

WACCI

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AND PREMIER CPC USER GROUP

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OPEN
THE CAGE

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- * List of PD discs, tapes, library books, services.
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BENEFIT list by Ernie (Wish List) Ruddick

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WACCI: The club for Amstrad CPC computer owners.

FRONT COVER: <<It's not been done yet>>

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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.)

W A C C I

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Well you lot, you can stop complaining now. I'm well ahead of time with this issue of WACCI, so it should appear on your doorsteps around about the 7th of February. That, incidently, is right on time.

THANKS A LOT CHAPS

My postman was an insane idiot who liked nothing better than loosing any post that was sent to me. The postman who used to deliver my letters is now back on the round and, guess what, I haven't missed a letter since.

I'd like to thank those members who sent me a collection of letters with nothing more than a piece of paper inside with the date and time of postage. I now know, roughly speaking, the average timing of post from around the country and when to start looking for letters that haven't arrived.

THE NEWS

WACCI is now in possession of some interesting hardware, donated to the club by a certain Phil Craven (yes, that one). This includes a load of almost finished Rombo Romboards (I still need to put cables on them), a vast number of Rombo Circuit Boards, both for the Rombox and the Vidi Digitiser, some side switches and 30 odd 6128 Basic Chips (the ones you need to upgrade a 464 to a 6128).

I need to work out the costing of these articles, but the moment I've done it, I'll let you all know. Remember, these are the last of the BRAND NEW Rombo Romboxes in existence, they are NOT secondhand. However, the prices are going to be very, very low indeed (Maybe £20 for a ROMBO).

A few years ago, Phil Craven had a very bad reputation with WACCI and the CPC Scene but, it would appear, since that time, he has pulled himself together.

To donate such articles to WACCI itself, I think, was a marvelous gesture and the WACCI editorial team would like to thank Phil for them. Time, I think, to let that part of the past stay firmly where it is, in the past. Thanks Phil, and best of luck with the future,

SORRY (AGAIN)

We at WACCI HQ are a load a raving lunatics who never seem to be able to get anything right. Computer Cavern seem to be the latest victim of this rampent insanity, in that we've managed to trim off the end of their phone number for some months now. Right, it's corrected (please let it be so) but, as way of an apology, it's here as well

COMPUTER CAVERN

9 Dean Street, Marlow
Bucks, SL7 3AA

Tel/Fax 016128 891022

GAMES IN WACCI?

The games special is on line and starting to build up. I need games reviews (decent games please), as well as anything else that is even half way towards being about games. If possible, can you send a screen shot from the game (don't worry if you can't, I can do it at this end if I have the game here).

TAPPERS IS BUILDING

For those of you who really liked the TAPPERS series, I have some interesting news. I'm working on a program at the moment (alright, it's going to be a very advanced Diary crossed with a file-o-fax), which should be entering these pages as of next month. I imagine it'll last for a few issues as well, so be patient with me (please). Sorry about the delay, but programming it (suitable for these pages as well) is quite a long process and somewhat time consuming. Not only do I have to write the program, but it has to be error tested as well to make quite sure it works.

A FINAL FAREWELL

I regret to have to inform the WACCI membership that Len Knight, a long standing WACCI member, died on December 31st of last year. Len wrote several letters to Fair Comment and was well loved by all who knew him.

I have sent a letter to Mrs Knight, conveying the commiserations and prayers of the WACCI editorial team and the WACCI membership.

FAIR COMMENT

Richard 'Bunny' Fairhurst
Frank Neatherway
3 Glebe Close
Reyleigh
Essex
SS6 9HL

WHEN THE WORLD

Thanks to you <<Paul, not me - Richard>> and all of the hard working <<that excludes me, too>> WACCI team for producing the magazine and the Library Supplement.

I like the recent articles giving help to readers on the various art and DTP programs, and think that they should be continued with the many interesting utilities and newer programs contained in the PD library. This would surely encourage members to make more use of the facilities.

I was sorry to miss the second Convention because my wife was in hospital at the time. The first one was enjoyable and I trust the same central and easily accessible venue is kept next year.

Arthur Coulter
Moseley

<<In which case, send Angie a postcard stating your preferences (see Market Stall 108). Similarly, I'm sure Philip would be delighted to hear of any ideas for "special issues" in the vein of the art and design one. I reckon a music issue: how about it, Mr D?

It's true, Walsall is central and easily accessible when you live in Moseley. About 10 miles away, I reckon...
- Richard>>

<<I like specials, even if they are hard work. The next one will be about games and if the membership would like one on music then so be it -Philip>>

OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE

I read Angela's ergonomics article with great interest, as I keep on getting a pain in the neck with sitting at my 464 for hours on end. I have readjusted my chair and put some big, heavy books under my monitor so that it would be at eye level, but I still get a pain in the neck and my arm was aching too.

I thought, "I'm doing all the right things: why am I still getting a pain in the neck?" So I got this idea - I don't know where it came from - that if I had a sprained wrist, then I would most likely put it into a sling. I tried this and it didn't work, but still, there was something there.

After some hours of thinking (I really must stop this, it hurts too much), the answer arrived: how about an elastic band? So I got a length of elastic, tied a knot in it and put it on, like you would a sling. My hand was free to do the typing but when it was at rest it just hung there with the springiness of the elastic.

And now I don't get a pain in the neck. Stop laughing - can you come up with anything better?

Nora Lees
Birmingham

<<I have to admit, I can't. Apart from suggesting you use a Mac with an Apple Adjustable Keyboard... no, no, I didn't say that.

Putting big, heavy books under your head can be good for your posture, too. Really.
- Richard>>

<<Hi Nora, Philip here. I'm pleased to see that you're still with us. Does that mean that I'm starting to get it right at last? -Philip>>

HUD-WINKED

In response to Simon Lucas (issue 106) Colourdump 3 is optimised for the Star printers which have their own colour printing system. Colourdump 2 will work with other Epson-compatible printers by doing three passes, one for each colour.

Ron Hobday may find that his version of SuperCalc 2 is pre-programmed with printer setup codes. He can use INSTALL on the reverse of the disc to find out, remove them and install new codes.

If Jean Stangroom (issue 107) is trying to use Mini Office II with a high capacity drive B:, she will probably have difficulties as MO2 grabs all the RAM and won't allow even the few bytes needed to use a high capacity disc. Her options are to use MO2 with a side-switched drive B: giving 2 x 178k in standard format or move to another WP. This normally involves saving all MO2 files in ASCII and loading them into the new WP.

Tom Neill needs to remember that, when importing screens into Stop Press the top of the screen is lost under the Stop Press menus.

John R Hudson
Huddersfield

<<Thank you, thank you, thank you and thank you. You ought to be writing Fair Comment, you know, John. Hang on, didn't Mike Lyons suggest that many moons ago?

I'd be surprised if Mini Office II conflicts with ParaDOS, though: the latter uses very little workspace that AMSDOS doesn't, and compatibility with existing programs is almost total when you've installed it in slot 7. The only exceptions I know of are Micro-Design Plus, DES, and a rather nasty German demo called More Xperience. Anyone out there tried it? Anyone out there still use Mini Office II?

- Richard J Fairhurst>>

<<I'm here a lot this month, aren't I? You're right Richard, Mike did put forward John as a Fair Comment editor. Not something that you'd want to wish on a friend, which is why I offered it to the editor of BTL. (That should get some people talking!)

Mini-Office II is ParaDos hostile. I know about the problems with DES, but MicroDesign Plus as well? The latter is most strange since I use MicroDesign Plus all the time and I've got ParaDos in slot 7 of my Rombox -Philip>>

LOST CAT

Is it possible with a PEEK, after the CAT has been invoked and the print of it suppressed on the screen, to determine the K free of a disc and then print the result at a specific screen position? If so, how please?

Also BASIC doesn't seem to like a series of DIMed string\$ being ERASEd and reDIMensioned, the result being sorted, then that DIM being ERASEd and the lot reDIMensioned to its original state before going back to the menu of program options. One gets "Array already dimensioned". Any cure?

As for Spectrum converters, I had a note of Multilink (Filosoft, PO Box 1353, 9701 BJ Groningen, Holland) and Source 2 (Software Mail Order Group Ltd, Jubilee Close, Townsend Lane, Kinsbury NW9 8TZ). Perhaps you could find them from that.

Roy Everett
Braintree

<<Oooh, goody goody, a techie one. Right. Finding the amount of space left on the disc is easy from machine code: an undocumented feature of the AMSDOS catalogue routine returns it in DE. It's not quite so easy in BASIC, but by running this program, you can type a%=0:CALL &A000,&a% after you've done a CAT, and the amount of free space (in K) will be returned in a%.

```
100 MEMORY &9FFF
110 FOR n=&A000 TO &A047
120 READ a$: POKE n,VAL("&"a$)
130 NEXT: CALL &A003
140 DATA C3,37,A0,21,9B,BC
150 DATA 7E,FE,C3,C8,11,44
160 DATA A0,ED,A0,ED,A0,ED
170 DATA A0,3E,C3,21,1F,A0
180 DATA 32,9B,BC,22,9C,BC
190 DATA C9,D5,21,44,A0,11
200 DATA 9B,BC,ED,A0,ED,A0
210 DATA ED,A0,D1,CD,9B,BC
220 DATA ED,53,38,A0,C3,13
230 DATA A0,11,00,00,DD,6E
240 DATA 00,DD,66,01,73,23
250 DATA 72,C9,00,00,00,00
```

I've not come across the DIM/ERASE problem before. Are you using a 464? It sounds like a garbage collection problem, and the 464 had several shortcomings in that department - try an occasional a=FRE("") to force garbage collection. Alternatively, you could have an all-purpose temporary

array defined at the start of the program, so you wouldn't need to keep reDIMensioning the things.

"BJ Gronigen" in Holland makes me think of the Amsterdam Police Officers sketch on last night's "Harry Enfield and Chums", I'm afraid. Thanks for the addresses: but since no-one's come forward with details of the Betasoft emulator, perhaps we can assume it didn't really exist... - Richard>>

<<To prevent a garbage collection on the CPC 464 (which is when the machine hangs up for several hours whilst it sorts out it's internal memory) all you have to do is add this at the start of the program.

```
10 OPENOUT "DUMMY"
20 MEMORY HIMEM-1
30 CLOSEOUT
```

Far more effective than adding FRE("") in several places around the program don't you think.

Joy of joys. I just managed to out techie the chief techie. Not something I can do very often -Philip>>

BELT JOB

My CPC6128 was struck by the dreaded "Drive A: disc missing" syndrome this week. Nothing else seemed amiss, and although some programs would still load, other previously reliable programs wouldn't. The small red indicator light that flashes when the disc is turning also seemed very dim.

In early 1995 there were quite a few letters about this in Fair Comment and the problem was put down to the disc drive belt stretching. A quick telephone call to OJ Software, and a new belt was received the following day, accompanied by a print-out of Wally Collinson's letter (WACCI No 85) explaining how to change the belt. There was also an excellent step-by-step account of how to change the belt by Bob Moffatt in issue 88.

Armed with both these articles I set about the task and was pleasantly surprised at how easy and straightforward a job it was. Everything was where the articles said it should be, and within half an hour my 6128 was up and running perfectly again. I would like to express my thanks to Wally Collinson, Bob Moffatt and to OJ Software. With their help a

potentially expensive repair job was accomplished for under £3, and all within 24 hours.

Ron Boreham
Pembroke Dock

<<Yet another advantage of using a steak-and-kidney pie as your disc drive - no drive belt to change.

- Richard>>

<<Dear Richard, if you start going on about formatting chocolate Digestives in your steak-and-kidney pies then I'm going to fire you -Philip>>

A DISCUSSION POINT?

I write this letter only after extended efforts to get a result and it is not intended to slag anyone off but I do need help and also I want other members to be aware of what has happened to me.

I have over the last 15 months had problems with regard to two 3.1/2" and one 3" disc drive which Nigel Calcutt agreed to disconnect for me at the Wacci Convention in 1995. I have tried on numerous occasions to contact Nigel but have been unable to get any straight answers. I have recently written to Nigel to give him 14 days in which to give me a straight answer as to what has happened to my three drives. This letter is the result of me not receiving any answer. I see from the Wacci Mag that he has gone into business selling drives and I am unhappy that he is advertising in our magazine with problems like this still unresolved.

I know that Nigel has done a lot of good work for the club but I can't understand why he is ignoring me!! Perhaps this letter will bring a result because at the end of the day I can't afford to replace these drives and I shall have to seriously consider a claim to the Small Claims Court.

Jacquie Owen
Wolverhampton

<<This letter has come directly to me, rather than to Richard for what are, I hope, obvious reasons. If there is a problem developing, then members should be made aware of it, however, difficulties like these can be a one off. I hope Nigel excercises his Right of Response and we hear from him in next months Fair Comment -Philip>>

THE PROGRAMMERS PATCH

MATTHEW + STEPHEN PHILLIPS

This new series aims to offer a smorgasbord of programming delicacies, juggling those hot potatoes of efficiency versus readability, of compactitude versus perambulatory execution, and ever searching for a use of the CREAL function, yet without wasting an opportunity of using our thesaurus. Many of you will have followed Alan Tilling's Very Basic Basic series, and we hope that you now feel ready for something more adventurous.

RUN*ARTICLE

We are going to start by looking at a program written by Stephen in the days when Computing with the Amstrad had a "ten-liners" slot for short BASIC programs. This wasn't one of them. Don't get scared off by the horrible listing, as all will soon become as clear as jelly.

If you feel like it, you could type in the program in Fig 1. You might even find it useful and it is only eight lines after all. The program displays a catalogue of the disc, and allows you to choose a file to run by moving a pointer with the cursor keys. Holding down SHIFT will make the pointer move faster. The file is selected by pressing COPY, SPACE or ENTER (RETURN to you 6128 users). You can change to a different user area by moving the pointer to the word "user" at the top of the display and pressing one of the three selection keys.

