'd better explain.

John Bowley has done the January competition page and it is on it's way in the post to me. Today is Sunday 18 December 1994 and I must take the completed magazine down to Prontaprint tomorrow if I wish to post it out to you on the 28/29 December. Failure to get the magazine to the printers tomorrow will delay commencement of printing until 3 January and posting until 9 January. This, in effect, would mean the magazine would be two weeks late.

That is not something I will let happen if I can do something about it. So, as it happens, there is plenty to chat about this month so I'll carry on but before I do its worth repeating for John's sake: *a combination of the Christmas postal delays and the bringing forward of the deadline for the printers has resulted in no Competition. I'm dreadfully sorry I can't hold on another day John.*

PAST WACCI'S

Frank Neatherway has been busy sorting out this service and he has come to some conclusions on what type of service it is best to offer, based mainly on cost grounds.

To photocopy a magazine local to Frank would mean that the final cost would be £4.00 and that's quite a bit more than I thought it would be.

It would seem to make sense not to offer this service but, in its place, offer an article photocopying service. Frank sees it running like this:

Find the article(s) you feel would be of some use to you using the Index. Ask Frank by phone or letter how many pages long that article(s) is. The price structure is:

copying per A4 side 10p
postage 1 to 8 A4 pages 25p
postage 9 to 16 A4 pages 38p

These makes great sense to me as you can mix and match articles from several magazines. Thanks Frank.

NIGHT DUTY

My thanks go to all members this month as not one of you got me shot and telephoned out of the 7am - 9am slot. Please keep this splendid effort up as night duty continues on for the foreseeable future.

PD LIBRARIES AND BIG DISCS

I was hoping to be able to announce that the new 3.5 inch disc service was up and running this month but, alas, not. The fact that this is a short month for me (see What No Compo Spot) and postage delays abound (well why no blame then) so only one Librarian has sent me details of his library.

Doug Webb has now listed those PD discs which will not transfer onto a D20 disc but I have not, as yet, heard from Ian or Stuart. That's not putting any blame on them as they are both loyal servants of the club.

With John Bowley just taking over as Master Librarian then he too cannot be expected to help out at the drop of a hat. So, hopefully, as the post has settled down maybe next month WACCI will have a D20 PD service up and running. (Famous last words again.)

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

You will remember that Bob Miller is producing a list of members names and areas for inclusion in the next issue of the magazine.

If you don't want to see your name in the magazine then please write or ring Bob at/on:

WACCI Membership List
55 Den Lane, Springhead
Oldham OL4 4NN
Tel: 061 620 2118

AMSTRAD ACTION INTERVIEW

I know a lot of members take Amstrad Action judging by the letter pages this month. For the benefit of those members who don't WACCI got a prime time spot in the magazine thanks to WACCI member David Crookes.

A full page interview between David and myself has done a lot of good for

the club already. Many requests for sample copies has been received and, hopefully, these will turn into new members. Only by keeping membership numbers up can WACCI fight on. Thanks David for your help.

Whilst on the subject of AA I'm afraid to say the December edition was still only 24 pages long. This does look like it's the format it will now be produced in. That will not please AA readers and one can only fear that AA will soon disappear forever.

OMEGA BBS

WACCI will soon have a page on the Omega BBS. The board is open daily 8pm to 2am on 081 393 6226. If you understand this it is:

8-N-I to 14400 bps

The board carries Adverts, BBS numbers, CDROM Club, Disks, Forums, Sales & Wants and Shareware. The address is:

152 Meadow Walk, Ewell
Surrey KT19 0BA

And remember you can now telephone, at weekends only, anywhere in the country for 10 pence.

ORIC USER MONTHLY

If any of you are interested in these machines or curious as to what the Oric User Monthly is then contact:

Dave Dick, 65 Barnard Crescent
Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 9PW

AND FINALLY...

As I've got a little space left I'd like you all to have a think about what you can contribute to the club. I was chatting about Brunword the other day to a member and the idea of having a Brunword review in the magazine wouldn't go a miss. So the two Springthorpe brothers, John and Neil, are going to do a review for me. (Cats out of the bag now lads so you will have too!)

There is plenty of software, both PD and commercial, that has never been reviewed in WACCI. So how about having a go for your favourite club.

Fair Comment

This
POST
Is
Extremely
Vacant

KICK OFF

Dear Paul, I'm a little confused as to whom I should send FAIR COMMENT stuff to, Mike is still on the banner (and I hope is making a speedy recovery and will rejoin us soon), Angie is listed in WHO'S WHO, and you seem to be replying to the letters. Go on, tell us the most convenient way for you.

Please stop printing letters about slipping belts. My CPC reads every WACCI and is now suffering from lapeus singularum. Discs in daily use seem OK but little used ones are increasingly likely to give a "Read Fail" message. I find it sometimes helps to press "R" for Retry while lifting the disc up slightly by pushing in and up on the exposed edge, but I can see a need to buy some new belts (or tarry substance if Ron Izett will tell us where to buy it) in the near future.

You 3.5" side-switchers do seem to have bought in to a load of misery, Ron's letter and your reply in FAIR COMMENT Issue 84 - left handed discs indeed! How you manage the switch and edit WACCI is beyond me. Are there any practical uses for the switch? I have a 3.5" drive which I think came from SIREN. It has no switch and (with ROMDOS) seems to treat 3.5" disc with ease. Full D20 formatting with no messing about. Ron's problem in transferring ASCII files from CPC to PC reminds me that, when using PC TRANS, the PC could not read the ASCII file unless it had been saved to the PC disc using upper case letters. Could this be the problem?

Paul, please don't bother to reply to this but in your reply to my letter you suggested that ZORK was a machine. It's a game, I'm ashamed to say.

The proposed convention? Time and date permitting I'll go anywhere. I can offer a free (to say 40 members) conference room here - but have you tried getting to Pendine?

Finally, please find enclosed my subscription for another year of mental fuel. I've added about 8% just

in case VAT on fuel goes up, if it doesn't please stuff it in the club coffers, regards,

Bob Moffatt
Pendine

<<Hello Bob, I'm very sorry to have confused everybody over Fair Comment but a state of flux has existed for the last six months due to Mike's illness. As you will have noted from Thanx & Stuff, Mike has retired on health grounds, so until a successor is appointed these rules will apply: send all letters to Angie and little old me will answer them.

The company SEME (see last issue for details) do deliver the goods PDQ. I ordered a belt for John Jordan (in Ireland who doesn't seem to trust mail order from afar) and it was sent by return of post. I've posted it onto John and John just might let us know how he gets on (you will want you John.) The belt dressing solution also appeals to me. Should WACCI buy a tin and post it out to members on request? Gosh, I'm really out of my tarry tarry depth here!

Side switches are really useful little beasts but only if you need one. Clearly you don't but I do. Here at WACCI HQ I use an awful lot of 3.5 inch discs formatted to AMSDOS. If I didn't have a side switch then I would need twice the amount of discs.

I don't think that Ron's problems (as many as they are) have anything to do with upper/lower case characters. PC TRANS sounds like a really well thought out program. Thank god for the Face Hugger and his wonderful and deeply shareware DOSCOPY.

Thanks for the offer of a suite for the convention, Pendine isn't quite the centre of the UK and it isn't served by the best road system but it is the best offer to date and I thank you for that Bob. Anybody care to beat that offer?

As a true blue I was so pleased that democracy ruled and VAT on fuel remains at the 8% level (too much

anyway) but your extra 8% will indeed help the WACCI coffers. Thanks again Bob. -Paul>>

PARADOS REVISITED

Dear Paul, I never thought my first effort at writing a review would give rise to so many questions. I'll try to answer them as quickly as possible. <<The delay in this letter reaching these pages is my fault as I had a problem with the disc. -Angie>>

1. I own an ordinary 6128.
2. I knew that the Backup facility on Parados didn't work. I should have said so in my review. Put it down to my newness to the task. However, it really doesn't matter that this command doesn't work. All you have to do is go to the Control Menu. You tag all the files on the disc, then press C for copy. Parados asks you which drive you want to copy to and then happily sets off making you a backup copy of your disc.
3. I don't have the problem Doug has with MD+. With MD+ in my 6128 it loads up properly whenever I press RUN*DISC. The problem comes when I try to access from a Romdos disc. It simply won't do it. As I said, what it will do is accept an S-DOS disc for a MS800 version of MD+. Confusing isn't it? Incidentally, my version Logs a disc as being MS800, not S-DOS.

Changing the subject. I like Andre Howard's idea about shows. The most daunting prospect is doing it on your own. I think if three or four members got together to tackle a Haydock show it would be a good idea. The only proviso is to state that it wouldn't be like the 'old days'. I, for one, am solely a "user" and couldn't provide the kind of help Clive used to. We could, however, sell back issues, make new contacts, distribute PD and other programs and meet each other. If anyone's interested they could give me a ring on 061 620 2118 and we could have a chat about the idea.

On a totally different track. Ian Neill has done me a tremendous service and put DOSCOPY onto ROM for me. The result is truly wonderful. I can type a piece and (almost) instantly convert it into a file that a PC or MAC (fitted with PC Exchange) will read. Keep up the good work. Cheers,

Bob Miller
Oldham

<<Aye-up Bob, I should start by saying it was you with the green 3.5 inch disc that Angie couldn't read. Bob sent a Romdos D20 format disc to Angie and she can't read these little beasties. Please remember all to use only Amsdos formatted discs at present, thankyou.

Thanks for clearing up the points from your review and I know this hasn't put Bob off doing another review as he has Rambase4 in his possession to review for the club.

Thanks for the offer of attending a Haydock show and I'll be interested to see if you get any responses.

Doscopy on Rom eh! Sounds a great idea. I wonder if Ian will get loads of requests for this service. Did you really want to offer this service to WACCI members Ian. Please let us know as I like the sound of it. -Paul>>

ROWS AND PORTS AND DRIVES YOU CRAZY

Dear WACCI, thankyou ever so much. I am forever indebted to you and your lovely readers. I had given up on my CPC 6128 drive and was planning to take it out and shoot it. Fortunately for me (and the CPC) people started sending letters in to WACCI about slipping drive belts.

After issue 83 I wrote off to SEME for a new drive belt which arrived this afternoon (8th Nov less than a week since I wrote). I feverishly disassembled the machine and removed the old drive belt. It did look pretty dishevelled and had lost nearly all of its elasticity. I fitted the replacement and put everything back together. My hands trembled as I inserted a disc and typed that almost forgotten word "CAT" (well, I couldn't really forget it as I have 3 of the things). And would you believe it? IT LIVED. My drive is now perfectly happy and can whirl away to it's heart's content... Isn't that nice?

But if it isn't one thing, it's

another. I have a 3.5" second drive and ROMDOS from Siren and an 8 bit printer port from Goldmark. Both work quite happily when they are on their own but if I run the code to activate the printer port the external drive won't work. Whenever I try to use it I get "Read Fail". The instructions for the printer port show how to use it with two drive systems under CPM but I want to use it with my own BASIC programs and AMSDOS Protexit. I tried detaching the ROM and loading RAMDOS instead but when I ran the port code the machine crashed. So I was wondering, if I provide a copy of the eight bit port initialisation code would someone be able to come up with an alternative that would leave my drive alone?

Another thing I have been wondering about expanding my memory (well not my memory, but my CPC's). What's the best way to do it? Could the expanded memory have individual banks of 64k formatted to different record lengths?

Finally, does anyone know how reliable the four socket ROM boxes from Cirkit are? Computers who needs 'em? Thanks for an informative and enjoyable mag. By the way, do you know if Izzy Swade will have any more stories published? (I'm a fan) Have a nice day, yours Sincerely,

Richard Narrain
Middlesex

<<Hello Richard and thanks for letting us know your success story. This will help spur folks on that feel a little tentative about opening up their CPC's and fixing things.

Clearly something is at odds with each other with regard to your Drive/Romdos/8 bit port. I reckon the best bet here is Brian at Goldmark and I know he is reading this right now. Hi Brian - can you help us out here? Of course, if anybody else can help with this type of setup then please do write in. Have you the same configuration as Richard? Does it all work together?

I've no experience of memory expansions for the CPC but I do know that it uses the same bank switching techniques as per BANKMAN. As to the question of variable record lengths within difference 16K blocks of Ram, I don't know that either (good me eh!) Please can we have an authoritative

answer from a 256/64K memory expansion bod. We must have one out there.

Anybody use the Cirkit four socket Rom box? You do, care to let us know if it's any good as Richard would sure like to know.

I do have some more of Izzy's work for the publication and it will appear in a magazine near you soon. Do you like being called Izzy Isobel? -Paul>>

WACCI CAR RACES?

Dear Paul, please find enclosed my renewal subscription form together with a Postal Order to cover the cost of the subs.

I just want to say thanks to Frank Neatherway for producing the INDEX MAGAZINE, what a good idea as it saves having to go through each issue if you want to look up something. *<<Well said Dave. -Angie>>*

With regards to Amstrad Action, why oh why do we have to suffer those cover tapes that won't transfer anyhow, even Doug Webb could not get his copy of the crossword compiler to transfer and it is no good AA telling us to go back to ABLEX, as they are blaming AA for not sending on the masters to them *<<it's called passing the buck. - Angie>>* so here we are in a catch 22 situation, it is no wonder AA is having problems with dwindling sales, may I make a suggestion here, let WACCI take over *<<oops I've just fallen off my chair. -Angie>>* as the main magazine for AMSTRAD CPC *<<I thought we were and we're cheaper too you know. -Angie>>* (I could here you shout all the way down here in Plymouth Paul) it is only a suggestion, but a good one I think.