As he has been working as a software engineer over the summer, Stephen wants to make it clear that this is NOT meant to be an example of Good Programming Practice. Mustn't spoil the job prospects with one little example.

The program takes up less than 1K of disc space. This is important because the idea is that you would save it on every disc and use it as a disc menu system. To achieve this small size, many ingenious techniques have been employed. Although they do make the listing rather daunting, one bonus is that the program runs much faster.

LIST 10-80

Let's have a quick look through what each line does.

10 sets up some machine code (shock, horror!) that we need later.

20 makes sure the screen is set up as normal, and catalogues the disc.

30 is where the fun starts. The loop starting "WHILE 1" ends at the "WEND" in line 70. There is no way out of this loop and the program only stops when the user selects a file, which is run in line 50.

The second WHILE loop ends at the WEND part way through line 50, and waits until a file or "user" is selected.

At the end of the line the pointer, CHR\$(215), is printed on the screen.

40 has a WHILE-WEND loop all to itself. It waits until SPACE, COPY or ENTER is pressed, and in the meantime moves the pointer about in response to the cursor keys.

50 after removing the cursor, reads twelve characters off the screen, using the machine code entered in line 10. We now encounter the WEND, whose WHILE was halfway through line 30. If we get past the WEND we know that we either want to run a file, or change to a different user area on the disc. If the ninth character is a full stop, we can assume that the string is a filename, and run it. Otherwise we proceed to...

60 asks for the new user number, changes it and recatalogues the disc. The WHILE-WEND loop here ensures that it's between 0 and 15.

70 is the WEND which will send us back to line 30, ready to start again.

80 is a subroutine which waits until none of the selection keys are being pressed, and then clears the keyboard buffer.

GOTO 10

The first command in the program is there to speed things up slightly. There are three different types of variable: strings, integers and reals. On the Amstrad, integer variables are whole numbers from -32768 to 32767. Real variables (also known as floating point variables) can be much bigger and don't have to be whole numbers. Using a real variable when an integer will do makes extra work for BASIC and slows the program down. To specify explicitly that a variable is a string we use the "\$" character as in:

```
a$="Hello Mum!"
```

There are equivalent characters for integer variables and reals. For example:

```
i%=3  
r!=3.1415
```

The "!" character is rarely used in this context because variables without any type identifiers are real by default. "DEFINT a-z" changes the default type to integer for all variables beginning with the letters a to z. You can find out about its



lesser known friends DEFREAL and DEFSTR in your manual. As an example, how about:

```
DEFSTR t
tigger="Philip DiRichleau"
PRINT tigger
```

We'll cover the rest of line 10 in a later article.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

This disc menu program could be run at any time, so it must make sure that the computer, and in particular the screen, is set up properly. This is all handled in line 20. We make use of three firmware calls, machine code routines which are built in to the computer. They are:

&BB4E TXT INITIALISE

Among other things, resets the pen and paper colours, and moves the cursor to the top left of the screen.

&BBBA GRA INITIALISE

Resets the graphics pen and paper, the size and origin of the graphics window, moves the graphics cursor to the bottom left, and sets the graphics write mode to normal.

&BC02 SCR RESET

Sets the inks to their default values.

These three routines are a handy way of getting a lot of things set up with very few commands.

After selecting MODE 2, we print CHR\$(23) and CHR\$(1) to switch to XOR graphics mode. You see XOR mode in use all the time, as it is used to display the BASIC text cursor. We use this same effect to display our pointer. If you switch on your Amstrad, and type in the following few commands, you can see a further demonstration:

```
MODE 2
PRINT CHR$(23);CHR$(1)
MOVE 0,372:DRAWR 200,0,1
```

A horizontal line should appear, cutting through some of the text you typed. Type the last line again, and the text will magically (or rather

logically) reappear. This is all due to the properties of XOR, as any logician could tell you.

a	b	a XOR b
0	0	0
1	0	1
0	1	1
1	1	0

Figure 1.6

Figure 1.6 shows the "truth table" for exclusive OR. Imagine that a is the colour of a pixel on the screen, and that b is the colour we are going to print on top. The colour that appears on the screen is a XOR b. So, if b is 0, then the colour stays as a. If b is 1, then the colour changes from 0 to 1 or from 1 to 0. In either case, printing colour b on top again means that we end up with what we started with. This makes it easy for us to move our pointer about on the screen without worrying about what is underneath it.

The position of the pointer is held in the variables x and y, and these are set up to place it near the top of the screen. After cataloguing the disc, the VPOS function is used to put the Vertical Position of the text cursor into variable v. As disc catalogues vary in length, we have to use VPOS to find out where the cursor has ended up. Variable v is used in the LOCATE command in line 60 to ensure that the "User:" prompt is always in the right place, just below the end of the disc catalogue.

END OF FILE

The program ends in line 50 when the selected file is RUN. Some programs may assume that the screen is already in MODE 1 as it is when you first switch on. Before running the program we reset the graphics write mode with another call to &BBBA and change to MODE 1, as these are the only things we have altered since the start.

FINAL SILLY HEADING

As a challenge you may want to investigate line 40 as that's what we'll be looking at next time. Also, if anyone can explain why Locomotive

Software decided to include the CREAL function in Amstrad BASIC, we'd be interested to know!

<<This was one of the articles that was lost in the infamous black hole of my down defunct filing system. So I have a thousand discs lying around everywhere and I keep having to rescue them from children, but at least I know where they are -Philip>>

```
10 DEFINT a-z:MEMORY HIMEM-34:a=UNT(HI
MEM+1):FOR x=0 TO 33:READa$:POKEa+x,VA
L("&"a$):NEXT:DATA CD,78,BB,4C,DD,6E,
0,DD,66,1,46,78,B7,C8,23,5E,23,66,6B,C
D,60,BB,77,23,C,79,E5,CD,6F,BB,E1,10,F
2,C9
```

```
20 CALL &BB4E:CALL &BC02:CALL &BBBA:MO
DE 2:PRINT CHR$(23)+CHR$(1):x=100:y=29
6:CAT:v=VPOS(#0)
```

```
30 WHILE 1:TAG:f$=SPACE$(12):WHILE MID
$(f$,9,1)<>". AND MID$(f$,8,1)<>":M
OVE x,y:PRINT CHR$(215);:GOSUB 80
```

```
40 WHILE INKEY(47)+INKEY(18)+INKEY(9)=
-3:b=x:c=y:x=MAX(0,MIN(632,x+3*((INKEY
(8)>-1)-(INKEY(1)>-1))*4+3*((INKEY(21)
=-1))) :y=MAX(15,MIN(399,y+3*((INKEY(2)
)>-1)-(INKEY(0)>-1))*((INKEY(21)=-1)+2
)):MOVE b,c:PRINT CHR$(215);:MOVE x,y
:PRINT CHR$(215);:WEND
```

```
50 GOSUB 80:MOVE x,y:PRINT CHR$(215);:
p=(x\160)*20+1:q=(400-y)\16+1:LOCATE p
,q:CALL a,@f$:WEND:TAGOFF:IF MID$(f$,9
,1)=". THEN MEMORY HIMEM+34:CALL &BBB
A:MODE 1:RUN f$
```

```
60 u=16:WHILE u AND -16:LOCATE 1,v:PRI
NT"User: "+CHR$(20);:LINE INPUT u$:u=V
AL(u$):WEND:IF u$<>"" THEN 'USER,u:CLS
:CAT:v=VPOS(#0)
```

```
70 WEND
```

```
80 WHILE INKEY(47)+INKEY(18)+INKEY(9)>
-3:WEND:WHILE INKEY$<>"":WEND:RETURN
```



PATCHING PROTEXT

DAVID
O'SHEA

So you're back for more? Well, last time I tried to explain some of the Protext vectors. This time, I'll try the RSXs. You've already seen one of the RSXs, and used it to find the address of the workspace, and the version of Protext. That particular RSX is pretty vital - you can't do much without it.

To call a particular RSX, just use this simple piece of code:

```
ld hl,RSX          ;Point HL to RSX
call &bcd4         ;Try to find it
.....           ;Set up entry params
call &1b          ;Execute RSX
.....           ;Use exit conditions
ret              ;Done!
.RSX byte &10,&8x ;Required RSX
```

Or, if you want to use the RSX a few times, you can do the following instead:

```
ld hl,RSX          ;Point HL to rSX
call &bcd4         ;Find it
ld (RSX),hl       ;Store address for later
ld a,c
ld (RSX+2),a
ret
.RSX byte &10,&8x,0 ;Required RSX
```

(Do that in the initialisation, and then whenever you want to call the RSX, just do this:)

```
.....           ;Set up entry params
rst 3,RSX         ;Execute RSX
.....           ;Use exit conditions
```

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Ok, I suppose you want to know what all the RSXs do then! Here goes:

```
-----
RSX:          &10,&83
Entry:          None
Exit:          DE=1, HL=workspace+1
Notes: Read the word at HL for the
        address of the Printer driver
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&84
Entry:          None
Exit: BC=&4D, DE=&22, HL=workspace+&22
Notes: Read word at HL for text len
```

```
-----
RSX:          &10,&85 (+)
Entry: DE contains text addr to go to
Exit: Goto addr DE (carry set on exit)
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&86 (+)
Entry: DE contains line num to go to.
Exit:          All corrupt.
Notes: line num is actual line num as
        shown with paged mode off.
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&87 (+)
Entry: DE contains column num to go to
Exit:          All corrupt
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&88 (+)
Entry: DE contains number of spaces to
        insert forward from cursor
Exit: AF,BC corrupt. Carry set if it
        worked. HL contains current text
        address. IX is current char from start
        of line (NOT colum - Tab is one char)
Notes: Use this to make space 2 insert
        something into the text at current
        pos. After call just copy char to HL
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&89 (+)
Entry: DE contains num of characters
        to delete ahead of cursor
Exit: AF,BC corrupt. Carry set if it
        worked. HL contains current text addr
        IX contains current chr from start of
        line (NOT column - Tab is one char!).
Notes: Use this to delete something
        from the text at the current position.
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&8A (+)
Entry:          None
Exit:          HL points to text start,
        DE points to text end.
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&8B (+)
Entry:          None
Exit: A=number of block markers found
        (zero flag if both), B and HL corrupt
        If both found, HL points to last one
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&8C (+)
Entry:          None
Exit: HL=text addr, IX contain current
        character from start of line (NOT
        column - Tab is one character!).
-----
```

```
RSX:          &10,&8D
Entry:          None
Exit: HL=&F7FB, DE=&F667 (Address for
        v.1.22)
```

Notes: This RSX points HL to the addr of commands in ROM, DE to table of addr of the routines for the commands

Note that any RSXs which are marked with a (+) can only be called when Protext is running. The reason for this is that when Protext is running, it swaps it's workspace to &AC00 (Basic's workspace) so that it doesn't need to do complicated calculations with the IY register (which contains the address of it's allocated workspace when it is called). The marked RSXs use direct access of &AC00 instead of the IY register, and so can crash the machine if called when Protext isn't running. Also, you shouldn't try to do anything with Basic when Protext is running, since Basic's workspace won't be where it expects it to be, so this could also crash the machine.

Some of the RSXs are more useful than others. For example, the one which returns the address of the printer driver doesn't strike me as being of much use, but perhaps you know of a life saving application?

Well, now you know how each Vector and RSX works, so all you need is an idea for something that's missing from Protext. Well, to give you a taste of what is possible, I'll recount what led me to start pushing Protext around!

One feature that I found lacking in this otherwise perfect word processor (in which, I might add, I'm writing

this entire article, along with all of the assembler routines!) was a 'Learn key'. You know, when you press a key, and then all the following keypresses are recorded until you decide to stop (or until you fill up the buffer!) and then you can play it back at anytime! Very handy for tedious work. You may have often used a similar idea by defining function keys, but the act of defining the key can take quite a while, especially if there are some complicated actions taking place. You need to look up all the codes, and then put them in with lots of CHR\$(x) commands. And then the machine tells you 'Improper argument' as you try to stuff too much into the key. Well, with this patch, you can store up to 256 keypresses at a go, and all you have to do is perform the sequence yourself once.

```

;;-----
;; LEARN.ASM by David O'Shea of
;; THE FIRM (1996)
;;
;; A useful example of how to patch
;; Protex vectors. To use, assemble
;; to required address, CALL check,
;; and set HIMEM to 'patch-1'. Then,
;; in EDIT mode, use CTRL+SHIFT+L to
;; begin/end a learn sequence and
;; CTRL+SHIFT+R to replay it. You'll
;; get a CHR$(7) beep for each
;; keystroke stored. If it stops
;; beeping, the buffer's full, so
;; press CTRL+SHIFT+L to end the
;; sequence!
;;-----
;;NOTE: NOLIST, IF2, PRINT and ENDIF
;; directives are Maxam only.
;; If you're using a different
;; assembler, just delete them!

org &a000 ;Change to suit
write"learn.bin"
nolist
if2
print
print"Check = &check"
print"Patch = &patch"
print"End = &fin"
endif
.check ld hl,find ;HL points to
; Protex RSX
call &bcd4 ;KL FIND COMMAND
jp nc,error ;Oops, not found
call &1b ;Call command
ld (ws),de ;Returns workspace in DE
ld a,c : ld (ver),a

```

```

ld (ver+1),hl ;And version in CHL
ld hl,(ws) ;HL points to workspace
ld bc,&14
add hl,bc ;Move to Process key vector
ld de,oldvec
ld bc,3 : push hl
ldir ;Keep old vector
pop hl : ld a,&c3
ld (hl),a ;Patch vector
ld de,patch : inc hl : ld (hl),e
inc hl : ld (hl),d
ret ;All done!
.error ld hl,mess ;Error message
.print ld a,(hl) ;Standard print
;string routine
inc hl : or a : ret z : call &bb5a
jr print
.mess text "Protex not found!",7,0

.find byte &10,&80 ;RSX to find
.ws word 0 ;Store workspace addr here
.ver rmen 3 ;Store version here

```

```

;-----Actual Patch Code -----
.patch push bc ;Save regs
push hl : ld b,a
ld a,21 ;Test for shift
call &bb1e ;KM TEST KEY
pop hl : ld a,b : pop bc
call nz,catch ;If pressed, check key
.lrnpc rmen 3 ;Store in buffer?
; (or 3 NOPs)
jp oldvec ;Old process routine
.catch cp &c ;CTRL+L?
jp z,learn ;Jump to learn routine
cp &12 ;CTRL+R?
jp z,replay ;Jump to replay routine
ret ;It's easy to add more keys
.replay push hl ;Save regs
push de : push af
ld de,(count) ;Get buffer count
ld a,d : or e :
jr z,empty ;Skip if empty
ld hl,buffer
.rplylp ld a,(hl) ;Get code from buff
push hl : push de
call oldvec ;Process with org routine
pop de : pop hl
inc hl ;Next code
dec de ;Decrement count
ld a,d : or e
jr nz,rplylp ;Repeat if not end yet
.empty pop af
pop de : pop hl
inc sp ;Don't process CTRL+SHIFT+R
inc sp ;(Take one return address off
; stack)
ret
.learn push af
push hl : ld hl,lrnpc : ld a,(hl)
or a ;Already learning?

```

```

jr nz,lrndne ;Unpatch if so
ld a,&cd
ld (hl),a ;Otherwise, install patch
push de : ld de,lrnst : inc hl
ld (hl),e : inc hl : ld (hl),d
pop de : ld hl,0
ld (count),hl ;Reset buffer count
pop hl : ld a,7
call &bb5a ;Beep to acknowledge
pop af
inc sp ;Don't process CTRL+SHIFT+L
inc sp : ret
.lrndne xor a
ld (hl),a : inc hl
ld (hl),a ;Remove learn patch
inc hl : ld (hl),a : pop hl : ld a,7
call &bb5a ;Beep
pop af
inc sp ;Don't process CTRL+SHIFT+L
inc sp
ret
.lrnst push hl ;This is called to
;store a keypress
ld hl,buffer-1 : push de
ld de,(count) : inc de : push af
ld a,e
or a ;Is buffer full?
jr z,fullup ;Skip if so
add hl,de
pop af
ld (hl),a ;Record code
ld (count),de ;Increment count
pop de : pop hl : push af : ld a,7
call &bb5a ;Beep to acknowledge
pop af
ret ;Process keypress with original
;vector
.fullup pop af
pop de : pop hl
ret

.oldvec rmen 3 ;Store old vector here
.count word 0 ;Buffer count
.buffer rmen 256 ;Buffer for 256 codes

.fin equ $ ;End of code!
-----

```

FAIRWELL FROM THE PATCHMAN

Well, that's it! I hope I haven't bored you to death with that last chunk of assembly. If you have any queries, or there's anything you couldn't follow, you can write to me. My address is

David O'Shea,
23 Hillcrest,
Carrigaline,
Co. Cork,
Ireland.

COP-LOST-MOP

THE BOWLEYS BRAINSTORMER

Hi there everyone, Happy New Year to you all. John & I have now got our act together again after a long hard haul. Unfortunately personal circumstances and a computer breakdown knocked us back quite a bit but we've bounced back in time to start another year of wonderful Wacci competitions! Read on if you dare!!!

RECAP TIME

Just to fill you in on whats been happening over the last few issues.

Here are the answers and winners to bring you up to date.

Due to getting utterly muddled with the competition results, we are only recapping from Issue 105 so if you would like any answers from previous issues then contact us and we will get them printed. <<Carol's fault honest>>

ISSUE 105 QUIZ ONE WE'RE IN THE MONEY

The grid should be filled in like so:

	£	S	d	
1	14	00	00	Fourteen pounds
2			1 1/4	Penny farthing
3		1	00	Bob
4	10	00	00	Tenor
5	1	1	00	Guinea
6			6	Tanner
7			1/2	Ape knee
8			3/4	Three far things
9		10	00	Half a knicker
10	1	00	00	Pound
11	6	00	00	Sick squid
12		5	00	A crown

= £32 17 8 1/2

QUIZ TWO - NINERS

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Accordion | 2. Badminton |
| 3. Cheiftain | 4. Edelweiss |
| 5. Foreigner | 6. Greatcoat |
| 7. Hypnotism | 8. Invisible |
| 9. Kilometre | 10. Norwegian |
| 11. Pseudonym | 12. Yachtsman |

FINAL WORD

His parachute failed!

And the winners are:

- * 1st Margaret Schofield *
- * 2nd Jeffrey Dean *
- * 3rd Tom Litherland *

Margaret wins the 2 binders and PD as usual for everyone else. Unfortunately none of you have said what you would like in the event of your winning so would you please drop me a line with your requirements and preferred disc size & side switch - yes/no.

TO IAN TANNER & OWEN BROWN

Have you received your prizes for the above quizzes? I hope so but in the event that you haven't then please let me know.

ISSUE 106 QUIZ ONE ALL SQUARED UP

- BASE - ball, line, metal.
- LAND - lord, mark, scape.
- EARTH - worm, quake, mother.
- FLOOR - show, plan, board.
- GROUND - sheet, control, swell

Unused word - *SOIL*

To the kind gentleman who set this quiz, please let me know who you are as John mislaid your letter so I don't know what prize you would like. (Hold on a minute! That's not true, Carol lost it!) John ->

QUIZ TWO - WHO'S WHO

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Stuart GASCOIGNE. | Frank PROST. |
| Richard AVERY. | Angie HARDWICK. |
| Doug WEBB. | Ian PARKER. |
| John HUDSON. | Philip DiRICHLEAU. |
| Nic RAYNER. | Clive JACKSON. |
| Ian NEILL. | Mark STEWART. |

NOTE - Philip tells me it took him ages to sus out that Harrods toilet was himself!!

And the winners are:

- * 1st Peter Rogerson *
- * 2nd Colin Hazell *
- * 3rd Peter Robson *

ISSUE 107 QUIZ ONE JORDANS JUGGLER

The Grid should read:

1 = D, 2 = A, 3 = L, 4 = Y, 5 = I
 6 = N, 7 = G, 8 = P, 9 = R, 10 = O
 11 = B, 12 = U, 13 = T, 14 = E, 15 = S
 16 = C, 17 = H, 18 = M, 19 = V, 20 = K

QUIZ TWO SPOT THE CAROLS

1. When the red red robin goes bob bob bobbing along.
2. Oh come all ye faithfull.
3. Twas the night before Christmas.
4. Rocking around the Christmas tree.
5. Away in a manger.
6. Chestnuts roasting on an open fire (Merry Christmas to you).
7. Ding dong merrily on high.
8. Santa Claus is coming to town.
9. When you wish upon a star.
10. Jingle bell rock.
11. Happy Christmas (war is over).
12. Silver bells.
13. White Christmas (holiday inn).
14. When a child is born.
15. AULD LANG SYNE.

Sorry for the mistook (Tut tut! Carol should have got Frank Neatherway to check it) in my spelling of number 15.

I read the passage through many times but still didn't see it until Wacci was in print.

Okay I know there is no compo this month yet again, but we thought we should bring you all up-to-date with the answers, the compo's will start again next month and thats a promise.

LET'S BE NICE

SUGGESTS BRIAN WATSON

This is NOT a letter, it's an article/statement, so you get it rather than Frank or Richard. Please publish it in its entirety or not at all as I have chosen the words VERY carefully so as not to inflame the various situations which have initiated some fairly hot phone lines recently. If you feel it is not suitable for WACCI I will publish it in slightly amended form in 8BIT.

COME TEMPESTS BLOW

This is not exclusively CPC-, or even computer-related really, but in the light of some recent events I felt it needed saying and perhaps others will agree.

Every now and then, someone in the CPC-using community 'has a go' at someone else. This may be a real and deliberate attack, an attempt at humour which is taken the wrong way, a statement based on a misunderstanding, or an innocent statement to which a wrong meaning is attributed. But one way or another, someone gets offended.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Because we generally communicate between ourselves semi-publicly through the magazines of our hobby (whether on disc or paper is irrelevant), things said which are or, could be taken to be, offensive or just plain wrong can remain in the public domain for a long time.

Also, any responses which are made will not usually be seen in the company of the original comment so an aggrieved party may still feel aggrieved even in the event of a retraction or correction being published. So what is the remedy, if any? The Press Complaints Commission? Litigation?

That brings me to the value which should be put on any comment. Recently I had it brought to my attention by a phone call from someone who was obviously very concerned that a very serious, defamatory, and almost certainly libellous allegation had been made about somebody else in a CPC magazine. The medium of that magazine is irrelevant.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I must say my immediate reaction was to be very concerned at the slur on a fellow CPC user and to feel personally affected; member of the same CPC-using community, brotherly sympathy, outrage at misuse of editorial privilege, all that sort of thing in turn. Then I calmed down and the piece you are reading is the result of more considered thought.

Why should anyone get upset about the pre-pubescent prattlings of a spiteful nitwit who doesn't yet know the difference between humour and offence? At a lower level of 'accusation', are we all so thin-skinned that even sincere criticism from another can really spoil our day? I know I do speak as someone who doesn't often find himself on the rough end of jibes, and I might feel differently if I was persistently attacked unfairly for one thing or another (come on, BTL, you're not trying) but from this viewpoint I do think that some of the periodic bursts of outrage are much ado about nothing.

Can I suggest that we all try to be a bit less sensitive about personal comments and criticisms when they are made? The present CPC-using community in the UK, as defined as those in touch with each other through WACCI, UAUG, BTL, 8BIT, and the other paper and disc-based magazines put together does not exceed 500 (prove me wrong, anyone?).

While this does mean that any slur, allegation, or libel may reach a fairly high PERCENTAGE of that number if it is repeated, it probably won't be because (1) editors don't like

publishing old news, and (2) we are talking about a fairly small TOTAL NUMBER of people anyway. So any real damage is pretty insignificant at a personal level, although it may be more quantifiable if it affects a magazine, club or business.

NO TORA TORA TORA

Incidentally, while we are on the subject of the media, the newsgroup comp.sys.amstrad.8bit is remarkably free of personal attacks. The other half of what I am proposing is that we all practice a bit of 'select brain before engaging mouth (or keyboard)', but not so much that humour shrivels on the altar of PC - Pompous Correctness.

THE IDIOT SECTION

There is another group of computer-users whose supporters are regularly dragged into the war (and I chose the word carefully) of two of its principal active proponents. Believe me, it's like Serbia and Bosnia between them! What a waste of energies.

IT REALLY IS GOOD TO TALK

Let's carry on talking amongst ourselves, debating the issues of the hobby, and not be afraid to address matters we feel could be improved. But also try to keep a sense of perspective in that, in many ways, it really doesn't amount to a hill of beans.

Brian Watson

MORE WASTED ENERGY

Just as a point of interest, the 'Serbia and Bosnia' battle that Brian refers to has failed to spill over into the CPC and WACCI arena. There were attempts made but we were well warned and stayed well clear of it.

JULIUS CAESAR THE COMSOFT BOOKS

BY DAVE
WHO?

Or should it read, 'What a tragedy'. Our ERNIE, the WISH LIST MAN, couldn't find anyone to review this disc so he called upon me. Tragedy, I hear you ask? I know as much about Shakespeare that you could print it all on the back of a postage stamp. Oh well, not to worry.

SHAKE A WHAT?

So what's this all about? It's one of the Comsoft Discbooks I'm attempting to review for you. I have had to read the book over and over, time and time again, to try to get what the story is about. I'm not sure if I have mastered it yet, it's not the type of material that one reads from a top shelf magazine, not that I would know anything about that type of material.

Disc books now available include the major works of Shakespeare and many other famous authors. There is an 'INDEX.TXT' file on the "B" side which takes up a full 15K list of some 300 different works, so you should find some reading here in the list to sort out these long dark evenings.

SHAKE A LEG

Most of the LARGE books are split into smaller books to fit them onto a disc. Large books take up both sides of a 3" disc whilst on a 3.5" disc (Romdos D20), they are stored in different user areas. Now, to view the text files and to save you booting up your word processor, that kind man Peter Campbell of COMSOFT has included a full disc version of DES. (Desktop Environment System) which would normally set you back £14.99 with the manual on side "A". How would I be able to view the text files using 'DES' I hear you ask? Well, here is a bonus for you. A short review on using 'DES' as a text file reader.

THE DES BIT

1). RUN "DES" or RUN "DISC". When loaded, press "A" on the keyboard and then select the files by using the cursor keys. Press the 'Space Bar' to highlight the file you want to read.

2). Press "F" for the file menu and then the "D" to display the file on screen.

3). Use the Print option for a full print out.

Simple isn't it.

4). Or you simply load the individual files into your wordprocessor.

Sadly, 'DES' had a fault on the disc that was sent to me. Our Ernie has notified Peter about it I believe, but having a copy of DES, I was able to carry out the instructions to read the files.

Now let's get back to Julius Caesar.

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

"The Tragedy of Julius Caesar" by "William Shakespeare".

The scene is about the 'Conspirators' led by "FLAVIUS" who is a 'TRIBUNE' gunning for poor old Julius in the City of 'ROME'.

The conspirators are camped near 'SARDIS' and the plains of 'PHILIPPI'.

Enter FLAVIUS who comes across... This bunch of British workmen sitting having a cuppa. Hence, You idle creatures, get you Home, is this a holiday? What know you not. Being Mechanical, you ought not walk upon a labouring day without the sign of your profession. Speak, What trade are thou?

From whence came the reply.. "British Gas" sire... Digging up the road after the "Electric Board" re-surfaced it last week... Well that's not the true reply just me (Dave)

having a dig at the Gas and Electric companies.

THE REAL THING

Why not get the disc and read the whole book, if this one isn't for you there are 300 others to chose from. This is I believe the only true way this Disc can be reviewed, by reading it upon the screen or from a print-out.

So what does it cost? Each 3" Disc book cost's £6.50. Send your own disc and get a £1.00 off of the price, plus a further reduction of £2.00 if you purchase multiple Disc books.