With regards to the PD Protexit Demonstration, reviewed by David Crookes in issue 82, I received from a reputable PD Library, (before I joined WACCI), a disc that had the Protexit Demo on it, it also had a save patched in and also on the same disc was a print program that you loaded your saved text from the Protexit Demo to get a print out. It is dated 1991. Being a TASWORD man myself, I have never used it until I went through my PD after reading David Crookes review in the last issue and it works. (not that I shall use it), but surely ARNOR must have come across the copyright, it could have been hacked out of course, how many other CPCeer's have

this DEMONSTRATION that works?

Finally Paul, (thank goodness he say's) I have a contact who will supply me 3.5" disc labels at £2.50 for 100 labels and there is a special offer on 3.5" HD discs plus labels and a box for £5.00 plus a first class stamp for each order. If any one wants them, if they would please send their orders to me with the correct remittance at the address shown below. Regards,

Dave Stitson
4 Connaught Avenue
Mutley
Plymouth
PL4 7BX

<<Hi there Dave and thanks for the letter and the subs. Thanks also for letting Frank know that all his hard work in producing the Index is really appreciated by members. I'm afraid the print quality wasn't great on some of the copies of the Index. WACCI has now changed photocopiers.

I'll not enter into any debates over Amstrad Action as Angela Cook will be after my hide. WACCI, I believe anyway, is the best magazine for the serious user. Look at the top of the front cover - we reckon we are the business when it comes to serious computing with the CPC. I'm also very happy to blow the trumpet for WACCI and call a spade a spade if needed.

Angie mentioned that WACCI is also a little cheaper than AA. Nearly half price in fact and WACCI currently has eight more pages than AA. Some aspects of producing, printing and posting WACCI out each month have been steadily rising in price over the last three years but the cost of £1.50 has remained constant. I can see no reason why 1995 should see a price rise unless VAT is added to magazines by Mr Clarke in his next budget. (Would Tory back benchers rebel for WACCI?) That would add 19p to the cost of the magazine and it would be difficult to absorb it easily. Let's hope Mr Clarke doesn't make me face that situation.

By the sound of it the hacked version of the Protex Demo is widely available and has been so for some three to four years.

Thanks for passing on your saving on 3.5" HD discs and labels to members. I'm sorry to say that WACCI can supply 3.5" disc labels (they fit 3" discs

perfectly as well) for 1p each. Minimum order 50, maximum 250 and the price includes postage. HD (high density 1.44Mb discs) aren't a great deal of use to a CPC 3.5" drive but I know many members own a PC as well (me included) and HD discs do come into there own on these machines. -Paul>>

THE RARIFIED CHRONON HIMSELF

Dear Paul, I wrote to WACCI some time ago (okay! last year) regarding a readers enquiry regarding genealogy programs, this was to advise on a program I had seen reviewed in two of the popular(?) Amstrad Magazines of the day. I also advised that I was working on some programs I had written for my own use. These were written in Locomotive basic and ran under Amsdos. To reiterate these used a commercial random access file handling program and so could not be put into the Public Domain. As I had obtained MBasic and it's associated compiler from yourselves (you have a lot to answer for) I was busy converting the programs to make use of MBasics random access file handling.

The programs have now been completely re-written and compiled and would seem to operate quite well having been enhanced and optimised to make full use of MBasics features and the speed increase from the compiler.

Although never finished (is any program?) as I keep writing additional bits of code for performing additional functions etc, I have a version which I now use (until the next one comes along.) I have tested this as best I can and have also sent a copy to my brother who is not computer proficient, but he has managed to use it okay without to many problems.

I am now busy trying to finish off the manual, but before submitting the programs to the library I would prefer it if someone interested in genealogy could give it a test run for me. CPC6128, CP/M Plus and Epson Compatible printer required. I can send a disc and draft copy of the manual either to WACCI or direct to a reader, any offers?

The programs were written in small parts (modules), tested and then saved in ASCII format, before being edited on a word processor, they were then merged to form each program, this was in turn tested. As many sections of

code are repeated throughout the programs, i.e input/output routines and error handling etc, these are written seperately and then patched into each program as required. It was much easier to manipulate and edit the code on my wordprocessor than in MBasic. Another advantage was that the line length could be set at 128 characters which is the maximum the compiler can handle. These programs comprise of 181K of source code (after being abridged) once compiled they just fit on one side of a CP/M auto-boot system disc, the data files being stored on side/drive B:

The programs and functions are all menu driven and will allow information to be stored on 500' people and on 200 marriages, this may be considered quite small compared to PC programs, but I feel it is more than adequate for ones immediate relatives (I have used only 130+ records so far).

The information stored can be displayed on the screen or printed in various formats, 10 at the last count which includes Pedegree Charts (Family trees) and Family Group Sheets.

Although I am not a professional genealogist and it is only a casual hobby I could try writing an article for beginners on the subject should anyone be interested?

Could you please refresh my memory on the difference between the Public Domian Library and the WACCI Homegrown Library?

I spotted a November copy of Amstrad Action in Smiths and decided to buy a copy to see if I have been missing anything, on first examination I thought I was missing half the magazine(!) and that someone had ripped the guts out of it while it was on the shelf, before taking it back I decided to examine it a bit more closely, after which it would appear to have all been there, all 22 pages of it, for £2.95?

On checking previous copies of Amstrad Action in my possession AA100 to 102 contained 58+ pages and AA103 to 105 contained 50+ pages. For it to drop to 22 pages in the space of 5 issues is a bit worrying to say the least. I also understand that in a previous issue of WACCI it was mentioned that AA were to start accepting subscriptions again although I could find no mention of this in the

November issue. Does anyone know what's going on out there with AA?

Andrew Solomon
Kingston Upon Hull

<<Dear Andrew, thanks ever so for the letter as I do look forward to your letters appearing in WACCI. Members might remember that I awarded Andrew best letter of the year 1993 in Blast From The Past of last year because of his letter on the rarefied choron atmosphere that surrounds every CPC. In fact I was so taken by that letter that in its memory I have designed this months front cover with a graphic sent to me by Russell Macdonald.

I feel a lot of interest will be generated by your genealogy program and rather than let me organise its distribution for testing, I don't wish to increase my workload, could members send in writing, with name, address, telephone number etc., and I'll simply pop them into an envelope and post then off to Andrew at the end of January. Thanks in advance.

I've had a look at Mbasic and it appeared to be very good. I don't have time for programming any more, a shame as I really enjoyed it, but WACCI comes first. I've tried the SMP Basic compiler for Amsdos but as it wasn't written with serious applications in mind then it was of no use to me. Mbasic does seem to bridge the divide between the ease of Basic and a speed of compiled code. Do have a look at it from the PD library if you are anything like half good at Basic.

The one and only difference between PD and Homegrown software is that PD can be freely distributed by just about anyone, any library and it can even find its way on to AA cover tapes without your permission. WACCI's Homegrown software is exclusive to the club and is copyright WACCI and the writer of the program. No other library may distribute it.

The size of the current editions of AA is very worrying to say the least. Subscription form/details have been removed from the magazine without any comment being made. I have heard nothing official but it doesn't look to good for the CPC scene. Still the December issue did give WACCI a good page spread in an interview between David Crookes and myself, so let's hope some good comes of that. I would

like to personally thank David for his help to the Club regarding that interview. -Paul>>

TIMESHARE ON THE CPC

Dear Paul, sorry I've left it so late this time to renew my subs. I have been 'up to my eyeballs' this while back as they say. But please find enclosed a cheque to cover for the next 6 issues or so.

Mentioning renewing subs have you seen the quantity of the latest issues of Amstrad Action (I won't say quality) but I'm afraid that's one I won't be renewing. I know support for the Amstrad is dwindling but 'Flogging dead Horses' and 'Rip-Off's' is all I can see there. In one of the last issues a reader suggested attaching a Cornflake to the front cover jokingly meaning at least the magazine would be worth the price they were asking for it. How true he is.....

At least WACCI still shines like a beacon in the sea of dross with no chance of supplementing my breakfast cereal.

Right that's my gripe of the month over and done with and I feel much better now (the pills really do work Doctor...)

Anyway - I received the WACCI Index at the start of the month and thought what an excellent little supplement. Please thank Frank and John from me for all their hard work they put in to accomplish it.

While I'm at it - sorry to hear Clive has passed on his laurels, if you're still in contact please thank him for all things he done in the past and pass on my best wishes.

As you are still passing on (I know I've got a cheek) I see you have some PD Discs for converting stuff over to a PC and converting a PC to a CPC or thereabouts. Meaning PD Discs 42 and 98. Since I've recently wangled to get my grubby hands onto a 486SX PC although only occasionally (whenever the Boss is out of the office).

I was thinking - since I have a load of RAMBASE and ZDE files plus various PD Titles (Thanks to my favourite PD Library.) Is it possible to convert them or better still use them on a PC and if so - how?

Also I read somewhere sometime ago that these programs come under the title of SHAREWARE. If you can - could

you explain to me how this works and how it effects me in obtaining said Discs. I'm afraid I've only used and come across the PD Discs used in the Library up to now so Shareware is a new Ball game to me.

If you don't mind I'll stick to my usual routine of paying the Library's copying fee and if it requires extra finance could you please let me know and how much. Thanking you again for all your trouble.

Gordon Kewley
Lisburn
N Ireland

<<Hello Gordon, gosh hasn't just about every letter this month so far included a reference to the size of AA. Clearly, if so many who are writing anyway, feel the need to mention it then its impact on members has been great to say the least.

Now to the question of CPC to PC to CPC conversion software and the CPC emulator for the PC. Doscopy is deeply wonderful, need I say more. It converts both ways and it's really easy to use.

The CPC emulator that runs on a PC (see review in WACCI 81 of version 0.8) is truly a beautiful piece of code. In his review Stuart wasn't happy on all aspects but these have been fixed in version 0.9 (PD98) available from the library. You can emulate CP/M on a PC using 22NICE and run programs like VDE. In fact I haven't got any reports of problems, so if its CP/M or Amsdos programs or files, then you can take them with you over onto a PC.

Shareware differs from PD in the fact that the writer invites you to send a fixed sum of money (varies depending on program) to register to program with him. This usual means that you will receive the latest version and complete documentation on the program.

I have reservations about the use of shareware on the CPC. Let's take Doscopy as an example. I doubt if you will get an upgraded version or any documentation. The program is given freely to PD libraries to distribute. So I treat it like PD. If Mr Face Hugger wanted to sell it he should have done it commercially. I bet that someone like Peter Campbell would dearly love to sell Doscopy.

In their true form, Shareware programs are older, cut-down versions or demo versions of the software. There is a real incentive to register.

These are, of course, only my views but I would like to hear what you think about the situation. Is there a legal point of view? I throw the subject open to the pages of Fair Comment, do join in. -Paul>>

BLOW THE RUBBER BAND

Due to popular demand - Paul has asked for a blow by blow account of replacing the Disc Drive Belt on the 6128. A blow by blow account indeed, does he realise he is talking about the computer I love.

If you do this kind of thing every day of the week, then please go to the next letter.

So here goes, before any of you think this is going to be a technical job, with soldering irons, circuit testing and meter readings, forget it, there will be none of that kind of language if you don't mind.

The requirements for this operation are minimal. You will need about half an hour or so of undisturbed quiet, send the wife and kids out, taking the dog with them, put the cat out, you don't want him/her/it, stomping around the place.

But seriously, all that is needed is patience, and a gentle touch.

Just three screwdrivers are the only tools required, one small and one medium Philips and a small slot screwdriver. You will also need a piece of wire about 8 inches long. With a pair of pliers, bend the end about a quarter of an inch over to 90 degrees, to form a L shape. A good light source is a great help.

Disconnect the keyboard from the monitor, printer etc. Take the keyboard, turn it upside down (I found it easier to work with it on my lap) and unscrew the four recessed Philips screws and the two smaller Philips screws at the side of the Disc Drive. Turn the keyboard over and place back on the table/bench in the normal operating position i.e. Disc Drive to the right hand side.

Gently ease the keyboard from the base, don't worry, there are no springs to fly in all directions or keys to pop up. The reason for being gentle is that the keyboard and base

are joined together by the leads coming from the keys and are attached to the base of the computer, consequently, no strain whatsoever, should be placed upon these leads.

WARNING: Those of you with a delicate disposition may find the following scenes disturbing. The working parts of the computer are about to be exposed.

Lift up the keyboard from the Disc Drive end and place a large book or similar object between the keyboard and the base, so that you can now work on the Drive unhindered.

The drive is secured to the base of the computer by two screws, (on the left of the drive), unscrew, and the Drive is free, except for leads, coming from the base to the drive.

Now look down on the drive, at the front, just where the Discs go into the slot, you will find two small Philips screws. Unscrew just enough, so that the front of the Disc Drive comes away, the screws should remain in place, safe and out of harms way. These two small screws, with the aid of the two small screws mentioned below, hold the base of the Drive to the Drive mechanism.

The Drive now has to be turned upside down, remember the leads, take care not to place any strain on them.

With the Drive upside down, showing the circuit board, (sorry about that), take note of the position of two small screws, unscrew and the base of the Drive is free (except for leads coming from the base, see above.)

Gently separating the base, (you have about an inch of working space) you will see the belt, the large pulley nearest to you and a small brass pulley at the far end.

The old belt will almost fall off the large pulley, using the wire hook ease the belt off the small pulley, careful with the wire, don't stab the belt with it and watch out for the circuit board.