BIG DISC PEOPLE

3.5" Disc users are better off as (ONE) D20 Romdos Disc contains....

Shakespeare's (Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Merchant of Venice and Loves Labour Lost) at only £16.00. 3" Disc version of the above 4 books would push the costs up to £22.50. And don't forget the WACCI MEMBERS DISCOUNT

THE EDITORS BIT

I'm starting to worry about the mental health of some of our writers around here. If this article is anything to go by, then my concerns might even had some foundation.

SORRY COMSOFT

Peter Campbell sent this to be reviewed some time ago but it has only now appeared in WACCI. What is the excuse for this extended review? There isn't one. If you read Brian Watsons interview this month, you'll see that he also has had problems with this.

So, if you (or I for that matter) get sent something to review can you please get it back to me as soon as you can. Too great a delay on a review will effect both sales and the reputation WACCI has built up.

--exit left pursued by a bear

COMSOFTS

A MARKETING SPECIAL

Two of the 'Frequently Asked Questions' that a lot of members keep asking me are, firstly, 'What do we use to produce an issue of WACCI?' and, secondly 'Do Comsoft do anything other than what's listed on the back page advert?'. Well, to answer both questions at the same time, read on.

WHY AM I DOING THIS

Recently, Peter Campbell of Comsoft sent me a disc with his full product list stored on it. This was so that I could produce a new advert for the back page.

Seeing a chance to answer one of those two questions, I came up with the following, sort of a cross between a Comsoft Review, an Advertising Special and an Info-Sheet. Whatever it turns out like, I think it's going to be interesting.

COMSOFT AND THE MINI REVIEW

1) **NIRVANA** - ROM based file and disc management suite. Features include: Disc copy, disc format, file copy, unerase, change file attributes, automatic catalogue of drive A and easy to use menu system. Suitable for two drive machines. Please note that Nirvana will only recognise data & system format discs in drive B.
£15.99

<<I have no idea about Nirvana, other than that I've been told it's very good>>

2) **MicroDesign Plus** - Menu driven DTP page processing package. Two discs and two manuals. High quality print output. For all Amstrad CPC disc machines with 128k.
£29.99

<<If you haven't got MicroDesign then I have to ask, why not? All the WACCI Graphics are imported into MicroDesign for the finishing touches and every header is created within this most excellent program. WACCI graphics would be very poor without it>>

3) **MicroDesign Extra** - Disc of clip-art for use with MicroDesign Plus. Consists of large headline fonts, musical notation symbols, flowchart symbols etc.

ROMDOS D20 format £13.99
or 3" disc £14.99

<<Also contains the headline fonts that I use for a lot of the WACCI headers. A useful addition to have around, especially if you like writing music>>

4) **The Maps Libraries For MicroDesign Plus:**

a) **Maps Of The British Isles** - Sixteen Hi-Res (256k strip format) maps of the coastline, motorways, counties and towns of the UK.

ROMDOS D20 format - £12.99
or 3" format (2 discs) - £14.99

b) **World Maps** - Fifteen Hi-Res maps of America, Europe, Asia etc.

ROMDOS D20 format - £12.99
or 3" format - £13.99

<<A collection of maps and outlines that may come in useful. I know I used the New Zealand map on a WACCI cover not so long ago. Quality high>>

5) **Page Printer** - 24 pin and ink jet printer driver for MicroDesign Plus. Easy to use - good quality printouts.
£9.99

<<The program that all the headers and most of the Graphics are printed from. If you have a 24 pin (or an inkjet) and MicroDesign Plus, then get this for perfect printing results. WACCI wouldn't be able to do without it>>

6) **The Desktop Environment System** - Sophisticated CPC graphical user interface, based on an Apple MacIntosh style WIMP environment. For all CPC disc machines.

Disc - £14.99
ROMS (2) - £24.99

<<Useful if you have a need for it. Makes the computer a lot easier to use if you're a beginner and fun to play with if you're a little more experienced>>

7) **2in1** - PC to CPC transfer program, runs under CPM. Allows the user to swap between a PC and the CPC using an interchangeable disc format. For all Amstrad CPC disc machines with 128k running under CPM3.
£19.99

<<Sorry, never used it so I really don't know, but, by reputation, it's supposed to be the best>>

8) **ParaDos** - Superb Disc Operating System for use with large format 3.5" B drives. Compatible with and superior to ROMDOS. This is the only DOS ROM which should be inserted in ROM slot seven thereby freeing an extra slot for more software.
£14.99

<<Every Disc based CPC I have is now fitted with ParaDos. If you have a ROMbox and you don't have Parados installed, then you're missing a massive chunk of your CPC's capacity.

Parados not only replaced Amsdos totally, but it also contains an extensive utility program that replaces all these disc based efforts that you used to use.

Seriously folks, if you are even halfway serious about your machine and you haven't got ParaDos, then get it, and get it now. You will not be at all disappointed in it>>

9) **The Basic Idea** - Quality Basic tutorial aimed at the competent Basic programmer. Consists of a 42 page manual and disc of example programs.
£14.99

<<I'd like to see this one, but I never have, so I can't comment on it>>

10) **Xexor** - Sophisticated disc backup utility, capable of backing up almost all protected CPC discs.
£14.99

<<Yup, it's probably the best>>

11) **Soft-Lok V2.3** - Comprehensive tape to disc utility, specifically designed to transfer speedlock protected games to disc.
£14.99

<<I use a Multiface II, but I have played with part of this one and I can say that, without a doubt, it works>>

12) **Stardump** - Printer driver for 24 pin dot matrix and Epson standard ink-jet printers. Specifically designed to print standard 17k Amstrad screens. Ideal for users of the VIDI digitiser, Advanced Art Studio and other CPC art packages.
£9.99

<<I haven't seen Stardump either, but I suspect it's very similar to PagePrinter, on which I've already made my comments. >>

13) **Colourdump 3** - Colour printer driver for the Advanced Art Studio. Can also print other standard format CPC screen files & multiface screen files. Features include: Program compatible with Advanced Art Studio palette files, two sizes of print out & single density or double density printing.
£9.99

<<Vital for colour printing. Should work on most, if not all Colour Printers. I haven't got a Colour Printer, but those who have, and use Colour dump 3, say it's good>>

14) **Maxam & Maxam 1.5** - THE Z80 assembler for CPC computers. Features include: Assembler/Monitor/Editor functions, disassembler, plain English

error messages, memory editor and menu driven screen editor. Please note that the ROM version (Maxam 1.5) requires Protexit.
Disc £14.99
ROM £21.00

<<The best of the best (What else would you expect, it was originally an ARNOR program). If you want to get into Machine Code, then this makes your life a lot easier than most>>

15) **Model Universe** - 3D modelling package for 128K CPC computers. This program enables users to create three dimensional objects and designs. The objects can then be rotated, viewed from different angles or even viewed from the inside of the object.
£11.99

<<It's fun, good fun, very good fun>>

16) **ComSoft Rombox MK1** - Cased 8 socket Rombox expandible up to 15 sockets. Ideal for DES, ParaDos, Protexit etc.
£35.00 + £2.00 postage

<<Looks like a house-brick, works like a dream>>

17) **ComSoft Rombox MK11** - Cased Rombox - A more compact design than the MK1. Up to fifteen Rom sockets in the same size Rombox as the original ROMBO Rombox.
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<<This is the one that we reviewed in Issue 100. It's technically superb>>

18) **Expansion port splitter** - Prevents wear on the expansion port and also gives a more stable connection for CPC peripherals.
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<<It works>>

19) **CPC Plus widgit** - For connection of CPC peripherals of the "edge-connector" type to the 464 or 6128 Plus machines.
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<<Why did Amstrad choose to make our lives so difficult? That's what I want to know>>

THE PROTEXT SUITE

Protexit is the Word Processing System that WACCI uses to create the magazine you're reading right now.

The most sophisticated word processing system ever developed for the Amstrad CPC computer range. Rivals 16 bit word processors in ease of use and range of features.

1) **PROTEXT** - The number one word processor for Amstrad CPC computers. Features include: Fast text editing, insert / overwrite modes, full text formatting, block functions, on screen help and printer control menu.
DISC - £15.99
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<<All WACCI text is created using Protexit on Rom. What about the competition to Protexit? In my view, there isn't any...>>

2) **PROSPELL** - Advanced spell checker for PROTEXT. Features include: Massive 32,000 word dictionary, can check up to 2000 words per minute, build/edit/list dictionary, unlimited dictionary size and word search/anagram feature. Will also check files from other word processors.
DISC - £14.99
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<<Any Spell-Checking to be done? Guess what WACCI spell-checks with>>

3) **PROMERGE PLUS** - The complete mail merge and utility program for PROTEXT. Features include: Comprehensive mail merge function, auto reformatting of text & selective printing. ROM version also allows for file swapping/background printing.
DISC - £14.99
ROM - £21.00

<<We use the ROM version. This is the addition that allows us to layout the page in this very nice three column format very quickly. Also adds some very nice little touches to the normal use of Protexit, so many, in fact, that it would be impossible to list them in this little bit.

If you have Protexit and want it to do a little more, and some of the same more efficiently, then invest in Pro-Merge Plus>>

4) PROTEXT OFFICE - Database system for Protext. Features include: Menu driven datafiles, sophisticated file sorting options and an invoice generator.

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<<Dunno. I've been waiting for a review of it for some time now but I have no idea who from>>

5) PROPRINT - PROTEXT print enhancement program. Features include: Multiple fonts within one document, import of fonts from other CPC programs, 9 and 24 pin printer drivers and an integral font designer for creation of new fonts.

DISC - £14.99 ROM - £21.00

6) PROTYPE - Typesetting and print enhancement program for PROTEXT. Features include: Support for 40 foreign languages, scientific notation & non-ASCII characters. Also gives micro-justification of text & up to 240 DPI x 216 DPI on a 9 pin printer.

DISC - £14.99

<<I haven't seen eather, yet, but I hope to invest in the ProPrint Rom to use to improve WACCIs appearance>>

7) DESTEXT - Powerful DES utility enabling owners of DES and PROTEXT on ROM to use the DES graphical interface within PROTEXT. Features include: Unique WYSIWYG screen printing option, screen saver and multiple text options.

DISC - £9.99

<<Interesting if you have both ProText and DES on ROM. Worth this price-tag, even if only for the improved on screen effects>>

8) UTOPIA - Utility ROM. Can be used as a stand alone ROM or within PROTEXT. Fifty new commands available from Basic or the PROTEXT command line. Features include: Text screen dump, graphics screen dump, predefined/user defined function keys, disc utilities, turn other ROMs on or off and display ROM information.

ROM - £14.99

<<Adds those bits that Amstrad should have in the first place. I find it a vital part of my setup and use parts

of it from within ProText and other program without even thinking about it anymore.

Utopia does, most certainly, live up to its name (look it up in a dictionary if you don't know) when attached to a CPC. You won't use all of its many and varied functions, but those you do end up using, you'll wonder how you ever managed to live without them.

Also streamlines a lot of the normal disc operating systems and makes them far more user friendly. All treats you like an understandable idiot when you accidently type in 'ERA,*.*' (which erased the entire contents of a disc by the way) by asking you 'ARE YOU SURE'. Certainly very useful>>

THE LAST BIT FROM COMSOFT

At the bottom of the Comsoft advert is the following which I've reproduced here for your information, just in case you need it.

PLEASE ADD £1.00 TO ALL DISC AND ROM ORDERS FOR U.K 1ST CLASS POSTAGE. AIR MAIL FOR INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS - ADD £2.00. CUSTOMERS WISHING TO ORDER BY CREDIT CARD PLEASE CALL 0141 554 4735 (24 HR ANSAPHONE).

THE OUTRO BIT

Comsoft and Peter Campbell are, I believe, the only company left that actively supports the CPC to the extent of actually commissioning and creating new products, both software and hardware (like the now famous Comsoft Rombox).

Peter himself is always on the lookout for new products and new machine code programmers. Try giving him a call if you have a decent program that may be of saleable quality, I'm sure he'll be pleased to hear from you.

THANKS COMSOFT

Finally, the WACCI editorial team would publically like to thank Comsoft for all the support and assistance he has shown WACCI, frequently by replacing blown ROM chips and sending down Software (Page Printer was the latest) when it's been desperately needed for WACCI production at such increably low prices as £0.00.



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BASIC COMPILER

TESTED BY JAMES COUPE

Everyone knows that BASIC runs very slowly. After all, each time the computer reaches a line it has to turn it into the machine code, so it can't do it any faster. However, all Wacci members are thinking what would happen if we turned it into the machine code first. Then the computer wouldn't have to compile it each time so everything would run faster. If only someone would write a program that did that. Well, they have.

THE BASIC THEORY

Basic compilers, that's the thing. What they do is take your slow moving BASIC and turn them into hugely fast running machine code. That's the theory anyway.

All the members of Wacci are now sitting thinking "Well, if it's that easy why don't we do this with all of the programs that are available?" Theoretically we could. After all, you could just compile your program and then it would run faster. Things are never that easy.

If you've ever seen a machine code program to print a string to the screen then you'll know that it's longer than BASIC's PRINT "Hello". You're talking around 10 to 20 bytes of memory for the program and then the length of the string as well. Basic does it in a lot less by using tokens which it compiles so it has a special code which represents the line numbers, the PRINT command and all of the other commands. Printing "Hello" would take up a lot less memory (10 bytes or so).

So compiled BASIC takes up more memory. Okay, says you, I can live with that. Fine, I reply, but give me a program to draw a circle.

Every BASIC programmer on the planet would reply with something involving SIN and COS (except BBC programmers who would use a very convoluted PLOT command, and Speccy owners who'd just use CIRCLE). What would you do if I told you that you couldn't use SIN and COS? What if I told you that you couldn't use fractions? Full stop. Most people would run away screaming very loudly <<We would? -Philip>>

SCREAM, SCREAM, SCREAM

This is the problem with machine code. It doesn't handle fractions at all well. What you can do, though, is shift all of your numbers up by a multiple of 10 then. Don't multiply 2.5 by 4.0 to give you 10, multiply 25 by 40 to give you 1000 and remember to mentally (or even in the program) put a decimal point in the right place.

Circles? Easy, don't use SIN and COS use basic Pythag <<The squid on the Hippopotamus is equal to the sum of the squids on the other two hides I think -Philip>>. Work in from one side of the circle pixel by pixel and, because the radius is the hypotenuse and the bottom side of the triangle is the difference between the x co-ordinate and centre of the circle you can work out the upright side of the triangle. Add this to the y co-ordinate of the centre of the circle and you have the x and y co-ordinates to draw to. Easy! <<I've just worked this out and, to my utter surprise, I find that it works -Philip>>

MATHS LESSON OVER YET JAMES?

Still, enough of the problems. Why am I telling you all this? Well, I have managed to get my hands on three BASIC compilers and I'm going to see if they're all they're cracked up to be. I'll run some programs through them all and report back to you with the results.

Some of the things you might want to do are repetitive maths things (adding repeatedly and the like), drawing lots of graphics and sorting. These should give us a good enough idea-of how the BASIC compilers perform.

THE BENCH TEST PROGRAMS

The programs are shown below. The only thing I haven't done is include the various bits and pieces about working out how long it takes (ie t=TIME...PRINT (TIME-t)/300) because the compilers don't all accept that as a valid instruction (told you everything wasn't perfect with them).

```
10 REM Bubble Sort Program
20 RANDOMIZE TIME:DIM number(100)
25 MODE 2
30 FOR random=1 TO 100
40 number(random)=INT(RND*1000)+1
50 NEXT
60 FOR a=1 TO 100:PRINT number(a);:NEXT
70 FOR outer=1 TO 100
80 FOR inner=1 TO 100-outer
90 IF number(inner)>number(inner+1)
    THEN store=number(inner+1):
    number(inner+1)=number(inner):
    number(inner)=store
100 NEXT:PRINT outer:NEXT:PRINT:PRINT
110 FOR a=1 TO 100:PRINT number(a);:
    NEXT
```

```
10 REM Repetitive Maths
20 MODE 2:a=2:b=3:c=5:d=9:e=1
30 FOR x=1 TO 100
40 e=e+2*(a+b+c+d):PRINT e:NEXT
```

```
10 REM Graphics Program
20 MODE 1
30 INK 3,6:INK 2,22
40 PLOT -10,-10,3
50 FOR a=0 TO 640 STEP 2
60 MOVE a,0:DRAW a,400:NEXT
70 PLOT -10,-10,2
80 FOR a=0 TO 400 STEP 4
90 MOVE 0,a:DRAW 640,a:NEXT
100 INK 1,14:PLOT -10,-10,1
110 FOR a=0 TO 640 STEP 4
120 MOVE a,0:DRAW a,400:NEXT
```

A VERY SURPRISED MR COUPE

Welcome to what should be part two of this little trip around BASIC compilers. I say should because we all know what Philip's like. Oh well,

whatever part this is this month I'm having a look at BC.COM. <<It is part two, in a way, part two of the first part of a two part series, both parts on two parts. If you get me -Philip>>

Those of you who used to read AA (around issue 80) might remember a lot of hoo-hah that blew up because they put BC.COM in an article about the best programs in the public domain. At the time, it was in the public domain, ie, you could get it from PD libraries. However, you shouldn't have been able to get it from them because it is actually a commercial package. Trying to get hold of it would be difficult. Philip was trying to get it legally entered into the public domain, but I don't know what happened there.

THE OVERVIEW

The program itself is a German program and is quite old. The instructions that I got with my copy are only a summary of the instructions because the originals are in German. Still, this doesn't matter because you don't really need any instructions except for the command to compile the program.

As far as commands which aren't supported go you can't use most of the obvious commands for use in developing programs. These are: AUTO, CHAIN, CHAIN MERGE, CONT, DELETE, EDIT, LIST, LOAD (BASIC program), MERGE, RENUM, RESUME NEXT, SAVE (BASIC program), TROFF, TRON

You can use commands like FILL but the program won't work if you then try to run it on a 464 (it should work on a 464 Plus but don't quote me on that one - however, the Plus machines have Basic 1.1 so should be able to do it).

FOR BETTER FOR WORST

The program says that it works a lot better if you set all the variables to being integers. I personally don't like to do this because I always think that a variable name $x\%$ looks messy and that using DEFINT a-z restricts you (and I'd always forget to refer to any floating point variables as $x!$).

Yes, you did read that correctly. This is the only BASIC compiler that will allow you to use floating point numbers. It does seem to have a limited accuracy (about two decimal places, it seems) but it should be

okay enough for doing things like circles. <<It's quite accurate enough for most uses -Philip>>

The more astute of you out there might have noticed that the name of the program is BC.COM. This, unfortunately, means that you have to use CP/M. It seems strange that you have to use CP/M to compile a BASIC program but, hey, it works. All you have to do is boot up CP/M and have the two programs BC.COM and your file on the same disc. A simple

BC filename

will compile the program. You can use the switches /L and /E if you want the program to not refer to line numbers or have no interrupts in it. The point of line numbers is that if an error occurs in the middle of the running of the program the program tells you where the error is.

OUT OF THE OTHER END

Your file should be saved as a normal BASIC file, ie, with SAVE"filename". You do not need to save it in a pure ASCII form or protected mode or anything like that.

Now, let's have a look at how the programs perform when compiled and uncompiled.

THE BENCHTEST

First of all, all timings are for the ENTIRE program which stands as written in the first article <<Read the first part of this article -Philip>> except for one or two annotations for getting the time.

The first program, the bubble sort, takes 63.783 seconds to run through when it hasn't been compiled. When passed through BC.COM it takes only 29.43 seconds to run. However, as I said, BC.COM recommends that you use

only integer variables. This I did and, when uncompiled, the program took 46.703 seconds. When compiled the integer bubble sort only took 8.873 seconds. Some quite fantastic time savings there.

The repetitive, but simple, maths program takes 3.703 seconds to run when uncompiled and takes 3.56 seconds to run when compiled. When it was set up to be specifically integers it took 3.536 second to run uncompiled but only 1.946 seconds to run when compiled. Some pretty big savings there also.

The graphics program (yes, I know how tasteless the colours are) takes 10.813 seconds to run uncompiled and 9.63 seconds to run when compiled. When done using integer functions it takes 10.076 seconds to run when uncompiled and only 8.773 seconds when uncompiled.

THE HALFTIME RESULT

BC.COM would probably be best suited to someone who wanted to write a database or a spreadsheet program since the functions there are considerably speeded up, but graphics functions aren't really.

The only real problem I faced with BC.COM was when I threw a program at it which involves the OPENIN and LINE INPUT #9 commands. Here, it compiled fine but didn't run properly because it gave a File Error when run. A pity, because the program (one of my own devising which checks 56 lottery lines), is a little slow.

So, BC.COM is ideal because you don't have to restructure your program or get rid of any special commands but the speed increases are only noticeable in heavily maths based programs and also if you have programs which print a lot of text to the screen (as several of mine did). Next month, another BASIC compiler.

I know this is an odd place to be reading this little bit, but I've had a request from Frank just before I sent WACCI off the the printers and this was the only place I could fit it, so here goes.

When you send letters to Fair Comment (via Frank), could you send them on a disc if possible. Unlike a certian WACCI Editor, Frank returns discs every time and very quickly as well. It doesn't seem overly fair to send long letters to Frank (although he doesn't really mind typing them all out). So, please, send a disc if possible (but don't stop writing if you can't).



You are in the hands of

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MARKET STALL

I have made a tentative booking for the 1997 Convention at Bescot for **SUNDAY 6th JULY** please let me know if anyone has a problem with that date.

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Yolk Folk, Kwik Snax & Spellbound. Double Dragon, Elevator Action, Fantasy World Dizzy, Fast Food Dizzy, Flyspy, Gauntlet 2, Gregory Loses his Clock, Grid Iron, Gryzor, Guardian 2, Gunboat, Huxley Pig, Hydrofool, Iball 1 and 2, Imagination, Joe Blade, Joe Blade 2 & 3, Juggernaut, Kentucky Racing, Kokotoni Wilf, Kwik Snax, Magic Maths, Magicland Dizzy, Miami Vice, Mission Genocide, Monte Carlo Casino, Nay Moves Pt 1 & 2, Nemesis, Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix, Ninja Commando, Nonterragueous, Oink, One Man & his Droid, Paperboy, Popeye, Postman Pat, Postman Pat 2, Power Plays comp includes Amstrad Shuffle, Barrier Reef, Corridor Conflict, Freedom Fighter, Nakamoto, Time Lord & Wrath of Olympus, Pro Tennis Sim, Psycho City, Punch & Judy, R-Type, Red Heat, Renegade, Rex, Road Runner, Rock star ate my hamster, Roland in the Caves, Ruff & Reddy, Salamander, Scooby Doo, Seymour goes to Hollywood, Seymour Saves the Planet, She Vampires, Soul of a Robot, Space Rider, Spellbound, Spindrone, Spitting Image, Starstrike I & II, Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), Street cred boxing, Strip Poker II, Super Nudge, Target Renegade, The Bounty Hunter, Gold Collection comp, Crystal Castles, Express Raider, Leviathan, Revolution, 10th Frame, Hit Squad, The Official Father Christmas, The Wombles, Through the Trapdoor, Thundercats, Titanic,

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MUSED UPON BY BILL MOHAN

"Grumble, grumble, moan, mutter, whinge...etc. etc. Why does that Philip keep moaning on so? I'm in Wacci for what I can get out of it and I'm sure nobody wants to keep having my ineptitude forced down their throats all the time, do they? I can't compute worth a d... (see Gone With The Wind for missing expletive.) but if 'Le Tigg' is stuck for words, I'll try to rally round."

IS BILL MOHAN INSANE?

I'm no good at all at Computing, in "CAPITAL LETTERS" but I can and do enjoy messing around with graphics and DTP on my Arnold Plus. While messing with Microdesign+, I found that I needed extra fonts in my Icon files so I sat down with an old Mecanorma Instant Lettering Catalogue to see if any of the many fonts in it were reasonably likely to translate into the format we need.

Whilst mooching around the catalogue <<Doing what with the catalogue? What on earth is 'mooching' -Philip>> I came across a familiar typeface, often seen in local hairdressers price lists and actually used as the main typeface outside my local chippy. What drew my attention most was its name, a dead cert for any Amstrad user, "Arnold Bocklin." There was no need to search any further for a victim, I'd just had a Volunteer, hadn't I?

YES HE IS!

Using (O! quiet at the back that boy.) paper and pencil I drew the outline of a couple of the Upper Case letters into a grid the same size as the MD Icon drawing grid and found that a better than fair example resulted.

After a few goes, I found that the paper could happily be discarded as many of the letters could be transcribed very easily onto the Icon Grid. This process is helped enormously by the real size copy of the Icon that naively displays at the same time as its pixels are being drawn into the design grid, making it simple to watch the curves etc. develop as they're drawn.

Some letters are repeated and then altered versions of others, so it is very simple to make M from N and I from J, thus after my first attempts took an evening to create, it then only took a week for me to realise that the lower case font was out of proportion to the upper case. I sat down for a couple of hours and quickly modified it to the right proportions.

SO WHAT ELSE

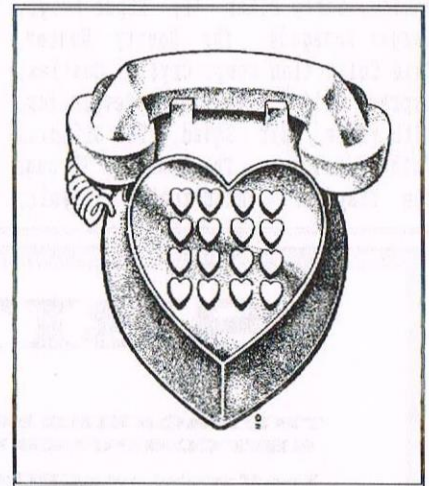
I intend to do some more font files from the book, next I'm planning to produce typefaces based on a font called Commercial Script and one called Fidelio. Another font I'd like to do is called American Uncial, that looks like it is adapted from an old Celtic alphabet. (Of course it will turn out not to be, but I still like it). Any suggestions (no, stop, listen I mean for Font Icons you daft ap'orth and you can pack that in too, missus!) send them to me if you cannot work out how to do it, I'll see if I can.

Any font Icon Files I do can go into the club library as PD, if that is how it's done, so Philip, the one you have now belongs to any one who wants it. It will go well on posters etc. for the School Fete and the like. Perhaps Philip will be able to use his replacement Multiface to do a screengrab to illustrate the Icon designer in action.



I'm told that you can produce lettering using the Advanced Art Studio, but at present I'm not that far into AAS that I'd be confident trying, but the MD system seems pretty good to me. I do not know anything about the rights of the typeface designer for copyright purposes but I'm confident that one of us will know enough to keep us out of real trouble. Any info, folks?

The Icon designer allows quite accurate curvy lines to be produced, with grids of sixteen or twenty-four pixels so that quite complex letter shapes are a viable proposition. Suck it and see is my motto when trying these things out (or on...)



Just to prove or disprove the above I'm about to stoke up the boiler under MD+ to try out another font from my catalogue, only one letter mind, Tigger isn't the only person around here working to deadlines. It's Saturday afternoon here and I'm due at work in an hour and a quarter!

BEFORE THE DEADLINE

Using the Icon editor is quite simple but I realise that some of you will have had no reason to try, so I'll give you a short run-through.

In any menu of Microdesign Plus you can use the "X" keypress to take you to the Main Control Menu. This will give you access to the Icons Edit page. The Icons will be loaded and sit at the bottom of the screen in alphabetical order. This is important so that when using the Alpha-numeric typing mode any letter key pressed will deliver the writing in the proper order.