Put the new belt on an assemble in reverse order. Take your time, half an hour or so and a little patience and your computer is good for many years. Don't put any strain on the leads, or you will find it's a hole in the wallet job. If you do find an easier way, or any short cuts, please let me know. **GOOD LUCK.** <<Thanks for this Wally I'll have a go at it. -Angie>>

Congratulations to Frank Neatherway and John Bowley for an excellent Magazine Index.

Wally Collinson
Cheltenham

<<Dear Wally, thanks for the blow by blow account of how to change to the disc drive belt on a three inch drive. I'm sure now that when the dreaded error messages occur with the drive, members will remember issue 85 and your name.

I must say that it doesn't sound too difficult at all but I'm not going to attempt it on my two three inch discs just yet as they are working fine. I know fully well I shouldn't have said that as I bet they are both listening to me typing away.

I hope Angie has a successful dabble with her dicky drive and that she lets us all know in due course. But do hurry up Angie. -Paul>>

SORRY SUPERMAN

Dear Angie, I must apologise to Tom Gordon for trusting the MOII handbook. In my piece I suggested using the function keys for underline and condensed because of the advice in the MOII handbook not to create conflicts with the printer.

However, using them I have been able to recreate Tom's problems. So my advice is: use the printer codes, not the function keys wherever possible. The ones I left out are:

	SET	RESET
Underline	f1 27,45,1	f1, 27,45,0
Condensed	f1 27,15	f1, 18 (No '27')

I realise I included the codes for 'emphasised' in my piece but called it 'bold'.

In response to Paul's query about PARADOS and CP/M, CP/M needs the disc firmware which is held in ROM Slot 7. CP/M isn't bothered whether it's PARADOS, ROMDOS, or AMSDOS as long as those basic functions are there when it wants to access a disc.

Even if you have patched your EMS file for one big format, with CP/M Plus, you can change that between programs using RAMSDOS+.COM since it simply pokes new values into banked RAM. So you can copy files from one format to Drive A: or a silicon disc

run RAMDOS+ to change the format and copy them back to Drive B: in the new format. Incidentally, RAMDOS+.COM will work on Plus machines, but you need access to an older machine to format the discs with RAMDOS.BAS.

The AMSDOS ROM includes some DR LOGO functions; presumably these were left out of PARADOS to make space for everything else it does. Sincerely,

John R Hudson
Huddersfield

<<Greeting John and thanks for sorting out the Tom Gordon MOII problems. Does this mean that his margins are forever constant? I wish I knew. However, as a copy of Protext hasn't come my way yet, Tom still doesn't know the delights of the driving his CPC to the limit but I hope MOII behaves a little better for him now.

Thanks also for answering my query on Parados. It just goes to show that whilst one can't know everything, as a club we do seem to come up with the answers. So do let's keep asking questions everyone. -Paul>>

A SOFT SWITCH OR TWO

Dear All, I keep meaning to write into these hallowed pages, but I never seem to be able to get round to it. However, spurred on by some unanswered member's questions in last issues 'Fair Comment', I finally got round to putting my cyberpen to paper.

I am a happy ParaDOS user and can confirm for Martin Cush that ParaDOS contains it's own "soft" side-switch. Additionally once it is configured to look on the "other" side of the disc, this setting will survive resets and so programs can be run directly, without the need to copy them off the disc within ParaDOS. The only problem is that you have to issue a DRIVE command, thus loosing the current contents of the memory. The drive can be configured with "Configure", "Drives", ie the keystrokes (shift c) then d, then using the arrow keys and the enter/return key to set the options.

John Hudson discusses ParaDOS - CP/M compatibility. Since CP/M Plus bypasses the AMSDOS (or ParaDOS) ROM and uses it's own disc access routines you cannot make use of all ParaDOS's formats from within CP/M Plus. However, you can still use Uncle

Clive's CP/M Plus Extra tip for setting up CP/M Plus to work with large disk formats. ParaDOS works fine with disks set up in this way. The method for setting discs up like this can be found in Issue 75, page 21.

CP/M 2.2 is rather a different story. You cannot run the 2.2 version of Dr Logo, however other 2.2 software runs fine. Better yet, ParaDOS allows 2.2 to recognise and use any format of disk that ParaDOS itself recognises. The only proviso is that there must be a 2.2 system disk (ie system format) in A when it is required by 2.2 (ie most of the time), oh well.

Finally I would like to put my twopenneth into the PD Discs pot. I think the best solution would be to provide a small program that when run would copy the contents of 2 3" PD disks onto 2 of the members own disks from a 3.5" disk sent to the member through the post then the member could rearrange the files using his own DOS, if he wanted. Because of the lack of efficiency in DATA format discs, 4 sides could be crammed onto a single 3.5" disk. If the first two tracks were DATA formatted a small program could be stored to de-archive the disks which all members with a 3.5" drive could run, irrespective of what DOS they use. I would be happy to write this program myself if only a member would tell me how to tell AMSDOS to look on the other side of the disk. It should be somewhere in the XDPB.

The problem with this solution is that a new library would have to be compiled by some mug, er, member, then some efficient method of copying 800k disks would have to be found, perhaps WACCI has found a use or a PC? Yours,

Mark Stewart
Belper

PS I know that my prose is a little incomprehensible, if any member wants to discuss any of these points with me, please ring me on my help-line telephone number.

<<Hello Mark and welcome to these hallowed pages. Thanks for confirming that Parados can read both sides of an Amsdos formatted 3.5 inch disc without the need for a side-switch.

Thanks also for further information on Parados and CP/M. It adds to the

info supplied by John R Hudson in the previous letter. Gosh, what a rich little old club we are in answers being supplied this month.

Now to the question of PD and 3.5 inch discs. I read with great interest your proposals and kind offer of writing the all singing, all dancing software to met all needs. I wish it was that simple I said to myself when I read your letter. In fact, the very thought that it was not that simple leads me to believe that problems are just around the corner. Let me explain what I mean.

When we talk about 3.5 inch drives we must always consider the lowest common denominator and that is a 3.5 inch drive with no side switch and no large disc operating system. Members do have these 3.5 inch setups.

On the other hand we have members with 3.5 inch drive, a side switch and a big DOS. We must never forget that some members have two three inch drives and some only one three inch drive. I think the days of the pure 464 tape user are over but I might be wrong on that point.

What WACCI needs to do is to be able to give value to all its members when considering the future proposals for its PD Libraries. I bet you thought I was going to trash your suggestion now Stewart but no, I see merit in it.

The club has just benefited from a brand new Master PD Librarian by the name of John Bowley. John has some ideas on the way to re-structure the PD Library with 3.5 inch discs in mind. The example John gave me was the MicroDesign clip art discs. Cram four three inch discs onto one D20 format 3.5 inch disc, using USER area to split the files up, and you have great value at £1.00 including disc and P&P.

Of course the four three inch discs will be available for those who can only use that format but I bet the advantage of a 3.5 inch drive will have become very obvious to them.

As I see it (and I may be wrong) the best way forward is to copy on to D20 format those PD programmes that will do so. An example of problem areas are the Demo discs. The library Supplement will then contain the complete three inch selection and which of those selections are available on D20 format. This will take a little bit of time but I feel

it is a worth while goal. Now if your program can aid that exercise then I would certainly like to see progress made. If there is a simple way for a D20 disc to explode onto four three inch disc then I'm all for it. John will be overseeing all the new PD library discs from now on so how about you and him talking on the matter. Perhaps an overview of your proposed program sent to John would be a good start.

Errmm as to telling Amsdos to look on the other side of the disc - pass. WACCI will never accept that a PC will be useful to any computer user. WACCI will never find a PC useful. If ever the situation arose when WACCI found a PC to be useful then WACCI will disclaim this fact. The very term PC isn't well received within these pages so I'll stop using it. -Paul>>

X MARKS THE SPOT

Dear WACCI, Bob Moffatt's query in Fair Comment, Issue 84 regarding my use of a data name 'X'.

I had explained in the Index Story the problems of showing in 34 chars a meaningful description of single and multi-page articles. I also explained why I found it necessary to split the Index file into several groups to deal with Protext memory space constraints.

Initially I had used the Subject start letters as sort keys to produce groups of records and this would have been ideal if the descriptions were of standard format but unfortunately they were not. I realised early that it was essential to devise description format for me to follow. However careful, it was easy to have slight variations in descriptions which caused similar ones to spread throughout the index - and I wouldn't tolerate that! Checking was easy if just a few dozen records were involved but when they number nearly a thousand it was very much harder, even when using printouts of umpteen pages. So I decided to have an indicator that would identify those records which had either to be amended or were already amended; hence the introduction of the data name 'X'. It served two purposes, (1) allowing easy selection of discrete groups by the use of the single figure 1,2 or 3 rather than letter by letter; and (2) more importantly, by using figure 6 as temporary data name; this would reveal

entries to be checked and was then amended after any correction.

This method was proven particularly useful when updating the index from subsequent magazines.

Frank Neatherway
Rayleigh

<<Hi there Frank, thanks for updating us on the use of data names when you made WACCI history and produced the WACCI Index.

Those of you who haven't got Masterfile III or who haven't done a lot of work with databases may find Frank's letter a little confusing but then you would expect that. The important thing to remember here is that the design of the database is so important to its final usefulness. I think that Frank has shown his ability in designing databases to be of the very best kind.

If any member wishes to convert the Index to, say, Rambase then please get in touch with me. -paul>>

HAVE SOME FUN

I would just like to say that WACCI is the best CPC mag I have ever read.

And now for something to tell everyone out there. PD FUN is the best PD library for all fun things, these are games, demos, adventures and slide shows. I put all the software on 3" and 3.5" discs only. Even serious CPCers need a break sometime.

Costs, I think as a special offer to WACCI members of 35p per side, it sounds good to me, all people interested should send me a SAE for a list of the Library. Yours sincerely,

Duncan Tizzard
PD FUN
Folly Farm
Cold Ashton
Chippenham
Wilts SN14 8JR

<<Hello Duncan and thanks for the letter. I didn't realise that WACCI had the owner of PD FUN as a member but now we all know.

If you are interested in the PD FUN collection then please get in touch with Duncan. I've not seen a list of his library so I can't really say much more can I. Hint: if you want to whip up more interest in your library then give me more details and I'll let the membership know. -Paul>>

MIDI INTERFACES

Dear Sir, please find enclosed my subscription to WACCI for four issues. I assume these to be monthly issues. I wonder if you could publish a request for help in the pages of WACCI. My son has a CPC464, which at present he uses mainly for game playing. As his interest is music (he has just passed grade 3 keyboard exam) he would like to be able to link his CPC and his music keyboard together via its MIDI port. I am aware of a number of MIDI interfaces:- The EMR Miditrack Performer, the RAM music machine and the DHCP Interface and Sequencer.

Unfortunately I can't find any trace of these devices, nor anyone who knows how to use them. Though the pages of WACCI can I ask for anyone who knows where I can obtain any of the above, or you can advise me which to choose or what can be done with them to get in touch with me at my address or by phoning 0455 637472. Yours sincerely,

Nigel Bacon
4 Cleveland Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire LE10 0AJ

<<Hello Nigel, well I guess as I'm no help its over to the membership on this one. Contact Nigel or write to me so that the answer can appear on these very pages. Thanks. -Paul>>

MASTERING THE EMULATOR PROBLEM

Dear Doug, Recently, I had from you v0.8 CPC Emulator on PD disc 88, which I have been able to use with my 486PC.

However, I have been able to get printouts from Masterfile and Mastercalc when using it, but I have been able to update the files on both successfully. Have you any information how to obtain printouts? My printer is a Citizen 200CX 9 pin. I do not relish the thought of having to re-type files into MSDOS/Windows programmes. My grandchildren have their eyes on the CPC6128. Yours faithfully,

John Court
New Zealand

<<Dear John, sorry to hear you are having problems with v0.8 of the CPC Emulator. I know you have ordered v0.9 which Stuart Gascoigne reckons to be better. Stuart can you throw any light here or can any member help John out with this printout problem. -Paul>>

MARKET STALL

STALL HOLDER: ANGIE HARDWICK

WANTED WANTED WANTED WANTED

Mike Brown, Isuzu Warrenty Dept, Ryder Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands. 0121-588-7137 (home) wants: Pin Writer P7, 24pin head, also 8 bit Printer Port.

Bill Ford, 6, Ormonde Street, Newtown, Chester CH1 3DD wants :- Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer on Disc or tape. (Thank you Bill for the lovely letter it brightened my day. Angie)

John Shaw, Willowbrook, 12, Watermans Way, Wargrave-on-Thames. Berkshire. RG10 8HR Tel: 0734-403981 wants: Educational Tapes for CPC 464 suitable for child 4 years plus. (Sorry I missed out your telephone no last time John. Angie)

Ray Neal, 56 Houldsworth Crescent, Hoibrooks, Coventry CV6 4HJ. Tel: 0203-362063 wants: 8 Bit Printer Port for CPC 6128 (around £15.00)

Howard Lucas, Flat 2, 12, Belgrave Road, Gloucester GL1 1QZ Tel: 0452-505043 wants: Prospell and Microdesign on disc.

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The following are available from WACCI HQ but please ring Angie to place orders.