EDITING ICONS

Select by using the enter key which will allow you to move around the Icon boxes to choose the letter either to edit or replace with one of your own. Before doing any editing it is a good idea to remove your MD disc and put in one to use as a work disc. This will stop any nasty accidents giving you a fright at a later date.

Incidentally, did you realise that you can make MD boot-up with sensible letter icons every time if you load an icon set you like and the save it back to your disc as BOOT.IC. The present Boot.IC file gets renamed Boot.Bak and sits around waiting for you to want it back by renaming it as summat else. To save it back just press SAVE.123 on the filing menu. I like to boot-up with "Times" when I start.

BACK ON TRACK

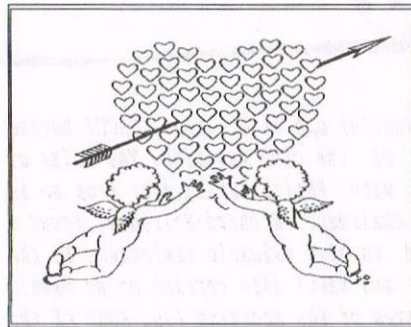
The Icon editing box just has an empty grid except for a small cursor in the bottom left corner. Pressing the space bar when you've put the cursor where you want it will fill in one pixel at a time, so that you can either hold down the space bar or go for the slower Precision approach as the cursor is moved. If a pixel is wrongly filled in, it is simple to use the f2 key to go over it and change its colour to white and then push f1 to go back-to-black.

A LITTLE BIT OF PLAYING

It is great fun, as well as educational, to use the f4, f5 and f6 keys to swap the colour and direction of the icons and to change them over to mirror image too.

The Editing grid is normally set on the Upper case line and uses the 16 by 16 square grid to draw the letters. Sadly the smaller size grid cannot be swapped for the 24 by 24 grid if it is to be entered on the top line, this

makes drawing some of the more complicated letter shapes more difficult. Any capitals thus drawn must be stored on the lower icon line and care taken if used Alpha-numericly to ensure that the image needed is used properly!



Using the Size or Reposition Keys must be done with care as any pixels dropped off the edge of the image are lost and gone. When you are happy with the image you've reproduced move around the icon strips until you reach your chosen spot to save it to and press the KEEP option and the usual f0 key to make it happen, as in any other Microdesign Menu.

OUTRODUCTION

The Icon Editing set is very versatile, I've used three icon blocks to write a pretty good facsimile of my own signature and designed several useful letterheads for members of my family too!

I hope Phillip can make up the odd screen-shot for this so you can see more clearly (YES... GOT HIM!... just splatted a mosquito that thought it was supper time..) what I have been referring to.

Sorry about the murder you've all just witnessed but he had been worrying me for some time and it had to be him or me.. Please try out the Icon Editor, it really is great fun. You could "AMAZE YOUR FRIENDS". Go on, the world's your lobster (or was that Sea Urchin?) and it's all in the best possible taste.

<<Hey, Bill, sorry it took so long to print this, but I got there in the end didn't I? Any chance of seeing any other typefaces you've done? Any chance of another article? Any chance of a ouch! Oy Bill, I'm not a mosquito you know -Philip>>

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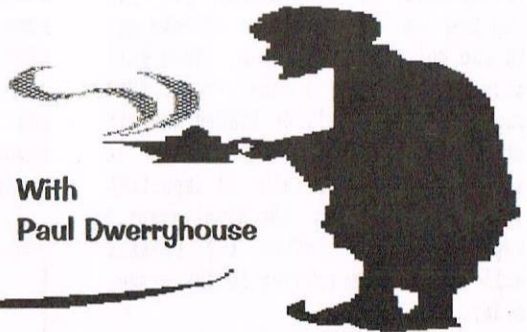
Merline-Serve is a non-profit making service run by CPC enthusiasts, for CPC enthusiasts. We supply software and hardware no longer available from the commercial software houses and publishing companies. We stock many books, magazines, fanzines, ROMs, hardware, software (both games and utilities) on disc, tape and cartridge. Our items are in good working order, or your money back. We will consider swaps, part exchanges and purchases ourselves. If you can't get hold of a CPC item, then try us, because we have probably got what you want, can get hold of it or know someone who can.

We also run *King Arthur's Domain*, a disc based PD library containing over 200 discs. For a catalogue, send a disc (3" or 3.5") and an S.S.A.E. to the address above. *Merline-Serve* is now offering a standard 10% discount to all WACCI members. To get our latest catalogue, simply send an A5 S.S.A.E to the address above, and we'll get one on it's way.

BLAST 96

A Look At The  of WACCI

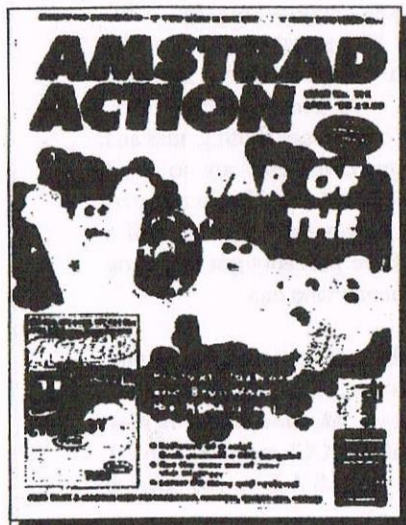
With
Paul Dwerryhouse



So that was the year that was. And pretty eventful one it was too. WACCI became 10 years old and produced its 100th edition of the club magazine. The roles of the lead members of the club swapped round with Philip taking over from me as Chief Big Ed and John stepping up to be Chairman. Richard Fairhurst found a worthwhile job (at last) and Frank continued to give valuable assistance to the new FC Ed. Ernie adopted the Wish List tag and WACCI life carried on as usual. Let's have a look at club life through the eyes of the magazine (and some of the unpublished Convention piccies.)

JANUARY 1996 #96

The January edition of WACCI blew in with me wishing you all a happy new year and making a new years resolution for you. This edition carried the letter from Angela Cook referring to Handcuffs and the fact that they were great. Odd we all thought. Alan Tilling was still VBBing, a magazine got a review as did a printer. Angela and Philip chatted away about BTL (*yawn*) and the good old Bankman reared his ugly head once more in the pages of WACCI. Angela (ITGA) Cook (*now you know why she's called that*) started a new series called The Angela Cook Interview. Actually that was my name for the series, she wanted to call it something like Interview by a Vampire. An odd name I thought.



Ray Neal reviewed Brunword and Philip had to admit in his footnote that

Brunword appeared to be a very capable WP. Ray sent him two booklets to prove his point, an index for Amstrad Action and the Amstrad Computer User (*remember them?*) and Philip said that as well as being quite an advert for Brunword, they were something he had been after for some time. What he didn't say was that the booklets were just the right thickness to stop his table from rocking. Dave Stitson gave us a cautionary tale on disc drives and the magazine was rounded off by Bill Mohan reviewing DESTEXT by the famous Richard Wildey.

FEBRUARY 96 #97

This month saw the announcement that Siren Software were leaving the CPC scene and Stamper retired as Discounts manager. A letter from Roy Everett appeared in FC that did so incense members. Roy thought he could get away with it but time proved him wrong.

Alan T was again VBBing and not only writing to WACCI readers but also to disc. PD Disc 61 got a going over (*fisty cuffs*) from Mark Johnson. ITGA interviewed Philip Dir and wrote a very sensible article about Philip. Very odd that I thought.

Nic Rayer told us how to install the CPC Emulator on a Plastic Computer, yes an article on a PC related subject in WACCI. Angela raved(?) about ergonomics when using a CPC. Not all that odd an article. Stella Outpost got a good review from Philip and Robin Tanner showed us how to marry MicroDesign and Parados in perfect

harmony. A marriage made in heaven, just for ROM 7.

Angela Cook wrote a little ditty about a day in the life of Amstrad Action with a visit to their head shed in Bath. She likened AA to a Porsche, too fast and you can't afford it. An odd summary I thought because they are the most ugliest of cars ever made.

MARCH 96 #98

This month saw the last ever VBB from Alan Tilling. Alan wrote to FC explaining why he had come to this decision. It appears he needed the time to embark on a course of study. Well, having given many WACCI members a course of study in BASIC over the years it seemed a fitting reason. We thanked Alan and still miss him.



Jeff Walker and Steve Williams

Graham Denyer was splendid in his Year 2000 article and how that date could effect computers. It appears that some serious problems are just around the corner in mainstream computing. Of course, Alan Sugar, all those years ago, ensured that the CPC would suffer no such problems. The dumb thing doesn't know what a date is.

Hugh Keir wrote the alternative Convention Report and gave me the chance to place on the page the cartoon characterisation of Philip DiR. The source of the cartoon, well

oddly enough, just ask ITGA to take a big big bow.

A new type-in series started by Clive Jackson. It required members to submit programs to Clive for publication. How long did you think it would last? Bill Mohan sped into action to show us how to put an ABBA switch on a PLUS thingy. ITGA interviewed John Bowley with odd questions like "What star are you?"

Bob Moffatt was back with another Experience for us to enjoy. This time it was DIY and how to make good use of a beermat in your projects. Finally, Clive Jackson started a mini series on sorting and searching with the help of a pack of cards.



Clive Bellaby chats to Doug Webb

APRIL 96 #99

The price of your monthly dose of WACCI went up to £2.00 this month but no one complained. Wizzard Games bit the dust, sad as they had been a good reliable supplier up until then. Goldmark Systems also left the CPC world this month.

The type-in series by Clive Jackson continued with two contributions from members. A sound start for the series? Clive also contributed an article about DLAN by Campbell System, now in the public domain. James Coupe explained the results of the questionnaire, which made interesting reading. James then reviewed Masters of Space. I think he liked it.

Angela Cook interviewed Ron Izett, the unsung hero of page layouts. She dropped the odd questions this month and actually used some decent ones. We also managed to squeeze in one of Rons drawing masterpieces to accompany his interview. That eccentric but very good CP/M PD word processor ZDE got a look at thanks to Ron Boreham and Clive Jackson ended the magazine off

with the final in the Searching and Sorting series.

MAY 96 #100

Our big day arrived and I was as pleased as punch to post out this edition. You don't get to many milestones in life and 100 certainly is one. The next will issue 150 but that's a long way off yet! We also posted out issue three with 100 so that a complete set of the magazine from one the one hundred was available. It only took 10 years to achieve! Oops, two screamers in one paragraph.

Comsoft's Mark Two Rombox was out for review by Philip and Master John. It also was the prize on offer for that months Competition at the amazing value of £240. Surely the biggest and best prize ever. Our thanks go to Peter Campbell and Paul Collins for that grand gesture to the club.

David Crookes weighed in with an article about the club and he described WACCI as "a love, a rock, a sense of security, a sort of monthly drug which has driven perfectly sane people crazy." He might even be right, just look at Philip. Clive Jackson had another type-in for us but this proved to be the last for this column. Thanks for trying Clive.


Ian Neill started his guide to EPROM's on the CPC, a very techy subject, and Richard Narain reviewed Model Universe, the 3D wire frame software from long gone Arnor but still available from Comsoft. Ian Parker disclosed how to use EPIC, the enhanced printer control program for the Protext ROM. Many questions had been asked about EPIC in the past and at last we had the definitive article to answer them.

Angela interviewed Jeff Walker, the founder of WACCI, and oddly enough

**THE UK'S ONLY SERIOUS CPC MAGAZINE
AND PREMIER CPC CLUB**

ISSUE 100	£2.00
MAY	1996

WACCI



**We're still hanging
around and looking
forward to the next 100!**

this was an excellent piece of work. So many questions answered. Peter Ceresole once more entertained us in the pages of WACCI and he rounded his article off by saying "[WACCI] looks exactly like the back numbers in my collection. Just like coming home." Do you think Frank Skinner reads WACCI? Footballs coming home...

The centennial issue of WACCI was rounded off by Bob Moffatt with Desert Island discs. And he didn't get Angela Cook to interview him, how odd.



Those WACCI editors

JUNE 96 #101

This issue has fond memories for me as it was the last one I edited. It took a couple of months to come down back to earth as I kept thinking that I must have something to do, some time limit was ticking away, but I'm happily adjusted now. Out of the four retired editors of WACCI I am a little unique as I actually still contribute to the running of the club and the production of the magazine. I don't appear to be able to live without it. I did, of course, find something to do with my new found time, I've started lecturing in AutoCAD (PC CAD software) at the local college on a part time basis. It's fun and I get paid as well but enough of me.

It was in this issue that Brian Watson referred to Richard Fairhurst as Bunny Fairhurst, a tag that was to stick and stick well. Clive Jackson attempted to get another BASIC series going by asking members what they wanted. We never heard any more so I



Richard Bowley

guess members didn't want. Thanks again anyway Clive.

Peter Rogerson discussed Spekchuckers and Tiger looked deeply at the Wizzard Printer Port. Angela Cook interviewed me this month and asked one very odd question. Did I have a hobby! Gosh where has that girl been the last couple of years.

Peter Rogerson was back again extolling the virtues of the Proclip programme by Richard Narain and I put a gardening article in WACCI to see what reaction it got. Err... I think I can safely say that it didn't even produce a ripple on the WACCI pond.

Mark Johnson gave PD disc 118 a going over whilst eating an Easter Egg. The depths members go to just to get their name in print. Ian Neill continued the EPROM saga and Angela Cook reviewed the PD game Street Warriors in a baseball cap. Was it the right way round Angela? And finally there was the first showing of the graphics by Jonty Jones in Comic Cuts, a sign of things to come.

JULY 96 #102

Philip picked up the reins from me and I know that many members were relieved and pleased to see Philip taking over the role and making such a good job of it. Whilst the job of editor is a heavy load, Philip is a match for it. I certainly would not have handed over the reins if I felt any differently.

The letters pages brought out the amazing fact that the CPC is already in a museum. The Royal Museum of Scotland in fact. Perhaps we should send a copy of WACCI to keep it company. Also in a historic mood was John Hudson, telling the story of our

beloved CPC, the big idiot. Dave Stitson began a mini series on the Bonzo suite of programs and Ian Neill was still having an affair with his deeply sexy EPROM's.

Richard "Bunny" Fairhurst patted himself on the back for BTL whilst criticising parts of WACCI. Having met Richard and formed the opinion that he is a very affable chap, very affable indeed, as are the rest of the Bunnymen, I found it difficult to come to terms with the content of BTL. But then that's just me. Or is it?

From one techy man to another, Paul Collins this time, who divulged to us how to add a switch to the big idiot to allow the use of both PARADOS and AMSDOS. Above my head for sure but I know many members enjoy these articles. Another in-depth article followed by Ron Boreham on the wonderful Discology. This was one I could easily follow being a user myself. Ron produced an excellent effort, the definitive Discology article in fact.

No beer mats Included (*lovely title*) by Ian Anderson, explained how to change kitchen worktops into a desk. It made me feel very shameful for buying my desks and my kitchen for that matter. Angela interviewed Mike Lyons this month. It was always a joy to read Mike's output but why did Angela call him a past WACCI officer? Odd or what.



John Bowley cuts the birthday cake at the Bescott Bash.

AUGUST 96 #103

This month saw poor old Tiger struggle with Thanx & Stuff. No news and a page to fill. He mentioned the fact in the page header and that I had warned him of such days. What he should of done was to invent no news. You know the sort of thing I mean - no, well I'll tell you by way of an example. Some time ago a newspaper had no big news for the front page. The paper was sold by men on street corners shouting "evening standard" (*but it never sounded like that*) to the passing public. They used advertising plaques and this day they said "The Pope - No news" and what happened - they sold loads because people thought the Pope was ill or had befallen some disaster. In fact there was no news of the Pope within the paper. Neat eh. So there you are Philip, the answer to your problem.



Tigger and the Bunnymen

Philip's lead article was called Basic Instinct. I thought that was a naughty film but there you go. The article was about Instinct and it concluded with a warning about not getting a WACCI next month. What was going on?

The next two pages saw Richard Narain talking about printer ports and Christine Raisin describing a Ghoul Writer. Not all that sure what a Ghoul Writer is except to say that it apparently allows you to send messages on a disc, to your friends etc., using a text editor that doesn't word wrap. Sounds like the futures bright, the futures no wrap.

Dave Stitson continued his series on those two hip cats, Bonzo and Blitz. Ian Neill completed the excellent EPROM series and I appeared with some membership statistics. The brains of Devon (*Dave Stitson*) reviewed The



Those three wise WACCI men - Bob Houston, Mr X (*sorry*) and Norman Davies

Times Computer Crosswords available from Comsoft. I couldn't get the clue on the screen shot. Champion golfers casual request to caddie? (3,3,4) How about ONE OUT IRON?

Tiger then read the riot act to members stating no articles no WACCI. Can he talk to members like that, I mean he didn't even say please. Would there be another WACCI. Did you withstand the suspense?

John Hudson told us about our Early Morning Starts and Sam (*who?*) informed the readership how to get rich quick selling your CPC stuff. Angela Cook interviewed Steve Williams this month. A very riveting read but I just don't believe him at all about the great WACCI crash. Still let's let bygones be bygones. It was good to see him back in the pages of WACCI.

SEPTEMBER 96 #104

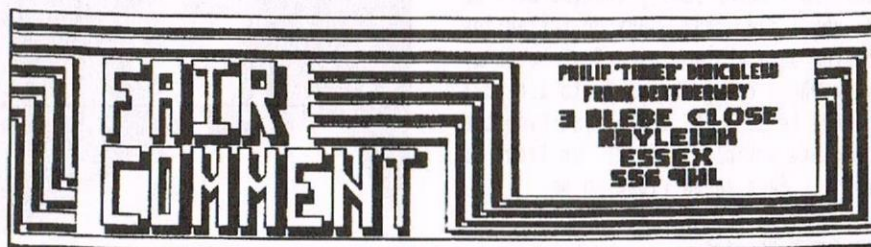
This month saw Richard Wildey have a go at me for knocking BTL. Well they can sure give it out but take it - forget it. Writing that letter meant that they were sure walking round with sore heads. To cap it all, Philip

thought that it was the best letter he had ever received. What a sad bunch.

Rafael from Spain asked about the Microsoft Windows program from issue #42. Of course, it was a April fool that I wrote and one that Steve Williams gave marvellous credibility to. Why should Rafael be taken it by all these years later? Well a quick look at the WACCI Supplement Edition Five, page 29 has the mickey take down as a review. Perhaps next time Frank you could place it in another category.

The next article saw Brian Watson launch his millennium project on an unsuspecting WACCI membership. This really sounded something special, I hope Brian gets it going. It also showed how many folks don't read every bit of WACCI. Why did I get a postcard they asked?

Martin Bela presented his 32 bit IO port - 32 bit, I thought only Windows 95 was a 32 bit operating system. Gosh, how clever Martin must be - the Bill Gates of WACCI. Brunword was back again with Ray Neal and John Hudson told us how he kept his chocolate



Those WACCI headers that did so get Philip into trouble with members

biscuits in an air tight container. Dave Stitson was talking about his Bonzos Big Jobs and ITGA gave very good reasons why we should attend the second convention. Martin Cush presented us with the joys of Protracker and Tetris got a Wish List review (and a fan.)

Family history appeared back in WACCI thanks to Andrew Solomon and his marvellous database. Frank Neatherway gave it a good going over and it passed with flying colours. Last out this month was an unknown star reviewer for Wish List Ernie. It was CPC South West in the spotlight.

OCTOBER 96 #105

This month brought our tenth birthday and the second WACCI Convention had just been held. In the magazine John Hudson completed his understanding of the CPC by looking at peripherals. Philip reviewed Donutmag, which he found apply named. Martin Bela finished his 32 bit port series and showed us how to use that little used Basic command WAIT. Apparently it causes the CPC to wait for something to happen.

Somebody called Just Kevin brought the unsuspecting readership an article about 'phoning Philip. I bet you thought that was bizarre. It didn't really surprise me as a mailing label with the name Just Kevin gets stuck on an envelope each month. An excellent overview of CP/M appeared from CP/M guru John Hudson and Jonty Jones began a long awaited MicroDesign series. The Adventure Probe got a Wish List review and it would appear very good provided you like adventures of course. Ernie Ruddick encouraged members to write for Queen and Country and WACCI.

Clive Bellaby was interviewed by Angela, shame he didn't tell all the story. He did reckon that I laid pages out wrongly by normally starting an article on the left hand page. Funny that as I never really thought hard as to why I did that. But on reflection if you have a two page feature then, with WACCI being designed to lie flat on the table, it means you have the complete article laid out in front of you. It just seems right to me.

NOVEMBER 96 #106

This month saw Philip resign as FC Editor and Richard Fairhurst take over

from him. I bet that shocked a few members. It is always good to get new blood into the pages of WACCI and we shall wait and see what Richard brings to the role. He started well.

BTL 3 was reviewed by Philip. Why didn't he ask me to do it? I would have loved that job. Philip liked it, of course. Well what else could he say with the BTL editor as his FC editor. The MicroDesign class was still running and a little known WP called Pyaward, which satisfies the needs of Ray Powell, got a review. The CP/M spreadsheet, Supercalc was reviewed, Tappers appeared for the first time giving you useful Basic routines. The Market Stall this month carried an article by Angie giving you the low down on the run up to the Convention and I did the Convention report this year. Anthony Jordon produced the definitive Xexor article and ??? decided that Doctor Who has a hand in the production of WACCI. November was rounded off by ITGA interviewing Dave Stitson, our man from Mutley.

A new figure appeared on the Thanx and Stuff logo. It was supposed to be Clare. I'll leave it up to you how good you think the artwork was!



The new T&S logo



The real Clare

DECEMBER 96 #107

The last issue of the year and Philip produced an art and design special. A nice touch, why didn't I think of that whilst I was in control. Oh well, you can't be good at everything. Gpaint, MicroDesign, Pagesetter 64 Gpaint, MicroDesign, Pagesetter 64, Advanced Art Studio, Powerpage 128 and Pagepublisher all got a covering.

The remaining articles were related to the same subject. The different ways to control an art package, the 8 Bit printer port, graphic characters from Protext, Character sets for DTP. Finally ITGA interviewed Jonty Jones, WACCI's new graphic designer.

ROUND UP

Regulars, like the Competition Spot and the Market Stall went from strength to strength. The most regular winners of competitions were Colin Hazell, Bob Houston (again), David Hall and Frank Smart. All in all 16 members picked up prizes. The Market Stall carried 51 wanted adverts and 56 sales. I'm not going to count the number of items for sale as I'd be here for a month of Sundays.

The headers in the magazine, on the other hand, did not go from strength to strength but quite the opposite and Philip got some stick for that. Most of the front cover pictures were produced by me, all except two. The best, in my opinion, was November 96 #106. You know the one. It had five editors in a trolley.

The back page, did that change? Well actually it did, as Peter acquired an Email address during the year. How about sending me your product list Peter so we can update the back page?

AND FINALLY...

So as another 384 pages of WACCI slipped gracefully by, I pondered what the year ahead would bring. Would Philip get the magazine out on time at least once. Would Richard Fairhurst upset anyone in FC. Would the headers take a turn for the better. Could England win a cricket match. Would Clive Jackson ever get a Basic series going. Would ITGA run out of members to interview. So many questions. We will have to sit back and await the answers during the coming year.

Take care all,

Paul.

IT'S THAT GIRL AGAIN

BRIAN WATSON



Brian Watson, the man who has unlimited energy, hundreds of feathers in his various caps and a lovely wife who's a brilliant cook. Who else to disturb then over the Yuletide period?

INTRO PROPER

Brian is a lovely man. I've had the pleasure of meeting him and his family on several occasions. The first time I witnessed Brian in his own home (which is lovely too, by the way, and like a Tardis sizewise) I decided he was totally and utterly mad - completely bonkers. But then so am I which is probably why I like him. I don't think much more needs to be said, because Brian says most of it himself in the following pages. I will just add that Rob Scott described Brian as "sublime" and who am I to quarrel?

WACCI) What prompted you to start 8BIT and have you achieved any of the objectives you set out at the beginning?

Brian) In May 1994, as a very satisfied user of a couple of CPCs for business and domestic purposes and games, I had noticed that all the news-stand Spectrum magazines had already gone and Amstrad Action and Commodore Format (for the C64/128) were still there but shrinking fast. That they were on the way out seemed obvious and inevitable.

I suppose partly from a selfish point of view, I wanted to do whatever I could to ensure continuing support for my CPC computers. Incidentally, I am STILL unpersuaded that I need to 'upgrade'. It seemed to me then that there was an opportunity for a cross-format magazine covering CPCs and the other computers from the same generation. I found that there were many features common to two or more of the 8-bit computers (3 inch discs, some games available in versions for several different computers, CP/M, etc.). As someone who is a

professional writer with business experience too I thought I could probably do a satisfactory job in an economically viable way. At least, I was as likely as anyone to make a success, if it were possible at all.

Further research showed that PCW Plus was still going at that time and WACCI and UAUG were serving CPC enthusiasts well, so there was a network through which to contact users of the principal 8-bit computers. I was confident that a bit of research could also put me in touch with whichever Spectrum organisations existed. I was aware the clock was ticking and had better get on with it before the 8-bit network collapsed. Incidentally, by making a graph in mid 1995 of the pattern of reducing page numbers which had preceded the closing of AA and CF, I predicted PCW Plus would close at the end of 1996. Who's a smarty pants, then?

It has been the intention of 8BIT to complement, rather than seek to challenge or replace, existing computer-specific publications. I have always tried to point my readers in the direction of other magazines and groups which are SPECIALISTS on their computers. I have probably lost a few subscribers that way too. In return, 8BIT has been treated fairly by other publications and computer specific organisations, who seem to understand what it's aiming to do.

Incidentally, on the subject of "is what I do in the computing world for philanthropy or profit?", the only frequently asked question you haven't included here, it's both in about equal measure. In my work for the amateur or semi-professional stage, I would not consider staging a production without a strong

probability of it more than covering its costs, but nor would I put on a play or show PRIMARILY for the potential profit. And I do not ALWAYS include a fee for me.

I started 8BIT, got involved in the rescues of Protext etc., and relaunched the IEBA because I felt there was a real and worthwhile need for doing all of them, but I'm also very happy that the first two are financially successful for me too. I certainly do not feel a moral obligation to run them on a non-profit basis. That is very naive and has been the downfall of many other endeavours by many other people. I would claim that the principal reason that programmers have virtually stopped producing good new software for the CPCs is because there is no profit in it for them, and for many people nothing motivates like cheques. I prefer to work on projects in the areas that I do that contain a balance of motivations.

Initially, I had anticipated that the magazine would be an advertising-centred publication and, in fact, it started with the name '8BIT MART'. As it quickly became apparent that the fast-growing number of subscribers wanted more articles than advertisements, the title became downgraded to '8BIT Mart' (using lower case letters), then it became the current '8BIT'. I expect it will just be called '8' by the turn of the century.

".. have you achieved any of the objectives you set out at the beginning?" Apart from the principles outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the only underpinning objective was to do the job well and keep getting better. As a 'one man band' I am in the fortunate position of being completely unaccountable so can take chances if I believe they are for the best. The feedback soon comes in from

(1) phone calls, (2) letters, (3) single issue orders which are, or are not, turned into subscriptions, and (4) renewals, or not. The subscription list currently stands at about 750 and growing, so I must be doing something right.

W) How did you become the "Honourable Secretary" of the Independent Eight Bit Association and what does the role entail?

B) When I heard in early 1995 (I think) that there was a SAM and Spectrum club called the IEBA which was failing fast, the name seemed too good to lose. The Association itself had hit difficulties when one founder left in a huff (he couldn't afford a taxi, so he had to leave in a huff) and the other founders were just going off to further education. Serve them right, I say.