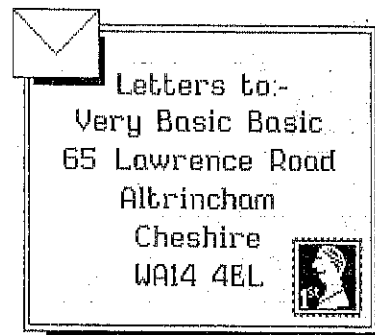
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VERY BASIC

BASIC

Written by
Alan Tilling



This month we are in the bargain basement, two programs for the price of one. Have you ever wondered what use the function keys can be put to? The first program sets up some useful actions and the second one gives random patterns on the screen.

FUNCTIONS

The function keys can be used as a numeric keypad but they can be reprogrammed to carry out some useful tasks - all at the press of a button.

I don't like the gold writing on the deep blue screen so I press f0 (function key 0) and hey presto I have black writing on a pale blue screen. I want to change to mode 2 so all I have to do is to press f2 and mode 2 is present. The keys I have reprogrammed are:

- f0 light blue screen, black writing
- f1 change to mode 1
- f2 change to mode 2
- f3 CATalogue the disc in 'a' drive remain in the 'a' drive
- f4 CATalogue the disc in 'b' drive and remain in the 'b' drive
- f5 CATalogue the 'b' drive and change (or return) to the 'a' drive.
- f6 type out goto 2 [RTN]
- f7, f8, f9 not allocated

THE KEY TO IT

Each key on the keyboard has a string of text associated with it and after reset, the function keys are set to give the numbers 0 to 9, as we all know. If you want to give a key a different character then this string must be altered. If you've used a PC <<a what? -Paul>> you will know that the keyboard layout is different. The keys can be reconfigured by the following method but I'm afraid that the engraving on the key tops, well...

BY HAND

To arrange a clean light blue screen with a similar border and with black writing, the following command string must be inputted; ink 0,11:ink 1,0: border 11:cls[RTN]. That is, the ink "in the paper", ink 0 is set to colour 11 (sky blue). The ink in the writing pen is set to 0 (black). The border is set to colour 11 (sky blue, the same as ink 0). The next instruction CLears the Screen and [ReTurn] tells the computer to get on with it.

When entering a program at the keyboard, [RTN] is used to let the computer know that it has reached the end of the line so how can [RTN] be programmed to press itself as it where? Fortunately those clever people at Amstrad have thought of this and if CHR\$(13) is entered then the machine will interpret this as meaning "hit the return key". Have a look at the "key" lines in 40 to 170.

DEFINITIONS

Once you've decided what a key is to do then the action must be assigned to that key.

Somewhere in your manual and on top of the 6128 disc drive is a drawing showing the key numbers. The instruction KEY DEF has the syntax KEY DEF, key number, repetition, string. There are further parts that can be used but these are sufficient for our needs just now. The key number is the number of the key as printed in the manual *not* as printed on the key tops. Function key f0 has the key number 15

and so the first parameter in line 50 is 15. The zero indicates that the key press is not to be repeated (like the letter keys repeat). The last parameter is the number of the string defined in the previous line.

I think that the names Key and Key Def are confusing. I suppose you could regard the names as what the KEY will do and that the other command DEFINes which KEY will do it. I tried allocating RUN"DISC but the sting definition is delimited by quotes so every time I entered run" the computer saw the quotes and terminated the string even though I used CHR\$(21) between the run and disc. If any one does figure it out please let us all know by writing to me or to the letters page.

```
1 GOTO 3
2 SAVE"init",a:STOP
3 REM
10 '-----
20 '   Initialisation prog Vbb 85
30 '-----
40 KEY 140,"INK 0,11:INK 1,0
   :BORDER 11:cls"+CHR$(13)
50 KEY DEF 15,0,140
60 KEY 141,"mode 1"+CHR$(13)
70 KEY DEF 13,0,141
80 KEY 142,"mode 2"+CHR$(13)
90 KEY DEF 14,0,142
100 KEY 143,";a:cat"+CHR$(13)
110 KEY DEF 5,0,143
120 KEY 144,";b:cat"+CHR$(13)
130 KEY DEF 20,0,144
140 KEY 145,";b:cat;|a"+CHR$(13)
150 KEY DEF 12,0,145
160 KEY 146,"goto 2"+CHR$(13)
170 KEY DEF 4,0,146
```

Prog 1

PROGRAM 2

On to the second program. I've made the line numbers follow on from program 1 because it seems to fit in nicely there but if you only want one half or the other then this is the place to start/stop it.

If you leave exactly the same picture on the screen for too long the phosphors can become burned out. This can sometimes be seen in shops using a computer for customer sales etc. When the assistant uses the machine, the menu can still be seen as a ghostlike image. All that's needed to avoid this is to keep changing the picture which is what this program does by splattering little dots randomly all over the screen, and when [RTN] is pressed, the program is wiped from memory ready for normal use.

IT'S OBVIOUS

180, 190 and 200 are obviously the program title. The next line, line 210 instructs Basic to GO to the SUBroutine starting at line 320 every 250 time periods. A time period for this interrupt timer (and since it wasn't specified, it will default to timer 0) is 1/60th of a second so 320 actually means every 5 seconds gosub 320. The mode 2 in 220 sets up the greatest definition ie the dots that will appear on the screen will be the smallest possible.

The "paper" ink and the border is changed to black and the "writing" ink is changed to bright white. 260 sets a random seed based on the time elapsed since switch on. This is ready for use by line 280. Now the program enters a loop. Since we don't know how long the screen will be in this display a while/wend loop is used

INTERROGATE ... INTERROGATE...

If the KEYboard is INTERrogated and a particular key is looked at, in this case the return key, key 18 it will display a number depending if it is pressed or not pressed and also if it is pressed with control or shift. When it is pressed on its own, it gives the value zero. Line 270 says while key 18 (the return key) is not giving zero ie when it is not pressed, stay in the loop. This infers that when it is pressed, the program leaves the loop.

THE PLOT THICKENS

The x and y in 280 are the positions along the horizontal axis (x) and up the side (y) of the screen. X and y are just like the x and y coordinates of a graph. RND gives a RaNDom number (based on line 260) between 0 and 1. Since x can equal up to 640, the random number is multiplied by 640. The INT just rounds the number up into a whole number. The result is stored in the variable called x. The y coordinate is constructed in the same way. x and y then PLOTs (or, really, splatters) this as a bright white dot on the screen. The WEND while END is met and so Basic goes back to the While line and repeats but this time RND changes the position of the dot. This will go on for ever but remember the EVERY in 210? EVERY five seconds Basic is yanked out of the loop and is thrown at 320 where it clears the screen. The variable "a" which started at zero is incremented by one. Since there can't be a colour number greater than 26, 340 checks for this and takes action if it is. The border colour changes and Basic is returned from whence it came, and that's it.

When [RTN] is pressed the loop is exited and 310 removes the program from the memory.

```
180 ' -----
190 '           Screen display
200 ' -----
210 EVERY 250 GOSUB 320
220 MODE 2
230 INK 0,0
240 INK 1,26
250 BORDER 0
260 RANDOMIZE TIME
270 WHILE INKEY(18)<>0
280 x=INT(RND*640):y=INT(RND*400)
290 PLOT x,y
300 WEND
310 NEW
320 MODE 2
330 a=a+1
340 IF a=26 THEN a=0
350 INK 0,a
360 BORDER a
370 RETURN
```

Prog. 2

Well that's all for another month so so it's goodbye from me and it's goodbye from me. Have a Happy New Year and I hope to be writing for you all, in the New Year. Alan.

Okay so what does Program Two do I can here you all ask. Well not all as many will be able to tell from the Basic listing. For those of you who can't then below I printed the screen file.

Doesn't it just drive you dotty.

If you stare at it for 5 minutes then you should see Alan in it.

GREAT



SERIES OF YEARS GONE BYE BYE ...

DISC SECTOR EDITING by JOHN KENEALLY

From the distant past of April 1987, and the hallowed pages of WACCI No.7 comes the definitive collection of technical goodies, set out in easy-to-understand terms by the Maestro himself, John Keneally of Camel Micros. This was article one of a series. Prepare to be amazed!

DIRECTORY FORMAT

It is often useful to know the format of the directory on disc. You can for example, check whether a file already exists from inside a Basic program. This is difficult any other way as, if you try to open a file which is not there, the program will just stop. Each file on your disc has one or more 32 byte entries in the directory, the construction of which is shown in the diagram opposite. The rules are the same no matter how your disc is formatted, but system discs reserve the first two tracks for use by the system.

The directory itself is held on the first four sectors of track 2 on a system format disc, and the first four sectors of track 0 on a data format disc. You can read any disc sector by using the following machine code routine:

```

org #8000 ;as good a place as any
           ;reads one sector of a track
           ;into a 512 byte buffer
readsec:  ld hl,function
           call #bcd4 ;kl find command
           ld (extadr),hl
           ld a,c
           ld (extadr+2),a ;HL and C contain extended addr
           ;for BIOS 'read sector' routine
           ld hl,buffer ;addr of a 512 byte buffer
           ld e,0 ;drive number (1 for B)
           ld c,(ix) ;C holds sector number
           ld d,(ix+2) ;D holds track number
           rst 3 ;execute the BIOS function
           defw extadr
           ret ;to basic
extadr :  defs 3
function: defb 132 ;'read' function
buffer :  defs 512
end

```

A NUDGE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

BYTE	MEANING	EXPLANATION
0	Entry Type	&00 if active - &E5 if erased. (Does he mean user No???)
1-8	Filename	Up to eight characters, padded with spaces if needed.
9-11	Filename extension	BAS, BIN, BAK, etc., and padded with spaces if needed.
12	File Extent	Each directory entry controls up to 16K of data. The extent of the first 16K is always 0. If the file has more than 16K, then more directory entries are created with the same name but with a non-zero 'extent'.
13-14	Not Used	Both bytes will always be &00.
15	Record Count	A record is 128 bytes long so there can be a maximum of 128 records (128*128=16K) in each directory entry.
16-31	Allocation Map	Each byte holds a number which represents two actual disc sectors. Each disc sector is 512 bytes long, so each number represents 1K of data. As there are 16 bytes, this covers the maximum of 16K and explains why file sizes are shown to the nearest 1K. There are 9 sectors per track and the 1K blocks are counted starting from sector 0 on track 2. Thus an allocation number of 2 would actually mean sectors 4 and 5 on track 2. To complicate matters the hardware requires that you add 65 to sector numbers (system format), so this is really sectors 69 and 70. For data discs you must add 193 to the sector number.

From Basic the routine is used by: CALL &8000, track, sector. For example, to read the first sector of the directory track on a DATA formatted disc: CALL &8000,0,193 and to do the same on a SYSTEM formatted disc: CALL &8000,2,65. The drive will whirr for a second and then you'll get the 'Ready' prompt back. The 512 byte buffer, in this case starting at address &8020, now holds the data from the

track and sector chosen. Use a monitor to examine it, or write yourself a little Basic program to print it out. You can alter it by POKEing the relevant addresses and then write it back to disc by replacing the 'function' byte by DEFB 133. Be careful though, you can really mess your files up by writing direct to a disc sector without going through the file-handling system!

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In The Dark

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME! HURRAH! by Richard Smith

It's Christmas time again. More endless and totally unwanted reruns on TV. But that's the BBC for you ...

INTRO

As soon as it's Christmas or thereabouts I thought that you might be interested in this routine I wrote. It prints a character of any height from four pixels by four pixels to 127 pixels by 127 pixels in any of three wonderful colours (MODE 1 only folks).

MASSIVE

The program is a biggie so there's not much room for anything else so I just have time to say a big thanx to Mike Lyons, Stamper J Metcalfe, Mark Johnston, Richard Duggan, David Crookes, Angie Hardwick, John Bowley, Chris Green, Arthur Cook, Alan Tilling, Doug Webb, Staurt Gasgoine, Ian Parker, Clive Bellaby and, last but not least, Paul Dwerryhouse for giving the rest of us WACCI members another year of perhaps the best serious CPC magazine magazine called "WACCI" in the known universe. Oops, just did.

SCALE

The SCALE. routine takes, erm, 1, 2, 3, 4, five parameters:

- Register A - The ASCII code of the character to be printed
- Register B - The colour of the character (1-3)
- Register D - The height of the scaled character in lines
- Register E - The width of the scaled character in pixels
- Register HL - The screen memory address of the top left hand corner of the scaled character (ie usually above #C000)

Oh, and another thing, the character matrix must be user defineable so use

a SYMBOL AFTER 32 command before you use the MEMORY command. This routine has loads of practical uses, from souping up text to adding spice to dull screens. Have fun and see you in the new year, when I'll hopefully finish the clock program (isn't optimism wonderful). TTFN.

```
SCALE.  PUSH AF
        LD (ADDR_),HL
        LD A,D
        LD (HEIGHT_+1),A
        LD A,E
        LD (WIDTH_),A
        LD A,B
        CALL #BC2C
        LD (MOD_+1),A
        POP AF
        CALL #BBA5
        LD (LPT_),HL
        LD HL,EXPL_
        LD DE,EXPL_+1
        LD (HL),#00
        LD BC,31+124+7
        LDIR ;Initialize
        CALL GETLINE.
HEIGHT_ LD A,#00
        LD B,A
        LD C,A
LOOP1A. SUB A,B
        JP M,PRP2.
STBT2.  DEC C
        RET Z
        PUSH AF
        PUSH BC
        CALL DRAWLINE.
        POP BC
        POP AF
        JP LOOP1A.
PRP2.  ADD A,B
        JP M,RDR2.
        PUSH AF
        PUSH BC
```

```
CALL GETLINE.
POP BC
POP AF
JP STBT2.
RDR2.  PUSH AF
        PUSH BC
        CALL GETLINE.
        POP BC
        POP AF
        JP PRP2.
```

```
DRAWLINE.
        LD A,(WIDTH_)
        SRL A
        SRL A
        LD B,A
        LD HL,FLINE_
        LD DE,(ADDR_)
        PUSH DE
LOOP5.  LD A,(HL)
        LD (DE),A
        INC HL
        INC DE
        DJNZ LOOP5.
POP HL
CALL #BC26
LD (ADDR_),HL
RET
```

```
GETLINE.
        LD HL,(LPT_)
        INC HL
        LD (LPT_),HL
        DEC HL
        LD A,(HL)
        LD IX,EXPL_
        LD B,8
LOOP1.  SLA A
        LD (IX+#00),00
        JP NC,STBT.
        LD (IX+#00),#FF
STBT.  INC IX
        DJNZ LOOP1.
        CALL XPAND.
CMPS.  LD IX,XPAND_
        LD IY,FLINE_
```

```

LD B,31
LOOP3.  PUSH BC
        LD D,#00
        LD C,%10001000
        LD B,#4
LOOP4.  LD A,(IX)
        AND C ;A=Masked A
        OR D
        LD D,A
;D=D+New pixel values
        RRC C
;Change mask for next pixel
        INC IX
;Move pointer
        DJNZ LOOP4.
        LD (IY),D
        INC IY
        POP BC
        DJNZ LOOP3.
MOD_   LD HL,FLINE_
LOOP6. LD B,31
        LD D,#00
        LD A,(HL)
        AND D
        LD (HL),A
        INC HL
        DJNZ LOOP6.
XPAND. RET
        LD A,(WIDTH_)
        LD B,A
        LD IX,EXPL_
        LD IY,XPAND_
        LD HL,XPAND_
        LD E,A
        LD D,#00
        ADD HL,DE
        EX DE,HL
LOOP2. SUB A,8
        JP M,PRP.
RDR.   PUSH IY
        POP HL
        SCF
        CCF
        SBC HL,DE
        RET Z
        PUSH AF
        LD A,(IX)
        LD (IY),A
        POP AF
        INC IY
        JP LOOP2.
PRP.   ADD A,B
        JP M,SKIP.
        INC IX
        JP RDR.
SKIP.  INC IX
        JP PRP.
WIDTH_ BYTE 32
LPT_   WORD #0000
ADDR_  WORD #0000
EXPL_  RMEM 8
XPAND_ RMEM 124
FLINE_ RMEM 31

```

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PD SCENE

DAVID CROOKES BRINGS THE WORLD OF PD INTO YOUR HOME

When you scour the PD libraries looking at the piles of software they offer, maybe you'll see lots of word-processors lurking about. Or maybe you won't. Either way, here's David Crookes with a round up of the said utilities.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Word processors are very handy tools. In the days of old when people lived in squalor and all there was to eat were a few mouldy old beans which people had saved up years for, getting quality looking documents meant you have to drag out the typewriter and clank out a few choice words. If you made a mistake it was a straight choice of three. Firstly you threw it away. Secondly you plastered the page with correction fluid or thirdly you merely wrote over the top of the spelling mistake to get a perfect smudge effect.

But when computers were invented and people began to see the possibilities, then word processors were made. Make a mistake and all you had to do was delete the word on the screen and alter it. And you could move things about more easier. And format the text. And many more things besides.

But there are lots and lots of word processors, many of them PD ones. We'll ignore the commercial packages because they're just not PD and when you write a PD column then I think PD software is more than appropriate. So which are the best and which are the worst. What will make you jump in the air and shout, "Whoopieeeeeee" and what will sink you into depression? Read on ...

OH NO NOT AGAIN!

The Protext Demo is the best there is but by including it, I'll be opening up the whole ethic debate over whether it is alright to make demo versions of software identical to the full version, again. <<There is no debate David - IS IT WRONG. -Paul>> Anyway I've already reviewed the Protext Demo

in a past WACCI so drag out your back issues but if you haven't seen my past review then I'll explain that some libraries stock this programme in its altered state. That is exactly the same as the original £30 version which does make you wonder whether it is acceptable. It is up to you whether you want to diddle £30 out of a firm which has supported the CPC for so long. <<Please don't. -Paul>>

VDE?

Let us forget about the existence of Protext, then, and see what the PD libraries can throw at us in the way of an alternative. VDE seems promising until you learn that it is a CP/M offering. But if if you aren't devilishly deterred by that fact then I'm sure you'll understand why people claim that VDE is the ultimate PD word processor. Along with a spell checker to boot, you also have the benefit of justification and word-wrapping as well as a host of other delicious delights. You may even find it easy to use. *Maybe.*

WACCI give away lots of documentation with this programme so you should be quite alright. But remember: CP/M is a dark horse. Use it and you may turn out like somebody who has used a text editor.

ED OR EDIT

Text editors are strange little things which crop up all over the place on packages which rely on word processors. Programmers slap them on to help out non-word processor owning members of the CPC fraternity get to grips with their programmes. Text editors vary in competence with most of them offering little more than

save, load and the occasional delete lines. They're great for those un-taxing jobs like letters to Santa (who I know you all believe in) but rubbish for anything more demanding.

If you are a demanding person then the Z-System Display Editor is fast and, like VDE, can handle huge documents. That's because the program is garbage and small, isn't it? Nope. Z-System Display Editor is fully comprehensive and nice with it too. You can format text and move blocks swiftly and easily.

AND FINALLY...

Now to our final package, the word processor that comes with Geoff Short's Print Enhancer. As an individual programme, it is better than a text editor but not as good as the more fully featured VDE's of this world. But combine it with the Print Enhancer and you've got a print routine to be proud of. It's an excellent all round package with an easy to use word-processor boasting simple but effective features.

CONCLUSION TIME

Rounding up, Z-System Display Editor comes top not least for it's speed and it's huge host of features. It pips VDE to the post due mainly to the fact that VDE is a touch slower. Then we get to Geoff Short's offering which is ideal for hacking out quick letters to friends and finally we end up with the Protext Demo. It's last for one obvious reason. Arnor have not authorised the enhanced version so it would be morally wrong for me to encourage people to clamour to their local friendly PD libraries and snap up copies. Leave it in those PD Library that stock it and continue to support companies that support the CPC. <<Protext is not PD but it is the best -Paul>> All the best. *David*

STORY TIME

JUST PETER by Angela Cook

In September I set a competition where members had to write a story using certain words which were: Wacci, Computer, Monitor and discs although the response to this compo was poor I did have a few good stories, this is one of them. <<John>>

"Phoehe. couhgouh." spluttered Peter, being lifted out of the box, which has been his home for the last week.

"What did you have to go and do that for" he said. "You know I don't like boxes, especially with all that polystyrene stuff, suffocate a bloke that could" he moaned.

"Well, that's not likely to be a problem for you is it" retorted Angela. "Yeah well, don't do it again." He said. "I won't" said Angela.

"So why did you put me in that stuffy box any way?" asked a rather indignant Peter. "We redecorated. Look, you can have a whole room now.

You still have to share with the others, but at least you don't have to share with mum any more and you can stay up later"

"Well, I suppose it's worth it then" replied Peter.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Peter trying to peer round a corner.

"I am looking for those discs, ah, here they are" said Angela, walking back to Peter. "Here have these" she said, giving them to him.

"What are they?" asked Peter. "Games" said Angela, loading up the discs. "Games, what do you want games for when you can play with me?" said Peter, in a rather hurt way.

"Playing with you is often so boring" said Angela, not thinking about hurting Peter's feelings.

"Do you want some water to take with that foot?" asked Catherine.

"Oh, sorry Peter, it's just, I would like to play a game I just got this new one and..."

"Well," began Peter, "if you don't want to play with me, fine, I just

won't let you play those games!" he said, watching Angela's face drop as she read a READ FAIL on the computer monitor.

"Fine" said Angela in a sarcastic tone. "If I can't do that, I will play on another computer. Catherine will do." With that, Angela got up, went to the other side of the room and started talking to Catherine.

"I am sorry" whimpered Peter. "Did you hear something Catherine?" asked Angela. "Can't say I did" replied Catherine. "I said, I am sorry" Peter spoke louder this time.

"Turn up the volume Peter, I can't hear you" said Angela, in a singing tone. "I AM SORRY" he shouted as loud as his system would allow him.

"That's better" said Angela, coming back over to Peter. She fiddled around behind his back.

"What on earth are you doing now?" he asked. "It's something I read in WACCI..."

"You haven't been reading that nonsense again have you? Last time you tried something out on me from that publication, I wouldn't work for a week." Peter spoke quickly and in a sarcastic tone.

"Well this time it is bound to work, it's not my fault I couldn't tell the difference between the chips. Any way WACCI is not nonsense, it is very informative."

Peter started to moan again. Angela could tell she would not stop him now.

"What do you mean informative is, ouch, that hurt." "Sorry" said Angela, then kept on fiddling. "You mean that WACCI is rubbish. You think it should

be about games, games, games. That's all you ever talk about, games."

"I do not just talk about games you know and I think WACCI is just fine how it is. We have this argument every month and if you don't stop it I will put you back in your box. Do you understand?" "Yes" Peter said, unwillingly.

At that moment Angela swung around to see her mother and father standing in the door way. "Who are you talking too?" asked her mum. "Um. Well, er" spluttered Angela.

"She has named her computer. She calls him Peter. She talks to him all the time, but he never replies. How silly" said Arthur, sitting down. He then wiped the top of the monitor and said "Hello Catherine, how are you today?"

THANKS

Thank you Angela for your story I enjoyed it. I wonder! How many members give their computer names.

My computer thinks it's name is OH DAMN why? May you ask! Well I'll tell you any way. When I was doing the indexes I kept on making silly little mistakes and I kept on saying, (YES) you guessed it! "OH DAMN."

FUTURE READING

If any member would like to have a story published in their favourite mag then please send it to me, you can either send it on paper or better still send it on a disc which would my fingers a lot of work.

I will of course return your disc as soon as I can. <<John Bowley>>

FINALLY

Angela and Arthur Cook also sells CPC related items at very cheap prices. So give Angela a call. Their telephone number is on the WHO'S WHO page.

MAILMERGING

THE DEFINITIVE TUTORIAL BY DOUGLAS THOMPSON

A LAYMANS'S VIEW By Ron Izett

These tutorials are complimentary to the instructions that come with Promerge in that in their disc form they make easy to access working examples without the tedium of typing and saving your own. Wacsi PD Disc No. 100 is the one to go for if you want the Promerge Tutorial.

INTRO

What exactly is mailmerging? Well, we are all afflicted with it at least once a week by the junk mail that infests our letterboxes. You know the sort of thing- "Dear Mr. Blank, you have been chosen to receive....major prize.... just buy.....umteen instalments ..." etc. These letters are printed by the thousand and during the printing your name and address are automatically extracted from a resident database and inserted in the appropriate spaces in the document. One of the many useful things contained in Promerge allows you to enjoy this facility for yourself.

GETTING STARTED

First of all you should make a printout of the document files, starting with the README file and including the files MAILONE to MAILFOUR. README is an introduction to the tutorial, and ONE to FOUR set out to make you thoroughly proficient in the art of mailmerging. Club Secretaries please note!

Mailmerging, as I said earlier, is amongst other things, the art of inserting information from one file into the context of another, without causing the computer to have a violent attack of hiccups. Promerge, and particularly Promerge Plus can do all sorts of other things but we'll stick to mailmerging for the present, so back to the matter in hand.

SIMPLE EXAMPLES

Examples to help you on your way abound on this disc. The first one, entitled MAILEX.1 gives an example of the sort of letter beloved of club secretaries. (Fig.1)

The actual letter given in the example file, Mailex.1 is of course somewhat more extensive than the example given here, but I think this is enough to show the type of file being dealt with, at least in the early stages of the tutorial. However, its presence, and that of a simple database makes it easy to get stuck into the task of learning the basics of mailmerging.

Now, it stands to reason that no red blooded secretary, dedicated though he/she may be, is going to suffer the tedium of copying a multitude of letters like this when the

FIG 1

```
Mr.A N Other
1 The Street
Any Town
Any Where
AW1.2WA

DATE etc.

Dear Mr Other,
      Re Membership number 12345RT
      Please note that at the end of this month your
membership ..... etc. etc.

Yours sincerely

A M Money
Club Secretary

..... followed by an attached renewal form and return
address and so on ...
```

CPC is fully equipped to do it for you, and this is where Promerge comes into its own, with a whole lot of new commands to help remove the drudgery of having to produce individually addressed letters etc.

DATABASE

This is the file that you must have to make everything work and the way to produce this is explained in Part 1, and set out for you in the file MAILEX.DAT.

The Swap command comes in useful here so you can refer to the database without losing the letter, though Doug omits to mention that CTRL-Y has the same function but quicker. What to do with all this is now explained step by step, interspersed with cautions about incorrect data accessing, which I should think we are all familiar with but probably need reminding of from time to time. I think it would be best to keep the MAILEX.DAT file loaded for swapping and change the other MAILEX files as required.

The steps for setting up your command lines, the instructions that precede your letter template, are laid out in a wealth of detail and lead you by the hand from step to step, with several more examples under the MAILEX filename which should be looked at before proceeding too

far. Incidentally, you should print out MAILONE in program mode i.e. MAILONE.P, which is on the disc as well. If you try to print the DOC version the printer will stop at the variable '&name&' unless the & signs are enclosed in parenthesis as they are here, because the variable does not exist. The same applies to examples of command lines, the MAILEX files, which should also be printed in program mode. Use the direct command PROG to alter, and for convenience, I suggest you print all of these out for easy reference. Some are quite short so you should get two, maybe three, to a sheet of A4. Incidentally, the SW direct command should not be confused with the SW stored command which configures the printer to Swedish!