The 'name and responsibility' for the continuity of the old IEBA were entrusted by the founders to one of the most unreliable members of the SAM community, so I chatted him up and gradually hi-jacked the Association for my own purposes. Apart from the name, there were no other assets to strip, indeed there were some debts, but I denied all knowledge and responsibility and set about relaunching and rebuilding the IEBA into a cross-format organisation to promote the benefits of 8-bit computing. "Honourable" in this sense means unpaid, and I go further than that by paying all the IEBA's Secretarial postage and stationery costs apart from the Directory and Newsletter duplication and distribution costs. As far as I know the other officers pay their own costs too, so are equally Honourable. It is a very frugal organisation.

Time has passed, and the IEBA now has a Spectrum-using Chairperson (Joyce Cook), a CPC-using Treasurer (Gordon Woolliscroft), a PCW- and Spectrum-using Publicity Officer (David Williams who, incidentally, is not a member of the IEBA) and the Directory is compiled by John Walker, who uses LocoScript on his PCW with a skill which is simply superb. I (as Secretary) have a CPC, a PCW, a C64, a Spectrum, and now a PCW16 and a rather awful PC. There are also

representatives of many other computer using communities on the committee. I haven't checked lately but there are about 150 members and more join each week. So out of its despotic and very devious beginnings, for which I accept all blame and responsibility, something very positive and effective has grown and, I might say, blossomed.

As IEBA Secretary, I handle all the 'front line' enquiries and membership applications. The actual cheques are all forwarded to Gordon for banking in the 'IEBA' account so that the process is open and accountable and neither I nor any other officer can be seen to be embezzling or misappropriating IEBA funds at any stage of the process.

W) We haven't heard much from the IEBA, what exactly is it trying to achieve and is it getting there?

B) I hope the job of publicising the IEBA and its activities will be better handled now someone else (David Williams) has taken it on. To date, I have been doing the Publicity job very inadequately myself.

The IEBA exists to promote the benefits of 8-bit computing; it's as simple as that. How it does it NOW is by publishing a Directory of 8-bit Services. All entries in this are free to encourage maximum participation and the Directory is a real goldmine of information. Suppliers and organisations with one specific target audience often do cater for other machines but do not allocate (or have) any advertising budget to tell anyone about it. The Directory is that medium and a real landmark for the IEBA.

I don't have the permission of the Chairperson to speak on behalf of the IEBA, but would like to say ON MY OWN BEHALF that I would hope 1997 would see the establishment of a portable IEBA display module for use at computer fairs and in public places such as libraries and community colleges.

Also, I will be suggesting to the committee that the membership be invited to pay for the display only (for four consecutive weeks) of well designed and printed postcards advertising the Association. These should be sited by participating members in city-centre newsagent windows or other places with a high

throughput of people, achieving a national advertising campaign for a very low cost to the Association. As the once-only joining fee of the IEBA is just £5, I would hope a significant number of members would feel able to respond positively and participate in this campaign to promote their computing.

W) Are 8BIT and the IEBA associated in some way?

B) Only in that, to all intents and purposes, I started BOTH of them and much of the correspondence for both gets printed on the same equipment. The finances of the IEBA are all banked and administered by someone else, whereas I make an enormous amount of money from 8BIT and will shortly be publishing it from the Isle of Man for tax purposes.

W) How did "Protext Software" come around and how healthy is it looking?

B) Due to space constraints and the fact that I tend to witter on given half a chance <<No, not at all-A>>, this will be kept to a very condensed history.

After the old Arnor programs for the CPC and PCW (Protext et al) were bought by the partnership called WACCO when Arnor went bust, Peter Campbell and I set about republishing them all at reduced prices. This was done very successfully during 1995/6. Although the CPC market is now pretty much knackered by piracy and poverty, PCW sales remain good, and revised and updated versions of several programs will be issued in 1997, as will a much-enhanced version of Protext for that very under-rated new computer, the PCW16. I will be stepping up our publicity and marketing efforts to the PCW world in 1997 and keeping the dwindling CPC users informed too.

If anyone can persuade me BY SALES that the CPC world is worth supporting beyond what Peter and I already do, I will be happy to put more effort and, if necessary, money into it. If it were left up to me NO club members would now receive a discount; the sales to WACCI and UAUG members simply do not justify it in any business sense. If anyone on behalf of WACCI wishes to quote back to me the old

glory days of CampurSoft/ComSoft sales to WACCI members as reason for maintaining the discount on products in which I hold an interest, I would reply that I was not a beneficiary of that and am speaking here purely on my own behalf, as requested.

We (as WACCO) sell a lot more WACCO programs through other sources than we do direct to WACCI members. However, as you know Peter Campbell is all heart and warmth whereas I am a stony-hearted devil, so WACCI members are probably secure in their discounts for the foreseeable future.

There has been a (free) Protexit users' club run from WACCO and 8BIT's HQ for six months and I've only had three enquiries from CPC owners about it. Makes you think, doesn't it? Perhaps they are all so good at using it that there is no need for a Club?

In fact, some of the CPC versions of the programs have already been updated, but we've just kept quiet about it lately as it seems impossible to get a review and I do not feel inclined to let any more review copies pass through four pairs of hands without a result, even if it's just to say a WACCO program's crap and a waste of money. At the time of writing (December 20th 1996), the WACCO programs Protexit Office and Montrac are still doing the rounds of WACCI members and are unreviewed at least four months after the release of both.

Enough of the bile and vitriol, back to "Protexit Software". With the CPC and PCW versions of Protexit etc. re-established but predicted to be on a steadily declining curve, I heard that the company who had picked up the rights to distribute the PC, Atari and Amiga versions of Protexit had ceased trading. This company were called COMPO, (absolutely no relation to ComSoft) but might more accurately have been called COMPOST. They had bought up the residual Arnor stock from the liquidator and obtained the rights from the copyright holders of the 16 bit and 32 bit versions of Protexit to sell it. These copyright holders are Mark Tilley and Gavin Every who created most of the Arnor programs. However COMPO then failed to give Mark and Gavin as much as a penny from their sales before closing down.

After discussing it with Peter Campbell, I arranged to meet Mark and

Gavin and offer a four-way equal partnership to relaunch and sell the versions of Protexit which they still own. This was agreed and the resulting partnership is called "Protexit Software". The front-loaded expenses have been high, but we have just released Protexit v6.7 for the PC and the Atari series, and the Amiga version may follow soon. This latest PC/Atari version costs just £50 and includes many substantial new enhancements as well as completely revised and updated documentation contained in two books; a user manual covering the basic instructions and a reference manual covering the Promerge language and other advanced user features.

We have also re-released Prodata, the PC database with the Protexit 'look and feel', at a price of just £20. We have just had a special demonstration version of v6.7 on the cover CD and disc of PC Plus and a WHOLLY revised upgrade may be released in late 1997, depending on sales. Frankly, I am not convinced that we need one, as PC Protexit v6.7 is quite simply brilliant as it stands.

W) With all that you do, how can you possibly fit it all in in the time available?

B) Blowed if I know. Ask my wife what's-her-name if you see her before I do. And you might <<Hi Sheila- A>>.

Seriously, all I do is write plays and magazine features for a living, edit and publish 8BIT, play Hon. Secretary for the IEBA, part-own or publish all the various versions of Protexit etc., sell greeting cards and dodgy lines to the gift trade of London and East Anglia, broadcast as their theatre critic for the BBC locally, chair the local drama society as well as acting, singing, directing, stage managing and spotlight wielding for them and other local similar amateur dramatic groups. I gave up being a trustee of ADEC (the Arts Development in East Cambs quango) over a matter of artistic principal last year and I no longer fence with foil sabre and epee for Essex. I DO still play bass guitar, but only very badly. I have an IQ of 152/3, and therefore am the star of the local Sunday Night Quiz evenings at our local

Conservative Club. <<Ouch! Orphan!>>

W) People think you are pretty fierce when it comes to copyrights. What are your feelings on the matter, both on the CPC and other formats?

B) Right, the background for starters. For about twenty years I have been working as (among other things) a writer of plays and magazine articles. In other words, my writing ability is part of my living; no payment, no eat. As creator, I can choose to either negotiate an outright sale or licence a publisher for a specific limited purpose and retain the copyright for later publishing in another medium. That is my right. So I get very upset INDEED if somebody rips off my work, or a product protected by a copyright which I have bought with my money. Such a purchase by me is a commercial investment and part of my living, just as an outright purchase by a publisher of my work is.

Software piracy is theft of intellectual property copyrights. That means selling or giving away COPIES of programs or documentation which are covered by copyright law, whether the originals were bought new or second hand. If you obtain bootleg copies from any source you are breaching copyright and should destroy or reformat them.

For the record, the CPC and PCW rights to the old Arnor programs are in my name so legally I would be required to act alone in any action. Fortunately I am very rich, well rich enough anyway, and also well covered by appropriate legal insurance.

So if I have good grounds to believe someone is bootlegging programs I own, I will take out an action using the Anton Pillar procedure to empower a duly-appointed agent of the court to enter their home and confiscate all their software, computer equipment and material documents as a preliminary to action in the courts seeking substantial damages and costs for breach of copyright. If you who are reading this have bootleg copies of Arnor/WACCO programs, think about it. Well, do you feel lucky, punk?

The antithesis to this 'bulldog-like' tenacity over copyrights is that I am all for the liberation of old software that no-one is publishing or

supporting any more. I can confirm from other sources that CP/M can now be supplied freely, in fact ONLY freely, as the copyright holders have said so, and many other companies have also declared that they have no further interest in the CPC and other versions of their programs and that they are now Freeware, legally speaking. This means that they can be passed around AND DUPLICATED quite legally as long as no one makes a profit out of the process. It opens the doors to substantially enriched PD libraries.

W) How far ahead are you looking into the CPC commercial market and what plans do you have?

B) What CPC market? WACCO launched a very good wholly new program called Montrac last year and the response was dismal. I have just relaunched the Pipeline Tutorials on behalf of Richard Wildey's Sentinal Software, and will plan any and all my future CPC releases according to the response to their sales and all the other CPC items I am involved with. But I'm no masochist and I've got more in my life than kissing old horsemeat in an effort to revive it.

The new Millennium computer is still very much a runner, for example, but I can say now that it won't be based very closely on CPC technology. What it will incorporate, though, are many of the features requested by WACCI members. Thank you all very much for your responses.

W) It is known that an offer was made to you to buy out 8BIT some time ago. Why did you not accept that and put more energy into the IEBA - is an organisation not more your thing than the constraints of a magazine?

B) Because I'm a money-grubbing capitalist who doesn't make any money out of the IEBA. The fact that I'm also a paid-up member of the Labour Party is just a (not very) red herring and part of that complex contradiction which makes me the intriguing enigma which I undoubtedly am.

If someone offered me the right amount I suppose I might sell, but I actually believe in what 8BIT is achieving and so would be reluctant to

hand it over to someone who can't write, can't spell, and dribbles his rusks. Oops, I hope he doesn't read this ... Oh, who cares, it's Christmas and I've just drunk two bottles of Southern Comfort ... Urgh! <<And what's wrong with Southern Comfort?-Philip>>

W) If that offer was made again, would your answer be the same?

B) Frankly, my dear, you couldn't afford me.

W) How are you promoting the use of eight bit machines, surely 8BIT is no more than a trade magazine?

B) Ah, this must be the gritty question. Therefore, I shall answer it with complete seriousness. I am sensitive to the fact that any magazine, including 8BIT, is open to being (or being ACCUSED of being) just a tame mouthpiece for its advertisers especially if, like 8BIT, it carries information on new releases within its news columns as news items. As editor, I do not require or expect people or companies with a new 8-bit product to publicise it with an advertisement before I will cover the release in the news columns. News is news; advertising is advertising. In 8BIT at least, there is simply no connection and an examination of the current and past issues will confirm this.

Since more than half of the magazine is 'editorial' and some of the advertisements are published on a free reciprocal basis, there is actually not much 'trade' content or bias possible, I hope. I have already said earlier when discussing the magazine's origins that I have moved away from an emphasis on advertising, and 8BIT does not rely on advertising for its profitability. For example, issue 15 will be the first to carry an advertisement specifically for any version of Prottext, my own program. If 8BIT were a trade-biased magazine, I would have featured a large advert for one or more of my own programs in every issue.

The articles tend not to promote one program or another and I try to maintain a balance of computer-specific content so that it is genuinely informative rather than

commercial. However, part of its role is to pass on information and sources of support and I make no apology for naming names in doing that. If it interests a user of one computer in the features of another (as well as selling shiploads of Prottext), I will feel it has done a good job. Damn, I was going to be completely serious, wasn't I?

W) Are you planning any more (drastic?) changes to 8BIT?

B) Changes, yes; drastic, no. Unless you call the inclusion of photographs, colour printing, free exploded-view pop-ups CPC circuit boards, and money-off vouchers for the PcW16 drastic, that is.

W) IEBA, 8BIT, Prottext Software... okay one quick plug and that's it.

B) Oh dear, I didn't know this was going to be an opportunity for an advert; I don't have my copy ready. Suffice to say further information is available from Harrowden, 39, High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, Cambs. CB6 2RA for the price of an A4 SAE. Thank you and goodnight.

TIME JUST FLU

Well, this is going to be short (it's planned to be but knowing me it won't be). Thanks Brian (or Brain as I often say - not because of his mental intellect, but merely because I type to fast and don't check my documents properly) for taking time out over Christmas to do this, and I entirely agree about the relatives.

Next month if I can shift this horrible flu bug that has invaded me I shall be doing a proper interview with Philip rather than the one I did last time. Have hope all flu sufferers everywhere.

<<I know it's most unusual for WACCI to print out a full four pages of interview, but since some of Brians comments were very interesting (and some of them were, shall we say, very bold), I thought that the full interview should be published as is. Besides that, I would have found it very hard to edit down to the customary maximum length of three pages -Philip>>

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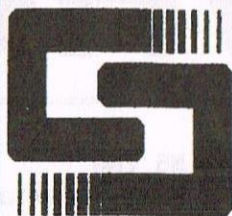
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