FIRST STEPS

Armed with a stereotyped letter and the data base the way is now open to try mailmerging out for yourself, and the instructions set out quite clearly what must be done. Don't be suprised if it does't work first time. There's a lot to remember, so if you cock it up at the start, don't worry, there are completed files to show you what it should have been, and with the printing to the screen facility you can view your efforts without wasting valuable paper. By the way, concise though the tutor is, you are still advised by the author to have your Protext/Promerge instruction books handy at all times. Remember RTFI (Read the flipping instructions!).

Having succeeded in transferring your data to the standard letter, I would endorse Doug. Thompson's recommendation that you read and practice on Part 1. again until you have complete grasp of getting data to transfer from one file to another, before going on to Part 2. My own fears of extra long names causing havoc with the layout proved groundless as the letters apparently re-format automatically. You learn something new every day in this lark.

SELECTING YOUR ADDRESSEE

Part 2. now starts to educate you into the clever bits of mailmerging. Obviously you would not wish to send demands to dear Aunt Ada for a club subscription just because she happened to be included in your address database, nor to people who have just paid your last demand, so your merging now has to become selective.

This is a section which does need very careful reading. There are a multitude of new commands to remember, a lot of them specific to mailmerging, so you probably won't have used them before. But, fear not, the instructions are concise and not hedged about with technicalities, but as always, they need to be followed precisely. Once more, follow the tutorial to the letter and do plenty of hands-on practice. There ain't no short cuts! By the same token, when you have completed your efforts there are again correctly assembled files for you to look at.

ADDRESS LABELS

This is an ongoing nightmare for anyone who has to send out multitudes of letters/packages at regular intervals (ask Paul) and this is a chore which is examined next in Part 2. Here we look at printing addresses direct from the database, but in this case care must be taken with the page layout to make sure that the address is positioned

FIG.2

BEESAFE ELECTRICAL Ltd
1, The Bee Hive
Honeytown
Sugarstate
HS3 7YH

Quotation

Date 12.11.94 Quotation number 12345
To
Joe Soap
'Scrubbins'
Tub Lane
Washington
AB12 3CD

Discription	Totals
Supply and fit security lights	
Supply and fit Porch light	
Materials	100.00
Labour	55.00
VAT @ 17.5	27.13
Total Cost	182.13

Terms strictly 14 Days nett.

correctly on the label, and as always examples are given in the MAILEX files for you to compare your work with. I'll take this opportunity to suggest that in all cases you should print out your templates in the first instance, to make absolutely sure you are saying what you want to say. It's suprisingly easy to overlook glaring mistakes on the screen that scream at you from the paper.

INVOICING AND QUOTATIONS

Now here's an area which will appeal to the self employed among you as your not so friendly bank manager tends to be less than contented with money spent on expensive letterheads, and customers do not place much credence on an estimate scribbled on a bit of wrapping paper.

However, it was here, I must confess that things started to go wrong for me. It may be that I'm missing some vital piece of information in the instructions. I hope so, because every thing has been O.K. up to date.

First there are rather a lot of printing mistakes in the command lines of MAILEX.13 and .14. No big deal in itself, but it spoils a hitherto well written piece. The worst is a misplaced figure in the VAT calculation which would produce a result that would send the most complacent customer into hysterics.

But the most annoying thing that I could not seem to find a solution for is that in the example given, one has to enter the print mode to initiate a questionnaire which fills the variables with the information. Fair enough so far, but on reaching the end of this questionnaire the finished result is immediately printed either to screen or paper, and all the data is lost so it seems impossible to retain a

copy of your invoice/quotation for future reference. The same thing occurs if you return to the edit mode to make corrections to your input; you have to start all over again at the beginning, which for practising purposes is endlessly frustrating. I have to conclude that the information would need to be held in a separate file and accessed in a different manner to make this a viable proposition, and I think this could have been mentioned, if only in passing. But, all is not lost, Page 28 of the Promerge manual shows you how to set up a database so you could make your own adaptations. As an exercise in the use of the 'av' command it is more than adequate, but should not be regarded as a commercial proposition. Still, the printed result is quite passable for a small business and the on-the-spot calculations are a real bonus. (Fig 2)

On the subject of calculations, if it concerns money, put your currency signs, £/\$ etc. into the template, and enter the figures only, else you'll get an error when the calculation comes up.

SELECTIVE MAILMERGING REVISITED

After the small diversion into labels and invoices, in Part 3, the tutorial gets back to the nitty-gritty of selecting what you want to appear in your letters, and here you need MAILEX1.DAT as your swap file. The other MAILEX files, from 15 onwards contain a wealth of data on the use of the multitude of commands available, and you need to have your Promerge handbook within reach for reference as the combinations get more and more complicated. As always, work the examples, don't rely on the written word entirely, it's easier to grasp if you see it happen in front of you.

A cautionary word here. Make sure you enter the Prog. mode if printing out the example *templates* for reference, otherwise your faithful CPC will seize the database from the disc and gallop madly into the bushes with a buffer full of example *letters* which it persists in printing in defiance of a panic of key pressing. I finished up with a lockup and had to start all over again! Incidentally, some of the later templates are, with their command lines, longer than an A4 sheet, so remove some of the blank lines before printing.

LOOPING THE LOOP

In its most simple form, the loop is used in mailmerging to repeat the ubiquitous form letter suitably embellished with the relevant information from the resident database.

MAILEX.16 demonstrates a slightly more complicated form of looping and is interesting in its use of the commands 'rp' and 'un' to set up and print a series of blocks of data using the 'sv count' command rather like a WHILE/WEND loop in Basic. Once more, Doug's hands-on demos coupled with his readable text makes it easy to get the hang of what is, on the face of it, a fairly complicated subject.

I think you could perhaps get a better result if you reduced the count to say 3 to save increasing the size of the database.

MULTI PURPOSE TEMPLATES

Now we get stuck into the art of making one standard template perform a variety of functions by laying it out to encompass different relevant information for members etc.,

but using the mailmerge process to select automatically who gets what, and here I should add another cautionary note. When the input starts off, as this does, asking for the month which identifies the data entries, you must enter exactly what is on the database. In other words, if you enter January and the D/Base entry is Jan, then nothing will happen and you'll have to start again. Use your Swap facility before starting.

Once again, the 'if' command, similar in action to the IF/THEN Basic function is admirably demonstrated in MAILEX.17 and .18. These examples are by nature all very similar but are progressive and should all be looked at, and, if you are brave enough, experimented with. Reading about it is definitely not enough.

DATA CREATION

In Part 4, the final part of this tutorial, Doug touches on the creation of ASCII files and reminds us that Protex can read these with ease. In fact, as we all know (*we do, don't we?*) a number of databases, spreadsheets and the like can export data as ASCII files and these can be accessed directly from Protex, and others can be converted to ASCII and loaded to disc for access as and when required.

Part 4 is in fact quite short, merely a rounding up of the good things that have gone before, besides exhorting you to go back and look again at anything you don't understand. Sound advice indeed because, even with Doug's easy to read explanations, experimentation is the name of the game if you're to get a firm grip on the complexities of successful mailmerging!

OUTRO

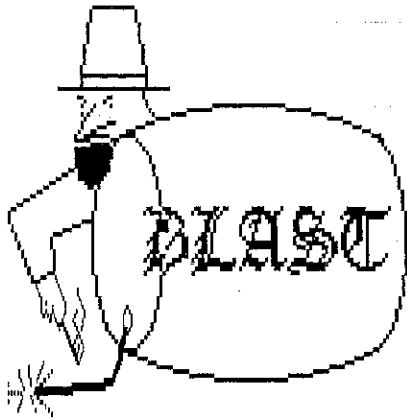
Well, there you are. Tutorials are notoriously difficult things to assess as they do not "do" things in the same way that utility programs do. They only point the erstwhile student in the direction that the tutor thinks he/she should go. If you are into writing reams of letters of similar content to lots of people, and you use Protex then Promerge and this tutorial is the way to go. The Promerge instruction book and this enhancement definitely go hand in hand very well together.

My own personal view, for what it's worth, and I write as a complete tyro on matters of importance where computing and word processing are concerned, is that while the Promerge instruction book is a wonderfully comprehensive treatise on the art in question, it is difficult to follow when you're trying something out for the first time, especially as the example pages in the back of my copy appear to be printed out of order!

Mailmerging is a powerful tool in the Promerge kit and even if you're not into secretarial pastimes or given to handing out estimates to all and sundry, there are sure to be other uses that will spring to mind after working your way through the myriad of examples that Doug Thompson has worked out to accompany the words and music. There are a few typing errors, but so what? It's readable and informative and that's all that matters.

I found it a great help in wading through the highly detailed verbiage that confuses the mind in the instruction book and things are much clearer now. Highly recommended.

Ron Izett



FROM THE PAST

By Ron Izett

Ye Gods! What have I let myself in for? Me, one-time Sapper R.E. trained never to volunteer for anything other than cookhouse duties (the grub was better) and a dedicated non-joiner of anything, have actually accepted the impossible task of following in Paul's footsteps (prints-get it?) Oh well, never mind. Bear with me, I'll do me best.

FRONT COVERS

There were thirteen covers to look and marvel at, including a re-issue of WACCI 2.

Several of them portrayed our one and only Clive in a variety of poses. Did this tip the balance for the revelations yet to come? Read on.

Some of them were a bit hard to place in context with the contents of the mag: however, what modern magazine cover ever refers specifically to the contents? On the whole, quite good and getting better.

INSIDE FRONT COVER

Well, what can I say? All this latent talent in umpteen named varieties, just waiting to be phoned, written to, and generally pestered by all of us. Purveyors of free advice, and keepers of the holy word on just about everything that bothers you. And a list of contents to boot. Can you ask for more? Of course you can. You can even find out who to blame/praise for the aforementioned front covers. So there!

THANX AND STUFF

January saw the celebration of Clive's 25th anniversary as editor (issues, not years) with his thanks to all you background helpers. There was a plea for shareware users to pay up. *<question: how do you send cash out of the country?>*. There was a change of printer to an Epson Stylus 800 inkjet, and it showed.

February sadly recorded the death of David Carter overshadowing WACCI's 75th birthday. There were donations of

mags, tapes, and books: the book library passed from Steve Lee to John Bowley, and Patrick Dunne snuck orf to another part of the country. Dire warnings were issued about dealing with AVATAR and Phil Craven which still hold good.

March had Clive explaining the demands on his time, and another warning about this Craven fella.

Did you fall for Clive's April Fool gag? Own up at the back, you lot. 3" discs got scarce, Clive had a bit of a moan, Dartsma disappeared, and Doug Webb took over the PD Library.

There was talk of a WACCI-ite convention, and more warnings, this time QUANTUM was the culprit. Caveat Emptor.

In August the dreaded axe fell, and the Honourable Clive finally had to give up as Editor. Thirty-one issues is a record that's going to take some beating. Hail and farewell Clive, you're a hard act to follow.

Sept/October saw Paul Dwerryhouse firmly in the hot seat, and the eviction of the Protaprint gremlins that plagued the previous issue. Mike Lyons continued to be poorly so Angie Hardwick took over Fair Comment. Guess who had to do some rapid explaining about writing to strange women!

November started badly for Paul with a death in the family, the Fabulous Index arrived, the Firmware Guide was available once more, and volunteers were asked for again, which accounts for me writing this.

And so to the end of a somewhat eventful WACCI year, a year full of

changes, in spite of which your magazine somehow managed to remain the WACCI we all know and love. Paul's Christmas wishes graced the hallowed pages, and my thoughts in particular were filled with sympathy for his dear lady on her nightshift duties. I worked nightshift continuously for thirty years, and if the bloke next door had known what I thought of him, he would have sold his mower and emigrated!

3" discs continued to be in short supply, and there was news of more goodies from Peter Campbell of Campursoft. John Bowley took over as Public Domain Master Librarian *<whew!>* and Bob Miller began to compile a membership list combining names with areas. You never know, there might be an unknown WACCI member in the next street.

WAVE folded, but RADICAL software appeared to blossom under the aegis of Angela Cook. Distinctly a case of many Cooks improving the "broth" as far as WACCI is concerned.

Last but not least, THANX & STUFF finished the year with Paul's thanks etc, to us helpers, gluttons for punishment that we are, and I for one appreciated being appreciated *<eh?>*

FAIR COMMENT

What a Pandora's Box this turned out to be. A multitude of queries and answers about things you can do with a CPC which, as a dedicated non-techie as far as computers are concerned, never failed to amaze me, and, I suspect, a lot of other people too.

The wealth of knowledge that exists out there, considering the relatively few CPC owners left, was absolutely staggering, and what is more, it was freely and unstintingly given. Not a query appeared in the pages, but an

accredited expert figuratively put pen to paper to try to, and most times succeeded in sorting it all out.

There were patches and pokes and mini-progs, and as always, just plain conversational letters that put "flesh on the bones" of the names we never meet. *<Perhaps we ought to have a "Rogues Gallery" to go with the well known names?>*

To attempt to single out a more interesting letter than most is virtually impossible for me, so I'll pass on that. After all, in some cases Mike Lyon's reply was more interesting than the letter! Phil Craven (aptly named don't you think) continued to receive castigation from members. The man must have the hide of an elephant.

Towards the end of the year, Mike had to give up Fair Comment through ill-health (temporarily, we hope) and Paul took on the task of replying to letters on top of his newly assumed Editorship. In the event, Angie Hardwick took on the burden of typing and collating letters for Paul to answer.

I think the great thing about Fair Comment is the way it provokes people who would perhaps not be given to airing their views in public as a rule, to put pen to paper in an effort to help others that they do not know, and probably will never meet. Very few, if any, set out to castigate the target of their writings, with or without good cause, and the enormous reservoir of unwritten expertise has to be sampled to be believed. Angela Cook's reply to Patrick Hanlan, regarding his opinion of Amstrad Action magazine was a prime example, straight to the point yet polite and well crafted. I shall stand well back, and look for more of the same next /this year.

"Rubber bandaid" for disc drives was a frequently occurring subject, and even as I write, my friendly neighbourhood video man mentioned a belt dressing for video drives which purports to roughen the belt to improve the grip. Sorry, that's all I know about it.

The vexed subject of re-inking printer ribbons reared it's ugly (print) head again with the inevitable WD 40/Endorsing ink controversy. So, if you're not 100% sure then don't do it! Print heads are expensive.

So there you are. Go back and rummage around, there's sure to be something you've overlooked or forgotten in the course of the year, and if you jealously hoard your WACCIs the way I do, that's no hardship at all.

COMMENTARY

Singularly unqualified as I am to comment on other people's works, if I've trodden on anybody's corns in the subsequent passages I can only say sorry, I'm trying to get my weight down.

So, delving into the merry month of January, issue 74 no less, we found Keith Mortimer discoursing on the subject of anagrams *<I knew her brother Telly>*. Alan Tilling returned with apologies, and Paul reviewed PRO-EXT by Richard Fairhurst. Hugh Keir enjoyed a visit to an All Computers Fair and felt constrained to write about it. George Ho-Yow produced a Morse decoder and said kind words about me in the process. Thanks George, the cheque's in the post.

The ZENE needs little comment from ancients like me: I'm not sure I understand the language. Clive continued to poke about in M/C code and Paul found time to review yet another program from Sentinel - THE ULTIMATE SPRITE SEARCHER or TUSS by Richard Wilding. Highly recommended.

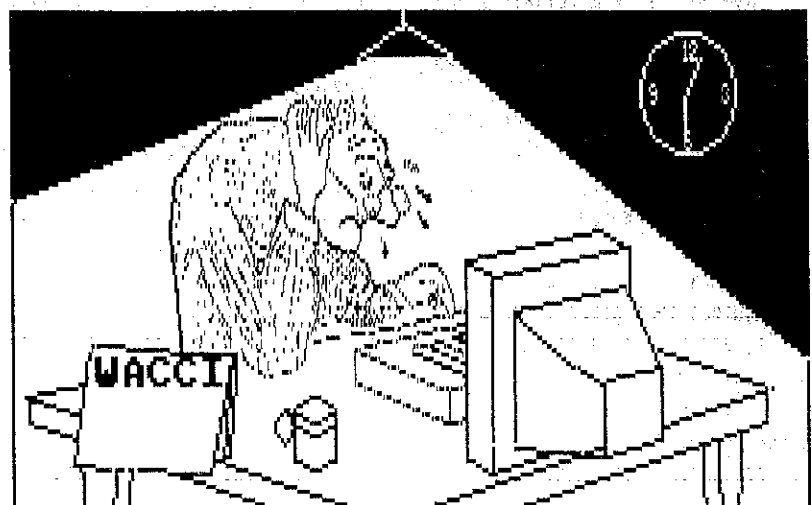
February (75) was graced by last years Blast from the Past *<No comparisons per-lease>* and all your old favorites flavoured with a discourse by Chris Green on NC 200 Notepad Computers, and a CP/M gem for all you clever-clogs who dabble in such mysteries.

A funny from Clive set March (76) off to a good start plus some more goodies for M/C code aficionados, George Ho-Yow gave us a lift, and John R. Hudson wrote the definitive rundown on PIP. Not to be outdone, Chris Green produced an exposition of the MS 800 DOS, while Anthony Jordan confused us all by using pound signs for spaces. (In my pockets read spaces for pounds!) WACCI Re-visited circled back to August, 1989, and there were continued pokings into CP/M+.

With April (77) things changed a bit. Some of the regulars took a break and let some new light in, except for Richard Smith who preferred to sit in the dark muttering about clocks. Peter Clement assisted by Hamilton (NZ) Amstrad Club discoursed delightfully on damaged discs. *<Cap that!>* GREAT WACCI SERIES OF YEARS GONE BYEEE appeared for the first time, with Alistair Scott's definitive exposure of that terrifying additive to the CPC, BANKMAN. Kindly Clive stuck one of my odd ramblings in, Stamper Metcalf had a look at DES by Campursoft, and Paul found a Window to look through at some fonts. PIP came to a conclusion, Bob Moffat joined the movers and shakers, and there was more CP/M+.

Of course, in amongst all these treasures, John Bowley struggled manfully to fill the Competition Spot each Month with mind boggling and aquire prizes for them that bothered to enter. Good on yer, John.

May (78) was, as we had come to expect, filled with all the usual masterpieces, plus reviews of large format drives, yet another print enhancer, more clock tips (ticks?) and



the magic of Macros explained by David Liggins. Didn't do much for my Macrocarpa! For them as felt the need there was a few notes on diaphragm switches <No, Ladies, nothing for you here, this is a family magazine.>

Come June (79) we had Chris Green looking at "essential add-ons" although he didn't mention that other essential, pounds and pence.

Hamilton Amstrad Club were there with other regulars, Vbb; LD A, CODE; Moving Experience etc. plus new thoughts from Tony Jordan on M/C code in Basic, hints on SUPERCALC, and of course the continuing BANKMAN saga. To top it all Harry Gubby added some useful hints on printing disc labels.

The third and final part of the BANKMAN epic appeared in July (80), a worthy epic indeed, LD A, CODE, Vbb; and the Competition Spot all graced the pages as usual, and Richard Smith continued to flounder around In The Dark. Bob Moffatt served up a further portion of his moving story; and C. J. Sonnack titillated/confused our tottering senses with a list of Comms/Email abbreviations. Come back Shakespeare, all is forgiven. The making of the INDEX was explained in easy stages, and John Bowley ventured into the review business with a run-down on The BRITISH MAPS LIBRARY for MicroDesign by Creative Technology. Sounds like a useful proggy for students and geography buffs. David Liggins re-appeared with a look at memory management (I could do with some of that) and Isobel Swade proclaimed her love for the CPC, and showed it by writing a futuristic fantasy on it.

And so to August (81) with Richard Smith in the dark with his clock ticks <I've heard of sheep ticks, but this is ridiculous.> The Book Library Index saw the light of day courtesy of John Bowley, but with no prizes for using it, Vbb occupied its usual slot and a re-print of Peter Ceresole's ruminations on the wonders of Protex began.

There was news of a CPC Emulator for those misguided folk given to dabbling with PC's, and Stuart Gascoigne sought out sort outs. <Yuk>

And then there was PARADOS reviewed and dissected by Bob Miller. If you're a large drive fan this might just be a PARA-PET. Chris Green looked at

RAMBASE and a re-print from December 1989 had Clive telling us of the wonders of VDE.

With Paul Dwerryhouse now firmly grasping the reins, WACCI Sep/Oct (82) took on a slightly different appearance, and yet remained essentially the same. We had a slightly inexplicable page titled ZEN, and a page extracted from the NZ Microcomputer Club Inc. magazine.

There was a new venture, The Market Stall, presided over by Angie Hardwick complete with flat cap and hessian apron, a dissertation on the vagaries of MO II's printer driving, more about Protex, how to boot CP/M from drive B, and converting your art masterpiece to ASCII characters. And there was MORE! The PD scene was looked at by David Crookes, Moving with Moffatt rubbed shoulders with Stuart's All(gorythms) Sorts, perhaps the liquorice variety would move Bob a bit quicker! Peter C. wrote learnedly about DU in December 1989 and got reprinted here, and Frank Neatherway finished off the Making of the INDEX.

The days got shorter and November WACCI (83) fulfilled its promise of more goodies to come. Stuart's sorting got quicker, Vbb returned with Alan Tilling having received the DIY equivalent of a Long Hard Stare! Anyway Bannister is linked to computers by the "RUN" command. <Think about it.> There was a step-by-step tutorial on labelling with MicroDesign, Bob Moffatt was there as ever, the Clock in the Dark still failed to make time (I think), and Richard Duggan reviewed a newcomer on the CPC scene, Richard Avery's "Another World DISCZINE". There was more from Peter about Protex, and Angies stall was piled high with bargains. More PD was looked at and Trevor Lawrence was on hand to help with those forgotten proggy names.

And so, reluctantly the year drew to a close with December's delightful discourses by our regular contributors <it's them blessed allsorts that keep 'em that way> and John continued to produce competitions to which I couldn't put answers. Life's a bind sometimes, ain't it? Even Alan Tilling got into the act, but he did at least give us the answers, even if you did have to stand on your head to read them.

On a more serious note, Peter Ceresole finished his dissertation on the pleasures of playing with Protex, with the challenge to one and all to do some playing for ourselves. With any luck this might produce some surprises in the near future.

GPAINT was looked at in a favourable light by Richard Avery, in spite of its words and music being in German. A sort of "colours sans frontieres" if you like, followed by the tentative promise of an arts tutorial. Watch this space!

Angela Cook did a first for WACCI when she interviewed Rob Buckley and gave Radical Software a gentle plug in the process. An interesting deviation from the usual magazine content, and one that holds promise of good things to come if she can manage to talk to the right people. Like Alan Sugar for instance. Sorry, just dreaming.

There was another goody from Campursoft, which you could have got for 25% off if you were quick off the mark, and David Crookes had a look at two PD proggy designed to help you with your keyboard skills, always supposing you hadn't any to start with.

Sorting with Stuart finally got to the end: then having got everything straight in our/my mind confused the issue by mentioning that some computers don't use ASCII, but some other benighted code. It was all very upsetting and I had to go and lie down for a while.

The Market Stall was a victim of its own success, and had to (figuratively) move to larger premises with a plea from Angie not to ring before 8.00pm on account of having to feed and bed down the young.

To round it all up, Stewart Peppiatt reviewed a book/disc called "The Basic Idea" by Sean McManus, obtainable from Campursoft, about which he seemed to me to be less than enthusiastic, though to be fair, he did concede that there were a lot of good points in it. Definitely a case of suck it and see, I should think.

SUMMING UP

On the whole a good year again, despite the setback of Clive's resignation as Editor, and Mike's ongoing ill-health. I thought I detected a subtle change in the

flavour of WACCI, not something I could put my finger on, and certainly not to the detriment of the contents, indeed, it may be only the extra pages that allowed more articles to be printed that brought about this feeling of change. Or it may have been the sudden realization that however good it is, a club cannot run on complacency; member's support is what makes or breaks it. Whatever it was, it was all to the good.

NEED I SAY MORE?

I suppose I'd better so I'll stick my neck out *<it's a turnip on a stick really>* and mention my individual likes and dislikes if I can find any. It's all so good, you see. *<I have to say that or Paul and Clive will set about me, as they say in these parts.>* I shall plead that these are the jottings of a not very computer-oriented individual, whose opinions probably have no relevance in today's ongoing technology. In other words, I was a late starter at this game and I'm not sure I shall ever catch up. So here goes, some dislikes first.

ARTWORK

Now here's an area which in my humble opinion could do with a smarten up. Considering the profusion of scanners and art packages and the like to be had, some of the drawings left a lot to be desired. Not all I hasten to add, but enough to be disappointing. There is a certain schoolboyish scribble about some of them that doesn't sit well with the contents of the magazine. As to quantity, about right I should think, so many mags are swamped with clever-clever artwork to the detriment of the editorial content. (AA for one)

HUMOUR

Very necessary in my humble opinion, to prevent the magazine becoming bogged down by people droning on about this and that highly technical something or other, and boring the pants off us all. But, I feel that humour needs to be subtle to titillate the senses, and some of the peculiar ramblings that graced the preambles to a number of the articles tended to confuse rather than amuse. Still, it's clean, or at least I hope it is. So nuff said.

GENERAL CONTENT

No complaints here. Early on, the insertion of the library lists seemed to take up more room than was really necessary with a reduction in editorial content as a result, but as that has now been attended to I'll say no more. Not being a games buff the Zene didn't do very much for me, but once more that's a personal view and not to be paid much attention to. The many reviews were appreciated although I thought that a number of these programs seemed to partly duplicate others that are already known and loved and I have to confess to wondering if I needed them at all.

Articles on M/C code abounded and I did promise myself I would read, learn, and inwardly digest Uncle Clive's valiant efforts to explain it all, but my Maxam 1.5 ROM continues to gather dust in the back of the CPC, and the instruction book is turning yellow at the edges.

LIKES

John Bowley's Competition Spot was very enjoyable even if I never got round to actually sending in the answers, probably because there was always one I couldn't get. Alan Tilling's Basic Basic was about my level, and full of little goodies that you tend to forget about, and George Ho-Yow's Inspiration articles are just that. *<Where's he gone, Ed?>*

The features I liked very much were the re-prints of bygone WACCI articles, refreshing the areas of my somewhat leaky memory that have become overwritten. I was especially pleased with the series on Bankman, as I have three sets of instructions including the official one and they're all different. Perhaps I can get my heart high enough to use the extra RAM now.

Peter Ceresole never fails to delight with his writings and the re-printed articles on the glories of Protext were very interesting to say the least.

CP/M is another of the mysteries I have failed to grasp over the years, though I have used some of its functions from time to time, so I feel perhaps that I should avoid any comments except to say that if the articles were in WACCI then they must be good. (I'm a well-known coward). In the beginning I wasn't too sure

what Bob Moffatt was on about, although I liked the header, and then I thought, we do need a little light relief to stop us getting stodgy don't we, so I felt I could give my qualified approval after all.

Mingled in with all these goodies were a multitude of the hints and tips that people casually mention in passing, and which turn out to be just the solution you were looking for. And the moral of that is: read every word. You don't know what you might miss, especially in Fair Comment.

I'm probably not qualified to comment on Isobel Swade's excursion into science fiction, mainly because I have been an aficionado of the genre since the late '30s, weaned and brought up on such giants as Isaac Asimov, Brian Aldiss and the wonderful American "pulp" magazines, Astounding Stories edited by the late John Cambell, and Amazing Stories to name but a few, so, as my tastes are not suited to critical comment I'll just say "keep up the good work Isobel, we need all the lady contributors we can get."

I was pleased to see a sudden influx of new articles towards the end of the year on a variety of subjects, and Angie's Market Stall seems to be an idea worth cultivating, especially as the CPC suppliers get thinner on the ground. I was especially pleased with Stuart Gascoigne's sorting exposition, it's a subject that I've never fully understood or been able to get to work properly.

OUTRO

What more can I say? The answer to that is "not a lot" I suppose. I found the editorial mix to be about right, though naturally it tended to be better some months, but that's true of any periodical, and it certainly never descended to the mediocre, in the way that so many so-called computer magazines have done in the past.

I think what I liked more than anything was the lack of condescension in the articles, even the more technical expositions. So many writers make you feel that if you're not a B.sc or equivalent you really shouldn't be reading their pearls of wisdom. It was, on the whole, jolly good stuff and I'm looking forward to next year and more of the same. *<Ron>*

FIGURE 1

SYSTEM USER'S MANUAL

Welcome to another little piece that Andy Frame found lying around on an Amiga disc. WACCI can't give credit to the author as he is not known but nevertheless enjoy what perhaps should have been in the CP/M manuals!

NOTICE:

This Software Information may contain code which has not been fully tested. Use this information with discretion and care.

INTRO

Please stop submitting requests for alterations to the operating system. This is our system, we designed it, we built it, and we use it more than you do. If there are some features you think might be missing, if the system isn't as effective as you think it could be, TOUGH! Give it back, we don't need you. See *figure one*.

Forget about your silly problem, let's take a look at some of the features of the operating system.

1) OPTIONS

We've got lots of them. So many in fact, that you need two strong people to carry the documentation around. So many that it will be a cold day in Hell before half of them are used. So many that you are probably not going to do your work right anyway.

However, the number of options isn't all that important, because we picked some interesting values for the options and called them...

2) DEFAULTS

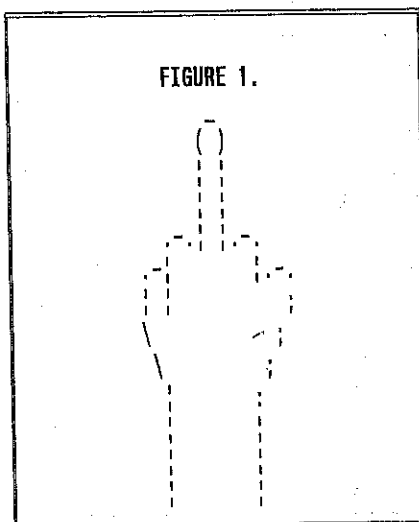
We put a lot of thought into our defaults. We like them. If we didn't, we would have made something else the default. So keep your cotton-picking hands off our defaults. Don't touch. Consider them mandatory. "Mandatory defaults" has a nice ring to it.

If you change them and your system crashes, tough. See *figure one*.

3) LANGUAGE PROCESSORS

They work just fine. They take in source, and often produce object files as a reward for your efforts. You can even make operating system calls from them. For any that you can't, use the assembler like we do. You don't like the code? Too bad!

We spoke to the language processor developers about this, and they think a lot like we do. They said, "See *figure one*."



4) DEBUGGERS

We've got debuggers, one we support and one we use. You shouldn't make mistakes anyhow; it is a waste of time, and we don't want to hear anything about debuggers; we're not interested. See *figure one*.

5) ERROR LOGGING

Ignore it, why give yourself an ulcer? You don't want to give us the machine to get the problem fixed, and we probably can't do it anyway. Oh, and if something breaks between 17:00 and 18:00 or 9:30 and 10:30 or 11:30 and 13:30 or 14:30 and 15:30 please don't waste your time calling us, we're out. See *figure one*.

6) COMMAND LANGUAGE

We designed it ourselves. It's perfect. We like it so much we put our name on it: CCL - Cyber Control Language. In fact we're so happy with it, we designed it once for each of our operating systems. We even try to keep it the same from release to release, but sometimes we blow it, we can't be perfect. See *figure one*.

7) REAL TIME PERFORMANCE

We got it. Who else could have done such a good job? So the system seems a bit sluggish with all those priority 70 tasks, no problem, just make them all priority one.

Anyway, realtime isn't important like it used to be, we changed our group's name to get rid of the word realtime, and we told all our realtime users to see *figure one* a long long time ago.

OUTRO

In conclusion, stuff your requests. Love our system or leave it, but don't complain about it!

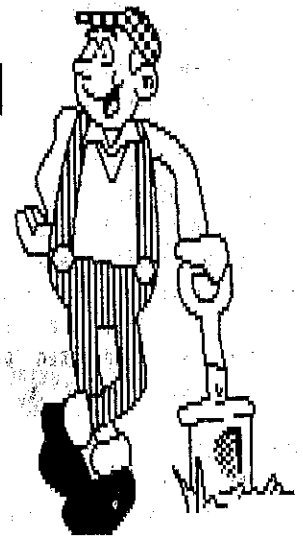
If you have a favourite computer funny story then send it along for all to enjoy.
Paul

A Work Experience



Bob Moffatt

tries to review a printer but ends up with
more work than he bargained for.



WIG

It's said that a fool and his Monet are soon parted. Well I haven't got a painter but I have a printer - but only just. About 75% of what follows is true or false. I'm sorry but I can't remember which.

RUDOLPH VALENTINO, PRINTER

Youngest son has long suffered an old Star printer. He hasn't suffered in silence. Dot matrix printer owners never do. Unlike his older brothers, neither of whom can write (but who seem to type at about 300wpm), and his sister, who has such a neat hand that she only prints when she wants to look messy or make a social statement, youngest son actually sends us letters, weekly. Such persistence in the face of adversity should not go unrewarded - well that's what I told him a few weeks ago.

THE TIME OF DAWN

University seems to have broken up about five years ago since when the lad has been taking part in work experience. In a moment of weakness I had offered to run (sorry, I'll type that again, *drive* him) to work, 2 miles from home. I would then have to re-trace my tracks for a mile to get to the office, but what the heck. The true horror dawned literally. He had to clock in at 7:30.

CLEANERS WEAP

The cleaners resented my intrusion into their hitherto empty building. I can't say I blame them. You can't *Pledge* a desk so that things placed on it slide gracefully off if the desk is already cluttered with the boss and his coffee. If things don't skid onto

the floor there's little to pick up and less to read.

MALE SHOT

Administration were faced with a different problem. Sworn never to place anything in the 'in' tray until well discussed, recorded, filed and in all probability answered, they found my morning chats with Dai the Post disconcerting. I was actually getting my own mail, and first hand at that. This actually doubled my work as I found myself dealing with things I had previously been sheltered from.

RING MAIN

Security were not impressed. John the Plug removes all plugs from sockets at close of play. Three groups pay him to do so. South Wales Electricity have read Thurber and realise his aunt had a point. Amps *do* leak out of empty sockets. John must also get a back hander from Alan. Alan inspects the plugs every six months for damage, wear and tear caused by John doing his rounds. I pay Alan to do this. I also pay John to remove the plugs. By day John works for the Establishment Fire Service who tell me to remove the plugs. I pay the Fire Service to tell me to do this.

KITSCH IN ZINC?

On the overtime generated by waiting for me or my predecessors to leave

work John has cornered an Australian zinc mine and most of the Canary time-share operation. Or so he told me. I prefer budgerigars and could afford to buy one outright should the need arise. As I left with everyone else John advised that I was looking exhausted and should have a good lie-in next morning. I would then be able to work late.

KEY WAIT

Other effects took a little longer to develop. On the first day our journey to work was uneventful. Clear roads (apart from old Owen on his bike) as one would expect in Wales at 7:15, meant that we arrived a little early. Son was dropped off on the doorstep of a dark and locked building to await the arrival of the key holder. As I drove back to the office a gentle stream of cars passed in the opposite direction. A few waves, a few scowls, a few stares of blank disbelief.

rites of passage

The second day, eschewing John's advice and honouring my promise to son I left home at the same time. Owen was a little further down the road as I overtook him. I try to drive carefully but the tranquility of this area can lead to a little rear mirror neglect. The driver of the red Fiesta which was trying to overtake us both made signs which suggested that two cars abreast were too many on that corner. By the time I got to the gate-house the Fiesta was there. I drove past and dropped son at the empty building.

Driving back to the office the traffic in the other direction was quite dense. A few waves. Most people seemed to turn their faces away. Odd.

CONFITURE DE RENAULT

By the end of the week there was a dramatic change. We started to get tied up in traffic jams. Held up by queues of cars at the gate-house and by the time we arrived at his work the building was indeed open and son was late to work.

FRUIT OF MY LIONS

Over the weekend I had a man-to-man chat with son. 'You can have my printer and I'll upgrade. Don't tell mum, she'll kill me.' Gratitude does not come easily to the youth of today. I admit he weeded the garden, picked up the wind-fall apples and put out the dustbins but my shoes were not polished. Some of the tips he gave me for 'Lords of Chaos' were a bit dubious as well, lions are not much use in scenario three.

LIFE CYCLE

The next Monday we left home a little earlier, just to beat the traffic jams. Owen, who was looking well with a healthy glow in his cheeks, had almost reached the gate-house by the time we overtook him, otherwise the traffic was back to normal. A Fiesta blocked the spot where I normally drop son off but he tells me he made the time clock. Heading back to the office the drivers of the on-coming cars, only a trickle, ignored me.

RIGHT OF PASSAGE

Tuesday was hell. A sweaty, ruddy Owen had stopped at the gate-house to draw breath. Well I presume that is what he was doing. His bicycle lay in the road, wheels still turning and parked somewhat inconsiderately in my opinion, and he was leaning against the gate-house mopping his brow with what appeared to be laver-bread. Friends from the cars blocked by the bike were obviously congratulating him on his new found fitness and offering tips. I pulled out of the traffic jam, overtaking the Fiesta and drove in through the exit gate. I was so busy watching Owen slide down the wall to rest his legs that I hardly noticed the Transit, full of grim-faced and

bleary eyed cleaners, which was bearing down on me.

Son deposited at the empty building I drove back past the gate-house towards the office. The owner of the red Fiesta seemed to have ideas above his station and tried to stop me getting past the site ambulance crew who were having a drill by the gate-house, blue lights flashing. I signed to him to come and see me at 1400 hours. He confirmed with a similar sign but failed to turn up. He must be disciplined. So must the keyholder of the building my son works in, it wasn't opened until gone 8am.

SON SET

We soon settled in to our new routine. It meant getting up a little earlier but traffic seemed to have been restored to normal. Owen must be on leave. Son's building seems to be open and working when we arrive. I must congratulate the foreman.

SOCKET TO ME

On Friday I was woken in the office at 7pm by John the Plug. I can recall signing Owen's 'Get Well' card straight after lunch, but all this extra work seems to be piling up. I must have dropped off. John apologised for waking me. He explained that normally he wouldn't have done so but he and Wendy were off to Cardiff to catch the 0500 to Tenerife the next day. If I would sign the overtime form and hand in my keys it would, indeed, help a lot.

LOSE CANON

Over the weekend, between bouts of napping to catch up on lost sleep, I

consulted 'Computer Shipper' to find a printer which might replace my BJ 10ex which son was now intent on removing from me at the end of his work experience. I was pretty sure that I couldn't afford a laser and knew that the noise of a dot matrix would drive me up the wall - 4 years with the wonderful DMP 2000 had made me so deaf that my hearing has only just recovered. That meant that my next printer would have to be an inkjet. Having run a Canon for a couple of years without the slightest problem it seemed the way ahead was to get a BJ 10sx, a BJ 200, a BJ 230 or one of the BJ300 series.

BREAD LINE

I'd had a BJ 330 at work in my last job and it seemed to gobble up desk space. It would never fit in my bijou study. The only thing to do was to ring 'What Ford Electronics'. I picked them because I have used them before and found them helpful (unless you go to their shop on Saturday morning. They are so helpful that queues reach Chorleywood). I also know where their shop is. It might be a long way from Pendine but I know how to get there and throw bricks through the windows if I am unhappy.

OUTRO

(A heading I hate but a tribute to clive.) <<Tell it like it is Bob - I'm listening! - Paul>> The man at What Ford was most helpful. He told me But wait! I know this was meant to be a printer review but it's now Monday, 0600 hours. Time to leave for work if I am to miss the traffic jams.

Bob Moffatt

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